

Transcript

Electronic Intifada's video podcast "Day 5 Roundtable: Gaza's Al-Aqsa Flood"

A 114-minute [roundtable](#) presented on October 11, 2023

Featuring: Nora Barrows-Friedman, Asa Winstanley, and Ali Abunimah from EI, with guests Abdallah al-Naami, Abdeljawad Omar, Lowkey, and Khalil Abu Shammala

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Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Welcome back to the Electronic Intifada podcast livestream, Day Five. It is Wednesday, October 11. I'm Nora Barrows-Friedman, with Asa Winstanley and our executive director Ali Abunimah. We're going to have some more guests, especially some voices as we can try to find them from inside Gaza, as well as the West Bank, and we're also going to have Lowkey with us from the UK. Ali, if you could begin by talking about what we know up to this point. The breaking news that we're hearing right now is that rockets from Palestinian resistance have reached Haifa, according to the latest reports, and it looks like the northern theater is potentially opening at this point. Can you talk about what we know?

Ali Abunimah:

Well, what we know is that Hamas says that they fired a long range rocket towards Haifa, which of course is in the north of Palestine. And it's unclear if this rocket was launched from Gaza or from Lebanon. That certainly suggests that things are escalating quickly. And at the same time, there have been the warning sirens sounding in Israeli communities across the North and the Galilee. And in the past few hours, there have been renewed exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and Hezbollah in South Lebanon.

Those have been going on since yesterday. And today Hezbollah retaliated, it seems, for the killing of three of its fighters by Israel yesterday, and Israel has acknowledged that two of its soldiers had been killed by the Hezbollah retaliatory fire. So that is developing as we speak. And as far as I can tell, the situation is still quite unclear. But what we can see in the past 24 hours, with regard to Gaza is a horrifying escalation in the situation. The death toll has climbed now to close to 1,000; 5,000 injured; and the territory is plunged into darkness. The electricity plant has ceased operating, hospitals are operating on their lost reserves on emergency fuel. And of course, when the electricity goes out for 2

million people, also the water pumps go out, and Gaza water has to be pumped electrically. So it's a catastrophic and rapidly deteriorating situation.

But the important thing to note here is that this is Israel's intention. This is really a genocidal war on Palestinians in Gaza declared as such by Israel. The defense minister referred to Palestinians as human beasts. And when he declared that he would be imposing a total siege, Israel has threatened to bomb any aid convoys from Gaza-- sorry, from Egypt and it's bombed the Rafah border crossing now, several times. So there is an intent. There is a planned intent by Israel to cause as much suffering to the population in Gaza as possible. And the scenes of carnage are simply unbearable.

I want to just spend a minute or two on the political context since yesterday. Joe Biden, the US president, of course, gave a very belligerent speech, in which he talked about the sheer evil of Hamas and repeated Israeli propaganda stories, baseless stories about rapes and so on that have been circulating on the internet. And today, we learned that these were actually fed to him by Benjamin Netanyahu himself. And I'll say a bit about that now. But what I want to say about Biden's speech that is so terrifying is that it really gives a complete green light to Israel to do whatever it wants to Gaza and he even said that Israel's response has to be overwhelming.

There's been no sign from the United States of any call for restraint from Israel. On the contrary, it's open encouragement to commit the kinds of mass atrocities we're seeing. But what Netanyahu told Biden, according to a readout that was published today of one of their phone calls yesterday is that Netanyahu claimed, "we've never seen such savagery in the history of the state, nor since the Holocaust." Netanyahu apparently compared what happened with Gaza's assault on Israel, to Babi Yar, the single worst massacre of the Holocaust when 34,000 Jews were murdered by Ukrainian nationalists and their German allies during World War Two in Kyiv.

And this is the kind of comparison that Netanyahu is making. And he also said that Hamas is "even worse than ISIS, and we need to treat them as such." And what that seems to me is simply laying the groundwork and providing the dehumanizing atrocity propaganda that Israel needs in order to convince international public opinion that its genocidal attack on Gaza is justified in terms of the usual war of civilizations language that colonial powers always use. We saw this during the struggle in apartheid South Africa, when the white South African newspapers were constantly full of atrocity stories. I'm not going to preempt the discussion that we had with we're going to have with Lowkey and some of our guests about this propaganda.

But it is a major factor now in inciting public opinion to support massacres of Palestinians. The final thing I want to touch on is what comes next because, of course, now Israeli forces are massing for what is an expected ground invasion, and they have called up hundreds of thousands of reserves and Israeli officials have made... Again, really, I can't describe them as anything other than genocidal statements in terms of saying Gaza will become a city of tents, it will never be the same again, what we're going to do

to Gaza will be remembered for generations and statement after statement after statement of intent. But in the *Washington Post* today, there is an interesting column by David Ignatius, one of the in house columnists who is always very close to US intelligence services, and tends to sort of reflect their thinking.

And his column today is titled in Hamas, Israel faces a formidable and technologically sophisticated foe. And the gist of the article is that any kind of ground invasion into Gaza will not be easy for Israel. He says, I'll just read I won't read the whole thing, obviously a couple of paragraphs, but he says Israeli forces will be counter attacking through a maze of tall buildings, laced with hidden garrisons and booby trapped passageways on every floor of every building, there could be a threat. And underneath this hostile city, there are miles of tunnels hiding not just Hamas fighters, but also up to 150 Israeli hostages. This will be one of the most difficult military operations in recent decades, exceeding the challenges we faced in Iraq says Norman Roule, former chief of the CIA's operations against Iran.

Gaza's urban area is crowded and large, but it also has a large number of multi flow buildings that must be cleared of weapons and terrorists who don't wear uniforms. We should steel ourselves for heavy civilian and military casualties. And he also says that US officials believe that Hamas will have prepared very well for ground invasion. He writes, Hamas must have anticipated that Israel would attack Gaza in revenge. What defenses did they prepare? And he says, according to one Western official, the intelligence services of Jordan and Egypt have given Israel a grim warning their agents inside Gaza report that Hamas has prepared improvised explosive devices, anti tank weapons and other defenses along the avenues of approach into the enclave according to this source, so whatever comes next, it promises to be just as horrifying as anything we've seen. But I think the key takeaway here is that Israel wants to project that it has a plan, but it knows what it's doing that it's proceeding with determination. But I think the takeaway really is that Israel doesn't have a plan, doesn't have any military solution. The only, quote unquote, solution it has is to inflict as much damage and death as it can and as we know it's very good at that.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thank you, Ali. He's our Executive Director here at The Electronic Intifada. I wanted to bring in one of our contributors to EI, Abdullah al-Naami. He is joining us live from Maghazi refugee camp, which is in the center of the Gaza Strip. Abdullah, thank you so much for joining us. Tell us what's happening outside your window, and right now and what the past, you know, 72 hours have been like for you.

Abdallah al-Naami:

Thank you, Nora, Ali and Asa, for having me today. What's happening here in Gaza today has exceeded the term of genocide against civilians by the Israeli occupation. It's really hard to find the words to describe what's happening outside my window and in the Gaza Strip, in general, right now. The deafening sounds of explosions are heard from all directions nonstop. It's really hard to go by not our daily lives but just to continue living in such circumstances. Nothing can dispel our fears, as hundreds of

Israeli warplanes are roaming our skies and throwing thousands of explosives and bombs, specifically targeting highly (dense) residential areas, mosques, schools and even medical staffs and medical facilities causing the death of or killing more than a thousand people and this is only the casualties we know about.

There are probably more, hundreds or even thousands, who are still trapped under the wreckage and under the destroyed buildings all throughout the Gaza Strip from Jabalia camp to Rafah. Again, it's this Israeli attack is unprecedented and it's really a level of brutality and a level of violence we have never seen before. For example, the idea of the people who are leaving now or have left their homes really portrays the images of a second Nakba, here in Gaza these days, more than 300,000 people have evacuated their homes and went running down the streets looking for a safe place.

Unfortunately, no place is safe today in Gaza, I mean, even the schools which were supposed to be the safe place for the Gazans, a place where they can evacuate to escape from the horrors of the Israeli bombing is now targeted. Several schools have been already targeted and others are in danger as well. I also want to add that we have been through a lot when I say that the level of destruction and the level of brutality we see in the Israeli attack, it's like nothing we have ever seen before. I mean, we've seen a lot but the the new thing about this or the new feeling about this Israeli attack is that death has never felt so serious, has never felt so close. Death in Gaza today can be seen in the images of the babies who are being pulled out of the destroyed buildings and it can be smelled through the air which is polluted by smoke and gunpowder, by the Israeli occupation bombs. It can be heard in all directions.

So, now it makes, we can say, an internal conflict. It's really a new feeling that I'm experiencing that I've never felt that so close and it's really hard to talk about it. It's really hard, for me, to put the words together to describe this feeling. I mean, when I come face to face with the idea of, okay, I can be bombed and killed at any moment, is really too hard to be dealt with. I mean, when I think of this idea, comes to my mind all the plans I've made for the future and all my hopes. I wanted to have a successful career, I wanted to get married and start a family, which all can feel just overlooked or ignored. When I'm thinking about this, I can't just say, okay, I'm going to die and be okay with it. I mean, this is just on the personal level. What about my family? I'm here at home with my family, 12 (family members), who are having a just as hard as I am, and even worse, with having two kids, a toddler and an infant here at the house, which make it even more challenging and harder to survive the Israeli attacks. When you have kids, they need to be comforted, they need to be calm, which is really, as I said, a challenging task, when the adults are even as scared or even more scared than the kids themselves.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Abdallah Can you talk about what's going on in Maghazi camp where you are right now, the level of destruction that Israel has meted out in your area? And also if you could, you know, you're a journalist, you this is your job to witness and report and investigate. Have you been able to do any sort of, have you been able to leave to see what's happening at places like Shifa Hospital, which is now you know, the

largest shelter for people in the Gaza Strip. You know, Shifa is working on barely any medications left. And as Ali said, in the introduction, electricity has been cut. And as we know, hospitals are forced to run on generators, but very soon the fuel will run out. What is it like, right now in Mikaze, in places like Shifa?

Abdallah al-Naami:

Honestly, I couldn't leave the house anywhere, like more than 100 meters away. I could go to the market next to us to get some supplies for my family, because it's really hard to even go to the main streets as they've been really heavily targeted by the Israeli occupation, mainly to block the ways or the roads in front of ambulances and journalists. I think this goes with the context of cutting of the electricity, the water and the internet connection from Gaza. I mean, I'm lucky enough to have a battery which will run out very soon. But Israel wants us to die in quiet because they don't want us to be heard. They don't want us to talk to the world and to show the world the war crimes that are being committed here in the Gaza Strip.

The situation in the Maghazi camp is really critical. I mean, just as I'm talking to you, two of my neighbors received warnings to evacuate their homes. The neighborhood just about 30 meters away and another one at the end of our street, which will be gone in the next hour or so. As I said earlier, the deafening sound of explosions is heard from everywhere, even in my area. But the problem is that we can't even know or have information about the places that are being targeted as the media coverage is suffering so much as a result of the cut of the electricity and the internet connection.

Ali Abunimah:

If I may ask a question... First, thank you so much for coming on. With everything going on in and it's... I wish we had the chance to meet in a different situation, but we're so grateful for you to come on the show, and we're also grateful for all the journalism you've done for us, for The Electronic Intifada. But right now, I'm glad that you're staying close to your family and staying as safe as possible. But I wanted to ask you, with the announcement by the Israelis that they are cutting off water, electricity, fuel, we learned today that the electricity generating station in Gaza has shut down. Can you talk about what that situation is like for you? And for the people around you? Do you have enough food? Do you have enough water? How do people in Gaza prepare for this? Did they keep supplies in their house because they know that these wars are coming? What are just some of the day-to-day ways that people are coping right now to the extent that they are coping?

Abdallah al-Naami:

The situation of supplies for the Palestinian families in the Gaza Strip is really critical right now. I mean, myself, my family, we are running low on everything, the water, the electricity has already been cut off. I mean, the last charge (battery) is the one that we're using now. We have no idea what we're going to do after this. We can't be prepared for something like this. I mean, I know that the Gaza Strip has been under the Israeli blockade for nearly 16 or 17 years. But let's not forget that it's really hard for the

average family and in the Gaza Strip to get their supplies during the days even when Israel is not attacking Gaza. Let's not forget that more than 60% of the population in the Gaza Strip are poor, or under the line of poverty. So, it's challenging for them to supply or provide the needed supplies for them and their families.

The markets are now running out of everything nearly, the water... I mean in my area, we can have water once every maybe three days. We have to carry water in buckets on the stairs to get it to the main tank. And people in other areas of the Gaza Strip, for example, Gaza have even more harder or harder than we do (it's more challenging for them to get water). I mean, in the area of Tel El-Hawa they have it once every week. They cannot use water for cleaning purposes. They don't have enough drinking water. So I think what the Israeli occupation is trying to say right now that if you Gazans could survive our bombing, we will starve you to death. We will cut the off the food and the water (and make you) live in darkness until you die of starvation, which is really just a speeding up of processes that have started 16 years ago. I mean we have never in Gaza had the proper amounts or sufficient amounts of these supplies, the water, the food and electricity. So, even though we have suffered from such problems before, we can't be prepared for such things especially that we don't know how long the war is going to last, and unfortunately, it looks like we're going... It appears (that it is) a long term war which nobody can be prepared for.

Ali Abunimah:

Abdallah, you spoke so movingly about your own feelings and your own fear, which I can only imagine, under such a situation, nobody can know what's going to happen and we pray to God that He will protect you and everyone in Gaza. Can you just talk about— Or let me put it this way, Israel's goal clearly by targeting the civilian population in every way is to break this spirit is to force the people in Gaza to turn against the resistance or to surrender. From your perspective, what is the feeling around you? How are people feeling? Do they feel ready to surrender? Do they feel defiant? What's the mood that you see around you right now?

Abdallah al-Naami:

I mean, we all are aware of how much the Palestinians are suffering and we know what you've seen on the media, the massacres that are being committed, the siege that has completely been placed on Gaza, but if there is one thing that the Palestinians cannot run out of is dignity and the love for our country, the love (that we have) for our resistance. I've never seen anyone and I don't think that anyone will surrender or just to give the Israeli occupation what they want, which is surrendering and starting to blame the Israeli war crimes against us on the resistance itself. I mean, this policy has been an Israeli policy for several years now (they have been adopting it for several years). They always used to kill a large number of people, innocent people, to lay down images of mass destruction in Gaza and then use their propaganda to say that look at this destruction if there were no Hamas there were no destruction or if you just give up and choose peace with Israel, you will be fine which is really not the case.

I mean, we in Palestine, we don't like war. We don't like fighting. We just want to live our lives in dignity on our land and we are going to and we're willing to sacrifice everything for this purpose. I mean, what do the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have anyway? The situation is really hard even when Israel is not attacking the Gaza Strip. We have been always under danger. I mean, the Israeli drones have never left the Gaza sky. We were always as a target for these drones. So, we really have nothing to lose. Our country is our first priority. We have always sacrificed our blood, our lives and our money for our country, and we are not ready to and we won't surrender. We won't give up on that because this is the only thing that we have, the only thing that we can offer to our country and that's who we are. If we drop off the resistance... If we just surrender to Israel or give Israel what it wants, then we are no longer Palestinians.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Abdallah al-Naami is speaking to us from the Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza. We want to let you go so that you can conserve the little battery that you have left and be with your family and we are with you and please stay safe. We will keep in contact with you. And yeah, thank you so much for joining us Abdallah. Thank you.

Ali Abunimah

Thank you, Abdullah. Allah yahmikum (may Allah protect you)!

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

And we're going to bring on our correspondent and contributor, Abdaljawad Omar, from the occupied West Bank. Abdaljawad, how are you? You know, with all the news coming from out of Gaza right now, there's also pogroms and attacks by settlers and soldiers in the occupied West Bank as well. Can you tell us what's happening there and what you're seeing unfold?

Abdaljawad Omar:

Well, today, there's been three murders by settlers in the village of Qusra here in Ramallah. And there has been— Things are heating up in the West Bank more broadly as Israel, in this very vulnerable moment makes it clear that its firing policy has become very free. (There are) more than 20 martyrs in the West Bank, as of now. (There are) a lot of clashes, demonstrations and things are slowly moving in the West Bank into a situation where I think, in the next couple of days, more and more wider participation by the population in the various events, and attempts to also engage in this war for Palestinian existence and Palestinian persistence on their land, because things have been going in a way where it seems like it's an existential struggle, both in Gaza, but also in the West Bank.

So yeah, this is the current mood. The West Bank has its difficulties and complexities that is different than Gaza, including a Trojan horse embodied in the PA, which leaves us vulnerable to Israeli attacks, with no defensive measures whatsoever. Its stance on cooperation (with the IOF) remains the same. It's attempting at this moment to basically wait this out and see the results. But eventually, I think what

happened in Gaza, what's happening in the North will have deep repercussions on the situation in the West Bank as well. Another element is that the organized resistance movement in the North has been engaged in a lot of shooting attacks which have gone uncovered because of the enormity of the situation in Gaza. So also within that realm and domain, there has been a lot of clashes and engagements by the resistance movement in the North, whether in Jenin, Tulkarm and other places. So this is the current at least paradigm of how things are operating in the West Bank as of this moment, but I can see that things will shift as the bombing in Gaza continues, and the massacres continue.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

It's, you know, it's so hard to get kind of the granular information right now, because of the overwhelm of everything that's happening. But what do you know, about the, you know, face to face battles between Palestinian resistance fighters and soldiers in the 48 areas between, you know, between Gaza and the West Bank, as fighters have been pushing eastward? Is there any information about that, that you can update us on?

Abdaljawad Omar:

I mean, there's two sources of information, what Israel is actually publishing and what the resistance manages to also give us. But I think a lot of what happened in the past couple of days is still unknown and questionable, including the wide and organized disinformation campaign that has taken Western media and actually blinded it, because I think, not only have they become just stooges of the Israeli military spokespersons, just repeating and echoing whatever they say. They have also fell prey to a lot of disinformation about the events that happened within the Gaza envelope, the settlements surrounding Gaza. I'm not sure of the facts. But it doesn't make sense from a military standpoint, specifically that Hamas was, and the resistance more broadly, more interested in delaying any form of Israeli clearance of the envelop to just enter and commit massacres all over. I think their strategy was more of taking hostages and attempting to negotiate, I think, but this is just a speculation is that at some point, Israeli military brass decided that they will not negotiate with any hostage taking situation, and will end that swiftly, which meant that in the crossfire or otherwise, a lot of also Israeli settlers were killed.

So I think in many ways, the lack of skepticism, the lack of critical review, this is a disinformation campaign, a large scale that has also been repeated by the Prime Minister of Israel and it has two elements to it. The first is trying to actually, you know, regenerate Israel's own will to fight, and will to revenge, and create more of a trust and unity in Israeli society, in attacking Gaza and creating the massacres. So trying to shift the accountability for what happened away from the military base and the intelligence services and into the, you know, ultimate enemy, conflating Hamas with Da'esh (Al-Qaida), and all that discourse that we've heard also from Biden yesterday.

So that's one element to it. And the second element is allowing Israel by its international media campaign and disinformation campaign to commit as much horrible crimes as possible in Gaza, before the world becomes enraged with its actions. And this is what's happening, at least from my perspective,

the second element, in terms of the clashes, I think they've have slowly subsided, there are still some infiltration attempts here and there, I think we've now turned into the second phase of this war. And the second phase is more of a defensive posture by the resistance in the Gaza Strip, and attempting a containment policy for Israel's reaction through also the threat of opening of other fronts in the North, but also through preparation for wide and a large-scale invasion of Gaza if that happens or occurs in the next couple of days.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

That's Abdaljawad Omar. He is a scholar and journalist speaking to us from the occupied West Bank. What is, you know, what are the conversations like right now, with you and your colleagues and friends and family about the possibility of a ground invasion? And how, you know, the terms of the terrain are quickly changing minute by minute. What could that look like? And what could that mean strategically for Palestinian resistance in the West Bank?

Abdaljawad Omar:

I mean, look, it's always hard to predict things and to chart out scenarios. But I think Ali was making a very important point in his introduction, which is that we have an Israeli military, that in the past 20 years has proven defective when it comes to maneuvers on the ground. Its use of the ground force has always been or not has always been, but at least in the past 20 years has been very weak, feeble, incapable and incompetent, and canceled destruction, but at the same time, it is a very risky and dangerous territory for Israel itself. And I think, this lack of thinking on the level of the military and intelligence paths in Israel, the seeking of revenge, is leading them to a lot of miscalculations. And they're also leading the region into a war. And I think that in many ways, on a strategic level, if they enter Gaza on the ground, and also come out with nothing substantial to show for, not only will Israeli society hold them accountable for their failures, the initial failures, but also the later failures. But also, I think that will change the terrain of politics and the world we live in, in terms of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

This was not an insignificant event. This was not something that just a routine military operation. This has created a psychological break. Israel has not been able to still retain its psychological balance. And I think it will be hard for it to do so, even with a ground invasion. The only thing that it could do, which is also a possibility, is doing a mass ethnic cleansing campaign in Gaza or otherwise, or other places as well. But that also remains problematic for it for its standing in the world, for its legitimacy, for its own citizens, but it could also not be successful. So I think we're in this moment where people again feel a sense of horror, and a sense of anticipation of where the events could lead. And I think the West Bank, although now it's relatively quiet, but heating up slowly would pay a heavy and hefty price if the resistance in Gaza is defeated. I think what happened and what's happening in Gaza would also, at least in the medium run, happen in the West Bank.

Ali Abunimah:

Abdaljawad, if I may ask a couple of questions. The one of the pieces I read I think it was in Haaretz by Charles Freilich who is a former Israeli national security adviser and a professor at Columbia University and Tel Aviv University, wrote a piece which I suspect reflects, to some extent, the thinking of the Israeli military political echelon, and he was talking about how Israel has to go into Gaza on the ground, and that there's no other option, we have to restore deterrence, and so on, all the usual slogans. And he said that actually Hamas should be toppled, and that the hummus authority in Gaza should be removed. But the question is, then what next? And he said... he argued that the PA could actually be brought back to Gaza. You know, riding in Mahmoud Abbas and his people, riding in on Israeli tanks.

I also noted that the other commentators have noted that in his public announcement, Netanyahu has not stated that the goal of Israel's war is the removal of Hamas. So, could you comment on sort of Israel's dilemma there, what they may be trying to do, or what they may have as a goal, and really, in a sense, the impossibility of them of having success in this context? And the other question is about the effect of a long mobilization on Israel. They've said that they've mobilized 300,000 reserves. This is a small country, and you're taking sort of the people who are in the prime of their work, you know, the workforce out of the workforce, and having them sitting around doing nothing for the most part, but, you know, maybe invading Gaza. How long can Israel sustain this kind of posture?

Abdaljawad Omar:

Where you finished, which is, how long can it sustain it... I don't think it can sustain it for very long. I don't think Israel as a society, as a country, as a state can withstand a war that lasts years, for instance, like what we see in Russia and Ukraine. So what we're speaking about is a few weeks. I don't know how many weeks, (maybe) eight, nine, seven, or ten. It depends on how the campaign rolls. So that's in terms of the timing, and in terms of mobilizing the reserves, as you said correctly, also, these reserves would mostly be doing nothing except protecting, you know, within Israel, and freeing up the the regular army to conduct its attacks or protect the northern front and the southern front and invading Gaza. I don't think Israel really knows what it wants to do. I think they're trying to conjure up political objectives. Because I think at the heart of it, it's a revenge campaign. So I don't think that there is clear, cool-headed, minded military and political brass discussing the concrete political objective of what could be done in Gaza. I think that there's just a rage. I think they're in this moment of where they cannot accept what happened.

And I think they're just seeking out revenge. So I think we sometimes give too much credence to Israel's strategic thinking, when specifically this moment, they're not thinking strategically. Now, as things roll, they might come up with something, but I'm not sure what. Historically Netanyahu has been a very cautious leader. Despite his, you know, Likud upbringing, despite his right wing credentials. He's not been a person that is, you know, focused on entering risky maneuvers and wars, or conducting campaigns that could lead, you know, to a lot of different results including his own political downfall, which I think is already starting... the clock on him has already started (he doesn't have much time in his position). His political career is already, you know, in finishing, at least within Israel, no matter what the results are, I think he's going to be held responsible for what happened at some level.

So there's that level of, you know, us sometimes giving his role too much credence when it comes to having an actual concrete object. I don't think they know what they're going to do. I think that at some level now, they're also engaging in psychological warfare. And I think they're giving as much space for the air campaign to continue for this ridiculous genocidal air campaign, because I think it's actually targeting civilians. It goes to the heart of the early air power doctrines that came out of Italian and British academies after the First World War where, you know, just target the civilians, make the civilians suffer, and perhaps the civilians will turn against their own governing body, against their own resistance. I think this is the logic of what's happening now by destroying institutions, infrastructure, and by targeting families in their homes. And this horrific campaign has been allowed to go on by American green light and by, you know, the Western media mobilizing, and completely dehumanizing Palestinians and their actions in the past couple of days.

So I'm not sure that they have a strategic objective out of this. At some point, depending on the result, they could also be in a very different position, because another point, which is also very clear to me, is that the more they depend on the US, the more they're depending on the Europeans, the more Israel's isolationist stance in the past 20 years, no matter what the result is, well also they'll have to pay a political price for it. This American backing, which is in the moment. with this European backing, which is in the moment, will also lead back to discussions of a Palestinian state and a political solution and a lot of different things that will happen in the day after the campaign. I don't think the Americans will continue to just back this Israeli refusal to engage on a political level with the Palestinians, no matter what the results, but the results could (vary). I think we're in a moment with a lot of possibilities could happen. So I don't want to like, you know, chart it out. But this dependence on the US at this moment, this dependence on the EU, will also backfire against the right wing in Israel.

Asa Winstanley:

Abdaljawad, could you talk a little bit more about the current situation in the West Bank, obviously, you're speaking to us live from the west bank where you are. And, you know, as you said earlier, with the most of almost all of the media attention on Gaza, and on the kind of war propaganda and atrocity propaganda that Israel has been putting out. increasing violence in the West Bank is being sort of mostly neglected and we're seeing... we heard today that Israel has closed the border with Jordan, and workers from Gaza have been left stranded and so forth. And there's an increase of settler attacks, as well. So could you speak to that?

Abdaljawad Omar:

There's an increase in settler attacks. I've touched on that earlier. Look, I think I said... the current situation in the West Bank is a marker of so much difficulties and dilemmas that face people in the West Bank. The first is having a PA that has decided to cooperate with Israel on multiple levels. Which means that you don't have an organized movement in the West Bank, you don't have the ability to mobilize people in an organized fashion. That's the first element of why we're seeing a lack of concrete mass

response, at least for the moment. The second is that the West Bank also suffers from the separateness that Gaza has with as well. What I mean by that is that there's no intimate relationship, or intimate encounter between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank, except in very minute places where friction could happen.

And typical actions of civil disobedience of protest are met with heavy firepower, which leaves people like sitting ducks, and this creates a lot of fear. You don't feel the agency in engaging in these protests, as much as you feel as sitting there as a sitting duck. And this is leading us to a place where Palestinians are searching for how do you chart a politically effective action at this moment to support Gaza and supplant it and try to support it? I think it's a very difficult condition in the West Bank, geographically speaking, demographically, and economically, but also politically. And I think people are now thinking about that. They're in this mode of thinking, and trying to conjure up ways to support Gaza at this current moment, but also support themselves because this is not only something that touches Gaza, it touches us all. And I think, you know, what is important is that at this moment, as people think, things will start to roll, and people will start to imagine and create new modes of resistance in the West Bank as well.

The settler thing is that the settlers are also interested in lightning the West Bank front. They're interested in pressuring people in the West Bank, they're interested in an ethnic cleansing campaign in the West Bank, in horror and terrifying people. So they're a wildcard even for Israel, they're a wildcard because I don't think the Israeli military brass or intelligence brass is interested in any flare up in the West Bank. But then roaming around and creating havoc could also lead to deadly confrontations happening, like what happened today in Qusra and for that to expand the mode of participation of Palestinians, and also resisting against settler attacks and their invasion to villages or otherwise. So that's another element. And the third element is that you have an organized resistance movement in the north of the West Bank, specifically, and maybe some cells here and there. And they've been engaging, I mean, they have been engaged in whatever means they have. In Tulkarm, there was an operation and in Janine, there was multiple operations. There are shooting attacks everywhere. They're less reported on, and they're less given, you know, time on air.

But I think that that's also a clear sign that there is significant participation, at least from the organized movement. And you've always had in the past couple of years, this form of individualistic or lone wolf attacks that could arise at any moment. But within the current conditions of fear in Jerusalem, closures of people staying in homes and of the day-to-day civic space, in Israel, or in Palestine being completely halted or mostly halted. I think things are, you know, calm down, at least on that level, people are not really meeting on the street, because nobody's leaving their house. There's less friction between Israelis and Palestinians in the civil or the Israeli civil space in Jerusalem or otherwise. And that's why we've seen this quiet, relative quiet, at least in Jerusalem and the West Bank for now.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

We know you have to leave in a few minutes, but I just wanted to just get your thoughts on the greatest insecurity in the settlers, you know, whether they're in 48, or whether they're in the occupied West Bank, is that something like this would eventually happen. That when they would get a knock on the door from the Palestinian family whose land and whose home they're squatting in. How is that, you know, deep insecurity playing out in the Israeli media, for example, Hebrew only media that we don't, you know, that is not translated into English, or is there any sort of like, introspection and reckoning happening, that you can, you can see?

Abdaljawad Omar:

There is introspection, I think there's not introspection in a sense of like, you know, this level of what have we done to lead to this? What is our, you know, history of inflicting trauma in Palestinians that makes them want to also inflict trauma on them? I mean, I don't think that that level of introspection is there, even on the left, I mean, even Haaretz is saying today is like reading, you know, the right wing newspapers. I mean, it's true that they're trying to blame Netanyahu for it on some level, because they have this internal reckoning that they're all looking forward to after this war ends. And I think that's significant for us politically, that even though they're going to come off as unified, that there is that political reckoning that is going to happen between them. But I think deep down on a psychological level. If you're a robber, you know that you're a robber. If you rob people's places, you know that, I mean, and that's why just the presence of Palestinians creates anxiety among Israelis, just our mere physical presence, not even holding a flag or pretending to be Palestinians creates this anxiety and that's why they always asking us to legitimize their existence.

We're as if we're like, you know, a vanishing mediator that they have to ask us to recognize them, recognize their existence, legitimacy, so they can feel a bit of comfort that even the people that they robbed are now telling them that they could stay here, and they could live here. So there's that deep level of anxiety. And I think, generally speaking, when a settler society suffers, it's not used to suffering, there is a God complex at the heart of every settler project in the world, because these people feel on top of the world, they can play with other people's lives, they determine how many calories enter Gaza, they can determine the flow of movement of bodies across the river and the sea. They decide on the nature of our economy, our existence, our development, our future. So for them to suffer, for them to be beaten or punched, or even slapped for a moment, always causes this kind of, you know, it's a humbling moment, but it's a moment where you refuse to be humbled.

And this is what happening with Israel, they're refusing to be humbled, they're refusing to recognize that there is no other way out of this conundrum with the Palestinians except for a political way. They always search for military security solutions, because they know and they recognize deep down within their psychological makeup, that they've committed crimes, that the original sin of creating Israel is that it was built on crimes. It was built on rape and pillaging and poisoning water wells like we recently discovered. You know, tragic, ironic, even considering Jewish history is tragic and ironic that all tropes of anti-Semitism was actually practiced by Zionist, you know, all lies and labels by Europeans were

actually practiced in Palestine, historically. I think, deep down, what this tells us is that this crazed Israeli posture, this lack of thinking, this backing from the Empire, this conjuring up yesterday of nuclear weapons now, like Biden's meeting with Golda Meir, and how she told him about it, like there's a secret weapon,

Ali Abunimah:

I'm pretty sure he made that up. By the way, Biden has a long history of fabricating stories like that, like the story he fabricated, that he was arrested while trying to go and visit Nelson Mandela, and all sorts of other fake stories. I'm pretty sure that's a figment of his imagination.

Abdaljawad Omar:

Yeah, I mean, probably, I'm not sure but I think it was meant to tell the world that look, Israel at the end of the day, has nuclear weapons, and it could actually, you know, kill in mass the region, not only Gaza, but everybody else in the region, and the secret nuclear weapon that, you know, is not a secret because it's an open secret. And this claim that Iran wants to destroy Israel, now at this moment, where you have a small infiltration inside of Israel that impacted one community. And now it's kind of almost contained, at least for the moment and where you have at least it's true, Gaza is resisting and it's making a significant blow psychologically to the Zionist regime but at the same time that you know, at this moment when you feel vulnerable, you start conjuring up the ability to mass kill people in the region, you know, so I think Israel is born in sin and probably it will die in sin as well.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Well-said, we have our next guest with us in the wings. Asa, do you want to introduce Lowkey for us?

Asa Winstanley 59:14

Yeah, sure, Abdaljawad if you can stay a bit longer, that'd be great. You know, we could interact a bit more with our next guest, if you've got a little bit more time. So our next guest is Lowkey who is well known to our viewers, friend of the show as well. Lowkey is a British Iraqi musician, rapper, academic and increasingly in the last few years journalist and we welcome you to the show. Thanks for joining us.

Lowkey:

Thank you for having me. It's great to be here and I hope anyone watching this will take the opportunity to support Electronic Intifada, not just by liking, sharing subscribing this video, but also contributing to Electronic Intifada, because it has been an absolutely vital source for all of us in the world, and I hope it continues to be for many decades to come.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thank you so much. Thank

Ali Abunimah:

you so much Lowkey.

Ali Abunimah:

Yeah, we would actually like to go out of business in the sense that we wish we didn't need to exist. And we hope that that will be the case.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

We wanted to have you on to help us kind of tease out and debunk the just, you know, cascade of propaganda, vile, repulsive propaganda that has been coming out, you know, all over social media, but also by international journalists who are just retweeting what they heard from someone who heard from someone who heard from an Israeli soldier, and therefore, lends it this like, you know, credibility that, of course, is not backed by facts or sources, or any sort of anything. Can you talk a little bit about how this happens, and what's behind this sort of just unbelievable propaganda and how the media is just taking it and running?

Lowkey:

So I think it starts with understanding Zionism as a top heavy movement, as it always was, meaning that it has great sway among the political and media elites of the world, but it has very little sway with people on a person to person level. So across these decades, we've seen effectively the integration of British and US and even in cases like Canada, in the Netherlands, you see the integration of the intelligence services of those countries with Israeli intelligence services. And while we understand the way the media functions in our countries as being the first and foremost a mouthpiece of the permanent, visible governments of our society, it would make sense that that relationship continues to manifest in this way. There is also a sort of a servile... what would see itself as a form of sort of Philo-Semitism, what is it in actuality... a willingness to be subjugated to the mythologies of Zionism, among our media classes, but it's also not just psychological, it's material in a direct way.

But before we get into this story of particularly i24, and where the beheaded babies story came from, I just wanted to really look at the way in which the Zionist idea is experiencing the death spasms, essentially. This social arrangement is unable to sustain itself, and what you have is the concentration camp of Gaza, the place where Palestinians are flung, and kept at arm's reach, where they are essentially interacted with by Israelis through machines, like drones, and F-16s and F-35s, breaking out of that place and how Israel was able to be taken to the place that it was. So firstly, what you have is a movement where key power centers within the Israeli military and intelligence establishment have been trying to overthrow their own government for the better part of the past year. Now, this has been documented in different ways. You had the US intelligence leak, where the CIA were monitoring phone calls of those in Mossad and said Mossad are encouraging these demonstrations against Netanyahu.

What you also had is examples of Netanyahu's son and Ben-Gvir even pointing out that some of the organizations demonstrating against the Netanyahu regime are funded by the United States. So on the

resistance side of the equation, they are monitoring these contradictions becoming stronger and stronger within the Zionist idea. You have a push from those stalwarts of the Israeli Intelligence establishment, like Ehud Barak, to push out Netanyahu once and for all. And you also have the last two wars in Gaza, waged without the participation of the group, which is believed to have launched this most recent operation. So they did not participate in the last two wars. The perception among the Americans and the Israelis was that that particular faction was almost out of the game, that it was all quiet on that front. And so what happened was, you have these contradictions within the Israeli political, military and intelligence elite, which opened up the space for this type of operation to be conducted in the way it was, you have the building up of pressure in the West Bank, which committed more Israeli personnel there, Israeli occupation forces there.

And you've also had the building up of forces in Lebanon, which is so fearsome to the Israelis, that just two days ago, you had Israeli soldiers on the edge of southern Lebanon shoot themselves because they feared shoot other soldiers in friendly fire, because they feared that what was approaching them was a vehicle of fires from Hezbollah. What you also had just now, just before we came on, was the pure panic of some birds, and perhaps it seems, one or two drones from South Lebanon coming across, and activating the alarms in hundreds of settlements, at least in northern Palestine. So what we're talking about is a situation where the contradictions are growing more and more, and this awareness, you know, you have to understand, in the Western media, they often present those who fight Israel as irrational. I mean, that is the baseline of how they are presented. But actually, these organizations are far from irrational and have been studying Israel and have a far more sophisticated understanding of the way the Israeli political entity of Israel functions and is arranged.

Asa Winstanley:

Sorry to interrupt, we're going to come back to this but we've got another guest with us now live from Gaza, and he's very short on battery. So we're going to welcome to the show. Khalil Abu Shammala. Welcome.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Tell us what's happening in your neighborhood outside your window. Tell us what the last few hours have been like for you.

Khalil Abu Shammala:

Yeah, first of all, I live in the Western part of Rimal neighborhood which was destroyed during the last two nights. The scene is unimaginable. Nobody can imagine what is happening. Even, I used to go to my office every day, but since two days, I did not leave my home because I don't want as a human being to see what happened in Rimal neighborhood. It is not Rimal, (the neighborhood looks completely different from what it used to be), it is the wide destruction in Gaza. The Israeli military aeroplanes continue bombing, continue destroying the homes, the civilians, the goals that they are talking about, according to Netanyahu, he claimed that the goal is military goals and Hamas institutions or centers but in fact, the

results of their acting is very clear. Most of the people who were killed during the day are infants, children, women, old people, patients, people who even cannot move from place to another (disabled) and you can say that Gaza is not Gaza.

Gaza now is not Gaza that we know just one week ago. And this will continue. And it seems that it's so early to say, or to talk about an ending of this aggression. It is a real aggression. I am a witness and I, as a human rights activist, and I am the former director of the association for human rights, I documented many of aggressions on Gaza, but this is unpredictable. It is completely different comparing to what happened during the last years. The problem here and the crisis that we are coming very soon to see a humanitarian crisis (on the edge of a humanitarian crisis). The war started on Saturday, just three or four days ago. Today afternoon, the electricity company announced that the fuel to continue providing electricity has just finished. The hospitals will announce tomorrow at two o'clock that they cannot continue hosting or receiving injuries. The Ministry of Health today declared that the capacity of all hospitals in Gaza Strip is complete and they have no capacity to receive.

They are talking about beds. Israel refused even for the humanitarian line according to demand or from the Egypt government. There are efforts from the United Nations, Egypt, UNRWA and according to the news, USA join these efforts to make access for humanitarian line to transfer fuel, medical supplies, and food through the Rafah border. But until this moment, nothing real happen on the ground. What we have now is bombarding continue killing people. Even I, maybe seven or more of my cousins were killed. But I even could not say sorry for my cousin because everybody is interested in themselves (people fear for their lives). We are sitting now while I'm talking to you with my family, wife and three boys and even I have the spokesman of the UN by the way and he received a call from Israeli military to leave his home and from a neighborhood, north of Gaza.

This is the case. It is not (only) him. We are talking about the majority. They (people) are waiting for a call at any time asking them to leave their homes because they will bombard. Last night, my brother and his family also slept outside of their home because he lives in the middle of the Rimal neighborhood. This is what we are experiencing now. We are very disappointed, not most of the Palestinians, all of the Palestinians, because they ask us as a victim to condemn the Hamas or the resistance act against the occupation. They forgot about the international law and the Geneva Convention. They even forget the humanitarian dimension. And you may listen to Israeli Minister of Defense when he described Palestinians as animals.

So, this is, unfortunately, the scene and the situation and what we have now. And we thank you. I know Electronic Intifada and I heard long time ago, long years ago, what you are making and efforts, but at the same time, we have many different stories who don't want even although they know the fact, although they know that Palestinians live 70 years ago under occupation under severe occupation we have if we want to talk we have many of violations, just choose what type, what kind of crime or violations against humanity in the Palestinian territories. And we cannot we cannot imagine we cannot believe that

anybody say that we... I don't see, I don't hear because everything is very clear on TVs, just we and Palestinians don't want anything they are not looking for a kind of life. They struggled for life itself.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

That's Khalil Abu Shammala. You know, we can't understand what you're going through right now.

Khalil Abu Shammala:

Do you know what to do? You know what my friend, what the talks that we are interested in since the morning? This man is 22 years old. She asked what will happen and Noor is 23 says, I don't want to die or any one from my family to die. We want to die together because I don't want to live while missing any of you. And I'm not talking about myself. This is the case of every single person in Gaza. Yesterday, a mother who lost her children in one of bombardments says that my kids died before they eat. And 200,000 of Palestinians in Gaza are at UNRWA schools and different places, they fled from their homes. Look, this is democracy. I as a human rights activist, have worked for more than 20 years in the human rights. I felt shame when I talk about the the international principles. I used to say to the Europeans that we deputize you to teach the Palestinians, the young Palestinians, about the principles of human rights. How can I convince a person or the youth who are in the 20 to 30 range of age about the international law and the international human rights law while nobody from them have never gone out of Gaza. They don't know, they just know about the other world through the internet and the TV's. How they want us to be good people? They ask us to be good victims not good people.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Yeah, solidarity is conditional when it comes to the west. Ali did you did you want to ask Khalil and we want to we want to let you go before too long because we know you only have very limited battery.

Ali Abunimah:

I just want to say thank you, Khalil. We know your work and we admire you and we can only listen and try to absorb the enormity of what you and your family and everyone in Gaza is experiencing and pray for your safety and hope that we will speak to you again soon in happier and better circumstances. God willing

Khalil Abu Shammala:

Insha'Allah. Okay, thank you all. Thank you for your effort. I know Ali long years ago and I know how much you work and you try. May God bless you and I know how, I can imagine the difficulties that you face, not in other dimension, but in work in the middle of American, I mean, the the official level not the popular, because we don't. I have many friends from USA and I receive them every year at my home, not only at my office. Thank you.

Ali Abunimah:

Thank you very much. Thank you, God bless you and protect you.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

That was Khalil Abu Shammala. He was the director of the Addameer Center for Human Rights in Gaza for many years, friend to a lot of us here at The Electronic Intifada. We want to bring back Lowkey and also Abdaljawad to talk more about the level of propaganda. You know, Khalil was talking about the conditional support and how Palestinians need to be the perfect victims in order to elicit any sort of compassion or empathy or even sympathy from the west and especially the governments in our various countries. Okay, let's come back to you. You can try to pick up where he left off.

Lowkey:

Well, I just wanted to bring to people's awareness that it's just been reported that a young man has been arrested in Manchester, UK, supposedly for wearing the Palestinian flag on his body. This is the claim. And when asked Police stated it was for common law, breach of peace, they then put a section 35 on Manchester City Center, threatening bystanders with arrest. So and the title of the tweet from Joseph Conway is Greater Manchester Police have arrested a young pro-Palestinian protester at St. Peter's Square Manchester for wearing the Palestinian flag. On this question of media, I guess I wanted to take it in a slightly different direction and look particularly at this question of Elon Musk. Now, him being somebody that owns Twitter means he is somebody with quite a significant level of power. But you know, because he was targeted so heavily by Israel lobby group that ADL, sometimes we may get the impression that actually, he's not that bad. But I just wanted to point out one way that hasn't been given much attention, that he is actually a direct participant in Israeli war games.

So obviously, it's known that he is the, you know, his company, SpaceX is very well known. And it actually launched spy satellites for an Israeli intelligence firm named ImageSat International, fairly recently. Now ImageSat International is so deeply entrenched with the Israeli military that its CEO is a current reserve in the Israeli Air Force. Also, you have several figures within it who are formerly from Elbit Systems. And essentially, what ImageSat International does is it identifies targets, through satellites from places it can't get into, by moving into the airspace. So for example, Israel has bombed Syria 1000 times over the last five years, right. Now, in order to carry out those airstrikes, the targets are identified via satellite, rather than being the planes entering the airspace directly before the strikes. Now, SpaceX, which is Musk's company launched the satellites, ImageSat International, and, you know, it was such a popular decision with the Israelis that the the embassy in the US actually publicly thanked Elon Musk on Twitter for the launch of the spy satellites and ImageSat International also publicly thanks SpaceX and Elon Musk for the launch of the satellites so he's somebody that is directly in a material way involved in this war, which is a regional war, essentially.

And I guess the question before of what we were getting to about the beheaded babies is if you look at i24, as an institution, it is an organization that in a Haaretz investigation they found had become increasingly pro Netanyahu in order to obtain a license to operate in the way that it wanted to, to the point that Yair Netanyahu was able to call them up and cancel particular guests, obviously, i24 has

former Israeli military and intelligence personnel all over it, obviously, in addition to that, you have the other aspect of it, which is the Israeli Prime Minister's Office was found and claimed by employees in this Haaretz investigation to regularly give directives to employees and high ranking figures within i24. Moreover, Patrick Drahi, the owner of this channel, which was responsible for the bombshell of the beheaded babies, and is somebody who...

Ali Abunimah:

Lowkey, could you just say for viewers who aren't familiar when you mentioned the beheaded baby, maybe? Could you just sort of give us ABCs of that, because a lot of people may not know what the story is there.

Lowkey:

Well, I mean, unfortunately for us here, every single front page, in the British press has led with this story, which came out from one of the settlements, which was engaged by resistance factions. And the claim was made by a journalist for i24 that up to 40 babies, many beheaded were found, or around 40 babies was her exact phrasing. We found many of them were beheaded. Now. I'll cut to the chase and be clear, I believe this is an example of Israel's lies, which it's told over and over and over in many different contexts, in order to rationalize those it is trying to delegitimize their form of fighting. Now, i24 was accepted by so many in the British media as a credible source of information for this, that like I say, newspapers who go to great lengths to lecture others on the so called superiority of the British media, because of its laws around libel and whatnot, have run with the front page that is almost a verbatim reproduction of what the journalist of i24 said.

So for that reason, I was just pointing out just how deeply entrenched i24, and worse than that, Patrick Drahi, the owner of i24, is with Israeli military and intelligence. So for instance, Patrick Drahi, the owner of this channel, bought the newspaper, Liberation, which was founded by John Forsythe in France, and he put in charge of it, a former agent of 8200, Israel's signals intelligence unit, and so much so that when Patrick Drahi, became the largest shareholder in British Telecom, in this country, the British government launched an investigation on a national security basis into his procurement, or becoming the top shareholder in British Telecom. So we're talking about a whole infrastructure of information peddling, which works against those of us who want to assert the right to Palestinian life. You know, and if people think that the Corbyn, I mean, this is on the British side of things, they think that the Corbyn anti-Semitism lies with something, then they're going to be in for, you know, a treat with what's going to happen now because you are going to see full spectrum dominance.

Ali Abunimah:

I have to apologize that I have to go because I have another event I'm participating in, in a few minutes. But I just want to say that regarding this, to reemphasize regarding this atrocity propaganda, and the fake stories that have made the front pages of all the British press have dozens of babies being beheaded, that this serves a purpose. The purpose is to dehumanize Palestinians, to turn them into what Yoav Gallant,

the Israeli Defense Minister, called “human beasts” in the eyes of the international public in order to justify and facilitate what I can only call extermination. I don't necessarily mean the entire extermination of all Palestinians, as much as some Israelis fantasize about that. But what we're seeing in Gaza is extermination, family after family being bombed in their homes, whole families being killed together.

Listening to Khalil Abu Shammala talk about how his daughters are saying, his family members are saying, we'd rather all die together so that one has to survive the horror. Well, there are many families that have been completely wiped out in Gaza over the last few days. And what may come next in terms of a ground invasion may be even worse. And I believe this atrocity propaganda is designed to facilitate that. So it's really important for all of us to confront it and debunk it as much as we can. Please excuse me, I wish I could stay for the rest of the discussion. It's absolutely fantastic, but just for all the viewers who are here, this will be available on YouTube and upon EI. So I'm going to come back and watch the rest of the show that I'm going to miss right now. But thank you. Thank you all. And I look forward to joining you again soon.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thanks, Ali. That's Ali Abunimah. He's our Executive Director here at The Electronic Intifada. Abdaljawad, I know you have to also leave soon. I wanted to get your take on what Lowkey has been explaining about this real concerted effort to use propaganda to expand this notion of dehumanizing Palestinians so that it's easier and more palatable, to enact the kind of genocidal attacks that Israel has been involved in over the past few days.

Abdaljawad Omar:

I think, Lowkey explained the details that he knows much better than I do, at least in the UK. And the story behind the story, let's place it that way. But I think there are two things here. In the long term, Israel is trying to shrink the space for advocacy, and struggle for the Palestinian cause across the world. And this is one of the impacts of trying to dehumanize the Palestinians in this mass scale. But in the immediate level, it's also what Ali said and what I said also earlier, it has a lot to do with allowing Israel to go crazy to suspend its regular engagement in Gaza, its regular mode of massacre, which was based on like, precision guided missiles, on knocking the roofs with rockets. You know, it's one of these ironic things where even at some level, now, Palestinians in Gaza are just demanding the regular massacre and not this form of massacre that is happening, this more extensive form of massacre. So it's equal in my eyes to, you know, what the American administration under Bush did, before going into Iraq, you know, a concerted disinformation campaign that is meant to allow for Israeli response, and for Israel to regain the balance on the bodies and of little kids in Gaza, of women, children, men and families to gain a sense of their, you know, power, the power to revenge and avenge.

And again, I can't emphasize this more, I just don't see the strategic objective here. I think they lost this battle in the first 24 hours. They lost it significantly. It created the shattering experience in the Israeli mentality, the world that they knew before Saturday is not the same world that they woke up to on

Saturday. And I don't think they can recover from that fully. But the way they're trying to rebalance their psychological hit, is again through a highly instinctive pulse, which is go and kill, kill more and use air power in this very destructive manner. So to do that they need a lot of legitimacy for the West, this conflation between Da'ish (Al-Qaida) and Hamid has also political doesn't make sense, not because they're not making the distinction between Islamist movements and their different orientations, etc. But you know, perhaps in a couple of weeks, you will have to negotiate with Hamas. So now you call them Da'ish, and you don't want to negotiate with them. But perhaps you have to, I mean, maybe it's not up to you if you want to or not.

So I mean, on all these levels, Israel is doing a lot of mistakes. I don't think they have a lot of cool minded people at this moment, taking any decisions at all. I think they've lost it. And you know, even in political science and strategic thinking, there's always that moment where you think being crazy has its utility. I can go crazy at a moment or lose it and do things that I couldn't have imagined before to do. But I think the West, the US, Europe, I think, at this critical moment in the Palestinian struggle, what is needed is an immediate rise of all those supporters. I mean, this worry that, you know, the current conditions and how it's portrayed in the west and in the mainstream media should not choke us. I mean, at this moment, we need the support of the entire world gather should not be left alone, the voices should come out on the street, and we should start pushing back against this blood libel being spared by this machine. And we should stop, you know, our kind of complacency with what's happening by energizing, whoever supports the Palestinian cause, on multiple levels, and wherever it can be done and however it can be done. Because I think this is a critical moment, also, for Palestinians in Gaza to feel the support of the world. I mean, if they do feel that they're alone, that also causes a lot of harm to the people in Gaza, to their current struggle, and to the futurity of the Palestinian struggle itself.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thank you for that. Lowkey, what's your response to that? And how do you think we must start pushing back against these just vicious, repulsive smears and the journalists that peddle them?

Asa Winstanley:

And especially pushing back against the repression there's been increasing in the West, especially in Britain, America and Canada.

Lowkey:

So I think we should definitely discredit the smears as much as we can. But we definitely shouldn't fall into the Corbyn trap, which was to entertain the allegation ad nauseam, and sort of lament about how unjust the allegation actually is, as has been laid out, it serves a strategic purpose in the psychological war. What also changes those terms of engagement is the material equation. So for example, Palestine Action has today released the sights, the details for 50 different sites in the UK, where there is an involvement with the arming of the Israeli occupation forces. What we also have are ways in which we can look at Israel and Zionism as an idea and rather than seeing assertions of power, we see

vulnerabilities. So for example, the way Palestine Action engaged with the presence of factories for Elbit Systems in communities, those became vulnerabilities rather than signs of strength.

And this was the problem with Corbynism is that it was constant turn the other cheek ism, which meant that people became just dizzy with turning around getting slapped and slept and never fighting back. So essentially, we became functionally speaking, Israel lobbyists because we entertain talking points that came from a defeatist idea and an idea which prioritize political power over political principle, or an aspiration for political power over political principle. And the Palestinians were essentially set by the wayside as something we'd get to a little bit later, the Palestinian Authority was deferred to, international law was relied on, we're not in that phase of the struggle now. Yeah, I understand that certain points. People may see that as a necessity, I never have, and I don't anymore, and we are not held hostage to the worst aspects of Corbyn ism. So we've identified 50 of their sites and those are sites that people can take direct action to shut down.

When we look at the examples of what can happen within the green line, we have to look at Ma'raket Saiful Quds (Israel aggression on Gaza, 2021), as having within it many different prototypes of things that can be followed. So for instance, for one day, during that period, in May 2021, Palestinian construction workers, almost 60,000 of them went on strike in one day. It cost the Israeli economy tens, if not millions, tens of millions, if not hundreds of millions of dollars, just that withdrawal of labor for one day, to the point where the head of the Israeli builders associations said we can't build without them. What you also saw was Palestinian transport workers go on strike, and 300 trips were canceled in that day, right. So the withdrawal of labor made the functioning of Zionism as an idea even more difficult. Well, you also have as 50% of the pharmacists, in the Zionist entity, are Palestinians, you have other parts of other sectors of the economy that they haven't been driven away from.

And that is why that period of time is instructive, because it contained what is referred to as Shalal Iqtisadi, the economic paralysis, that is a necessary phase of the dying of Zionism. And so we can look at ways in which certain institutions or bodies that look like assertions of power, because the other thing about the Corbyn period, as Asa will tell you, is that there are elements of the Israel lobby that blew their cover during that time. Even us, we didn't know the names of some of these Israel lobby groups until they went tooth and nail against all of us and against Corbyn. Well, now we know who they are. Yeah, and now we see more clearly, and we have clarity about where their reaches. And so you understand actually, these expressions of power can be vulnerabilities and cracks within the monolith.

And I think our job is to work open those cracks, you know, because water wears down rock. And we have the struggle of a lifetime on our hands. And so we have to understand ways in which we can act effectively. And I think to be honest, part of the miseducation, the political miseducation of our generation in this country has been misdirecting us towards corporate behemoths that we are supposed to campaign against, who frankly, it doesn't make that much difference. If I had a bank account with Barclays, and then I don't have a bank account with bank Barclays because of Palestine, it makes not as

much difference as if I as one person walk and shut down the Israeli Arms Factory in my own community. So all we have to do is increase a criticality and literacy about the ways in which Israel acts within our society and work out ways we can act to be of assistance to the liberation, which is coming.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Indeed, well, we're going to wrap this up, but I wanted to get some final thoughts from Abdaljawad and then also from Lowkey. Abdaljawad as you know, it is evening in the West Bank. Can you talk about what you're looking at, and what you expect over the next couple of days?

Abdaljawad Omar:

I mean, the next couple of days, I think we're going to see more of the air campaign unfold. We're going to see more skirmishes also happening in the north with the possibility of it spiraling. Its intensity is increasing because of the blows that are being taken by Palestinian and Lebanese groups with Israel in the north. I think in the southern front, the air campaign will roll and will continue with its bombardment of Gaza as Israel prepares for ground invasion, that it will decide whether it is going to be limited, you know, the depth of it, the extent of it, it will start to decide and try to outline what exactly it will do in Gaza. You know, the type of statements that we're seeing from Israeli military is stating, generally speaking, this holistic approach, this humanitarian corridor with Egypt, trying to bring people into the Sinai, making people in total fear of the possibilities, because in a ground invasion in Gaza, and if it's a total ground invasion, we're looking at, you know, a situation where we have thousands of Palestinians killed, if not tens of thousands.

It's not going to be an easy ride, it's going to be bloody. And I think this will lead eventually to the awakening of people inside 48 and also in Jerusalem, and in the West Bank. I think this is a moment I called in one of my articles recently, where everything is up in there, and everything can happen. And also, the possibilities are mired. You can't really predict how things will roll. If Israel comes to terms with what happened to it, it could become more limited if it starts to have more rational objectives around its kind of response. But this vengeance and this will and this conjuring up of the will to fight in ways that makes the Palestinians a total enemy is something that we should be aware of and we should also take note of because it is opening the space for widescale massacres that we haven't seen for a long, long time.

And that's why at least now, it's a moment to mobilize and not sit down. It's a moment to push back against a lot of the disinformation, like what Lowkey just outlined, and also through other methods, no matter what. I mean, this is a moment for everybody, to think, to act, and to mobilize. It's a very critical moment in the history of the Palestinian cause. It's something that will we look upon, and we will remember dearly for long years to come. And sometimes when you live in these moments, these historical moments, no matter what they turned out to be. I mean, it's important to be actors in it and not just watch. And that's my main message, at least.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Thank you so much for that. And Lowkey, your final thoughts.

Lowkey:

So what the Israelis are banking on is the threat of ground invasion. And the airstrikes will ensure one of two things. So either that they are not required to carry out a ground invasion because they don't want that or if they do carry out a ground invasion that there will not be resistant. Now, the Israeli military, traditionally without calling in its reservists as it has done is about 160,000. So now it's supposedly called in 200,000 reservists, which makes it 360,000. Ideally, when they are fighting street to street, they want to outnumber their opposition by 10 soldiers to one. There are believed to be 40 to 50 thousand resistance fighters within Gaza. Now, when Israel is engaged in that way, these are soldiers who are frankly speaking, and I don't mean this in a sort of to be unkind, but these are soldiers who are used to bullying this armed populations in the West Bank by the Palestinian Authority. And that obviously now has become not the case thanks to the last two years of inspiring resistance that Israel has been met with in the West Bank by new younger generation in different groups right.

But they are used to flying drones. They are used to sitting in unit 8200 listening to calls, they are used to blackmailing, they are used to sitting behind turnstiles, they are used to going on the beach in Tel Aviv, then going home to London for nine months then coming back and spending some time there. They are not used to hand to hand, street to street engagement. Israel does not want to get ground invasion, but it may have to do that. You will get massacres like Shuja'iyya if they carry out a ground invasion, but you will have more losses incurred to the Israeli military, which they will find hard to justify to their population. Bear in mind, you've had flights from Bulgaria taking people out, you've had flights from Germany now being announced that will be taking people out. So while information about that will be difficult to get a grip on, we will see people leaving. You also have seen almost all Israeli companies believe me, this is crazy on the stock market, their value has decreased, the value of their shares have decreased, the shekel is falling.

So effects bear in mind when they're taking all these people out of the traditional economy, these reserve soldiers and putting them on the edge of Gaza to try and scare people, the economy will suffer more and more. So it's becoming more and more difficult to sustain the level of fascism required to maintain this unjust social arrangement. And that's where sort of these death pangs that we're talking about come back in. And also just to add one last point they're lying about the death toll, and I'll explain how. So Israel yesterday, announced they had the bodies of 1500 fighters within the green line. And these were people that supposedly had come over and then been killed by Israel. Now we've seen from human rights groups, footage of people that had come in holding their hands up, and then being dead on the floor. And the idea was that Israel was engaging fighters.

Well, actually, I would argue that what has probably happened is people came over when the fence came down, who may not have been armed, who may not have been part of resistance factions, and they were

massacred. They were massacred by the Israeli occupation forces. We've even seen now reports coming out of... Oh, bodies of resistance factions fighters have been found in buildings which were bombed by them by rockets. Right? So there's an attempt to try and now blame the presence of these bodies. You know, journalists are not being able to go into Geza, but they are within the green line. So journalists are seeing bodies on the side of the street, who are not being wrapped up and who are not being buried.

What's Israel doing with those bodies? That's what I want to know. And that's before you even get to the death toll in Gaza, which is obviously over a 1000 people now. So when we're receiving the death toll we're being told, okay, so there's a 1000 in Gaza and a 1000 caused by the Palestinian operation on the seventh of October. No, there's a 1500 who Israel claimed to have within the green line. So there's a lot about what they're trying to do in terms of defining the terms of engagement. I think that's the key thing to take from this. Do not allow your enemy to define the terms of engagement which you deal with them on. Do not engage their talking points ad nauseam, fine, discredit them, throw them away, they're rubbish. They're only meant to divert you. Push where you want to go and where you have strategic objectives, and push where they don't want you to go. Let's not spend another three years entertaining the fact that we have some type of irrational hatred for any type of religious identity. Rubbish, rubbish.

Nora Barrows-Friedman:

Well, I think that's a fine place to leave it for now. I want to thank our guests Abdaljawad Omar, Lowkey, of course, Khalil Abu Shammala and Abdullah al-Naami, Ali, and Asa and I really want to thank Tamara and Azhar behind the scenes. Please share this video, like and subscribe. We have a donate button on the top of The Electronic Intifada website, electronicintifada.net. We will be back I think we're going to try and do these live streams every other day or so. And so please stay tuned. Keep informed. Push back and stay safe everybody. Thank you all so much.