

## *Transcript*

# **Electronic Intifada's video podcast "Day 7 Roundtable: Gaza's Al-Aqsa Flood"**

**A 105-minute [roundtable](#) presented on October 13, 2023**

Featuring: Nora Barrows-Friedman, Asa Winstanley, and Ali Abunimah from EI, with guests Jon Elmer, Refaat Al-Areer, and Khalil Abu Shammala

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### **Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

Welcome back to The Electronic Intifada Podcast. This is our live stream for Friday, October 13. I'm Nora Barrows-Friedman, Associate Editor with The Electronic Intifada. I'm here with my co-host, Asa Winstanley, and our Executive Director, Ali Abunimah. We're going to hear from Ali first to kind of lay out the current situation and some breaking news. We're also going to be joined by our friend, Refaat Alareer, in Gaza, as well as Khalil Abu Shammala and possibly some other guests as we can reach them. We are also going to hear some analysis on the current situation by our good friend, Jon Elmer, so please stay with us. This is going to be yet another very essential, informative live stream with information that you probably haven't been hearing from the corporate mainstream media at all. With that, Ali, please take it away.

### **Ali Abunimah:**

Thanks, Nora. I just want to start by thanking all our readers and viewers of The Electronic Intifada, old and new, for your support and for all the messages you've sent us in recent days. I can't tell you how much they've meant to us and really keep us strong. So we haven't had a chance to reply to everyone, individually, but I just want you to know we're receiving them, and they mean a great deal to us, they really lift our spirits. As you may have heard, since last night, Israel ordered 1.1 million people in Gaza to evacuate the northern half of Gaza, including Gaza City, within 24 hours. The World Health Organization has called this a death sentence for many people, particularly the sick, the injured, the elderly, and the United Nations has called it impossible particularly in the catastrophic situation in Gaza.

Human Rights Watch said today, ordering a million people in Gaza to evacuate when there's no safe place to go is not an effective warning. The roads are rubble. Fuel is scarce. The main hospital is in the evacuation zone. This order does not alter Israel's obligations in military operations to never target civilians and take all the measures that can to minimize harm to them. World leaders should speak up now before it is too late. Human Rights Watch has also called on the International Criminal Court

prosecutor who has been totally absent and derelict when it comes to Palestine to warn all parties of the consequences of their actions. There is absolutely no safe place in Gaza. No part of Gaza has been spared. There is bombing and massacres all over the territory all the way south to the Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

More than 1500 people have been killed so far. 500 children have been killed by Israeli bombing in a week. There are horrifying scenes of people digging their loved ones out of the rubble with their bare hands. The hospitals cannot cope and the streets outside al-Shifa hospital and Gaza City are lined with bodies because the morgues are full. The situation in the occupied West Bank is also very dire. Since Saturday, Israeli occupation forces and settlers have killed almost 40 Palestinians, what would normally be a shocking number, but it has been overshadowed by the scale of Israel's extermination campaign in Gaza. Settlers in the West Bank are going on unprecedented rampages and killing sprees, all with the full support of the Israeli army and government. While Palestinians in Gaza have no safe place to go, there are real fears that Israel's order to evacuate is the start of a new Nakba, a mass ethnic cleansing or genocide by Israel to finish the job it started in 1948.

Today Badil, the Palestinian Resource Center for Residency and Refugee Rights in Bethlehem, wrote the following to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres: while the United Nations and many countries are calling for the opening of humanitarian relief passages for civilians in the Gaza Strip, there are also calls from the United States and other countries that align with the Israeli colonial apartheid regime to open passageways to transfer Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip to Egypt. This mixing between the responsibilities of the international community to secure urgent humanitarian relief passages, and the opening of passageways for civilians is an intentional confusion that conceals a plan to displace Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

The United Nations and all countries and third parties should be aware that any attempt to displace Palestinians under the pretext of ensuring their safety constitutes a new Nakba, in which states supporting Israel are complicit. One very slight bright spot today is that Norway became the first western country to condemn Israel siege on Gaza. It's cutting off of food, water, electricity, fuel, medicines, and other life essentials to 2.3 million people who are under constant barbaric carpet bombing. But there is no doubt that Israel's genocidal attack on the Palestinian people could not be happening without international complicity and support, particularly that of the United States and the European Union.

I wrote yesterday for The Electronic Intifada about the shocking position of the German government in adamantly refusing to condemn Israel for cutting off even food and water to everyone in Gaza. That includes more than a million children, even while Israeli officials label them human animals and human beasts. Chancellor Olaf Schultz has even offered Israel military aid to help Tel Aviv perpetrate its ongoing slaughter of civilians, which makes an absolute mockery of the constant cry of "Never Again". Yesterday, we saw you as Secretary of State Antony Blinken traveling to Israel to provide more of that

support, and today Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is there as well. Already, US globe master aircraft are arriving with more bombs and munitions for Israel that are destined to be dropped on Palestinian homes, schools and hospitals in Gaza.

Today on Al Jazeera I saw the European Union spokesperson Peter Stano, repeating Israeli atrocity propaganda about what happened when Hamas fighters crossed into Israel on Saturday. Many of these stories are being used to incite hatred, and bloodlust against the Palestinian people as a whole, even though they're completely error unverified, and many of them have turned out to be totally false. Perhaps the most notorious example is the claim that 40 babies were beheaded by Hamas in the settlement of Kfar Aza. This fake story was splashed all over the front pages and spread by the Israeli government. President Joe Biden even claimed he had seen photos proving it before the White House had to retract that and admit that there had been no such photos presented to the President. But the purpose of all this propaganda is the same as it has always been. We've seen it in South Africa, in Vietnam, in the Jim Crow South of the United States, where British, American and other colonial occupiers, colonizers and oppressors have always demonized their victims in order to make a pressing and exterminating them palatable and even desirable to the population as a whole.

I choose my words carefully, but I will say that the blood libels Israel and its accomplices is spreading against the Palestinian people are no different and intent and effect than the blood libels Hitler spread against Jews, and those who spread such sensational unverified stories of mass rapes and beheaded babies have blood on their hands. Saleh al-Arouri, a senior Hamas leader, addressed many of these claims in an important interview on Al Jazeera yesterday. He did not deny that Israeli civilians have been killed, but he explained that Hamas fighters have been under strict orders not to harm civilians. However, there was heavy fighting in the settlements which Israel deliberately built right up close to the Israeli border and Israeli civilians may have been killed in some cases by their own forces. We have also seen numerous examples of videos of Hamas fighters protecting civilians, or in at least one case, returning an Israeli woman and her children safely home. By the way, that occurred on the first day of the Hamas assault, and Israel knew about it, but never revealed it to the Israeli public.

Al-Arouri explained that many such civilians were brought into Gaza, not by Hamas fighters, but by Palestinian civilians from Gaza, who poured through the border fence when the Israeli defenses collapsed much more quickly than expected. There was also the interview with an Israeli woman who said Hamas fighters spent several hours in her house and didn't lay a finger on her or her children. One fighter even asked her permission before taking a banana from the kitchen counter. The point I'm making here is we do not know everything that happened and we have learned enough times that most of what Israel puts out through its sophisticated propaganda machinery is lies that our so called media are happy to repeat without any question. Right now, these lies are being used to justify genocide. I truly hope we will find out the whole truth. But that would take a genuine, independent international investigation of the kind Israel has always opposed and done everything in its power to demonize and prevent.

Finally, I want to end my remarks on a small note of hope, which is the outpouring of international support and solidarity with the Palestinian people that we're seeing. Today in particular, there have been massive rallies across the world, particularly huge marches in the Arab world, including in Iraq, Yemen, and further afield in Bangladesh and many other countries. In Jordan, there have been huge rallies and today thousands of people headed towards the border with Palestine, only to be met with tear gas fired at them by the Jordanian security forces. There have been similar scenes of repression, in so called democracies, like France, where Emmanuel Macron's riot police have charged teargass and arrested marches, who have been out defying a French government ban on showing solidarity with Palestinians. Germany, too, has banned rallies in support of Palestine, and Britain is considering whether it should be a criminal offence even to display a Palestinian flag in public. Here in the United States, I've heard many personal stories of students and educators on campuses facing intimidation, harassment, and even death threats simply for speaking out in support of Palestinians. But I have no doubt this repression will not work. People cannot and will not be silent in the face of such horror. Thanks, Nora.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

Thank you, Ali Abunima. He's our Executive Director here at The Electronic Intifada. Thank you for compiling that and for saying what needs to be said as always. We want to bring on our friend Khalil Abu Shammala live from the Gaza Strip. Khalil, how are you? How is your family? what can you tell us about the last 24 hours?

**Khalil Abu Shammala:**

Thank you, Nora. Today is the sixth day of the war and nobody can expect even in his worst dreams that this moment will come. We struggled during the last many years, long years, tens of years, to stay in Gaza over our land. But today, the moment when I was forced to leave my home with my kids, it was – No words can describe what is the emotions I have and I know that this is not only me but all of the Palestinians. Maybe tens of thousands of Palestinians from Gaza and north of Gaza have to move to South of Gaza. It is after the order of the Israel occupation forces when they ask us to move and because they say that it is more safe to you rather than to stay in homes [in the North]. We know what is coming. We know that many people have fears that they may witness the second Nakba if they were forced to continue moving or pushing them to Sinai.

And we know why they want people to move because– And you will see this. I'm not sure if you will see it or not, because I just heard that the internet will be cut at any time in the coming hours. And they asked even all of the people including the media, imagine if there is no media, local media, because we don't have international media or press here in Gaza unfortunately. As if they know what will happen. They prevented any of the International press to enter Gaza. What is to expect is mass massacres against the civilians. The civilians I don't know how to describe because we cannot distinguish between civilians and who is the militant. Because as I told you last night is the most of them are civilians, how

we can distinguish between the militant of Hamas and the people. They will destroy Gaza because they claim that Gaza is full of tunnels which are used by Hamas.

This is not the story. The main story to the Palestinians is that the victimizers is supported by the internationals against the victims. And it is unbelievable scene of silence by everybody, I mean, the governments, the European who talk about the human rights international law, principles and morals. Where is their morality? I don't know. Believe me I have never been a coward, but I feel that I'm a coward, but why I'm a coward? Because I have kids and I cannot even look at their eyes. I make this live from my cousin's home. I left my kids at my brother's home. Originally I am from Khan Yunis. I came back to the family home. But imagine how many of thousands can have in south of Gaza, the place – They are homeless now. Most of them are homeless without any place. They cannot even go to the bath and we are in camps and, you know, the camps, the refugee camps, they want to remind us and to return back to the Nakba and to emphasize that the Nakba will continue. I cannot talk about political – I cannot analyze what will happen. I have no ability to say what will happen and what type of policy we have now and we will have. I consider myself as one who can read the future, but I cannot read what will happen two or three hours later.

It's the time, the time of the fact. But what is the fact? If I tell you that, Wallah [I swear to God], if I spent today just to receive a court order to spend ten years in prison, it will be better than the moment I am forced to leave my home. I left everything. And imagine! I'm one of thousands or, let's say, I cannot even tell you how many people came to the South. Yes, there are people who stay now and this night and they refuse to go. They refuse not because they want to die. But they refuse because they don't know where to go and who will house them. Many questions – Even the UNRWA, my friends, they said to everybody publicly that we are not responsible for your relief in Gaza. We advise you and I read the message was sent to the UNRWA employees, they said to them, we advise you to move to the South for your safety and from this moment, we are not responsible for your safety. Behave by yourself. So these are the UNRWA staff. What about the others? The Red Cross also said that it's not our mission or business to ask people or to advise people. Everybody just take off. Yeah, everybody. No international institutions, no international NGOs – Can you imagine! the director of the UNRWA operation is out of Gaza in this critical time. Thomas White, the director of the UNRWA operation, left Gaza last Thursday, and he transferred his responsibility to a person named Juniper. And she – I don't know. I don't want to accuse anybody. Not everything that we know can be told.

**Asa Winstanley:**

Where is Thomas White now?

**Khalil Abu Shammala:**

He is in Greece.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

It's just a total abandonment of the Palestinian people. Khalil, we want to bring on our good friend Refaat Alareer. He is also in Gaza. We spoke to him on Monday. Refaat, can you tell us how you are, how your family is and what it looks like outside your window right now?

**Khalil Abu Shammala:**

Tomorrow we'll go. I cannot tell you. I cannot give you the clear case of my kids and if you – When I say that I can't look at my kids eyes, it is unbelievable. I have never thought, in my worst dream, to stay in this position. Last time, Nora and my friends, Noor, Nesma and Muhammad were laughing and suddenly I said to them stop please. Noor asked me, why? I said that I don't feel good tonight. I was feeling that something will happen. And I spent from one o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock, following up the news and asking and receiving and negotiate and consult. Well, shall we go? shall we stay? If we stay, what will happen? And if we go, what's next? Will we be able to return back to our homes to Gaza? Or we may come to a station for the next southern station. You know what.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

Yeah. Khalil, you are a veteran human rights activist and advocate and fighter for Palestinian liberation. We want to bring in our good friend Refaat, who is a writer and an academic. Refaat, How are you?

**Refaat Alareer:**

Thank you Nora, Ali, Asa and Tamara for having me. It's the same story. The same story as Khalil. We speak about the unknown. And again, we speak about and we think about the worst case scenarios and Israel creates even more horrible scenarios. And it's escalating, as you can see, the number of people killed, the number of children killed, the number of, you know, bombs Israel throws, the crazy procedures and steps Israel takes against Palestinians in Gaza. And we always ask this question, what's next? And we can ever predict. This is where you fail, whether you are a political analyst, a human rights activist, a veteran writer, you can't predict and you can't plan. And the topic of the hour is evacuating more than 1 million people from Gaza, North Gaza. That's impossible. It's impossible to do for many reasons, because Israel, still bombs people rushing out of this designated area.

There are two reports of two targets, people killed and injured, and the roads or the infrastructure is destroyed. So people are going to get killed anyway. And this is what many people realize. There are hundreds of thousands now in the Gaza City. And there are people who protested in the Shati' beach refugee camp and Sheikh Radwan, I guess. They took to the streets, declaring that we're not leaving. How many times do we have to leave? How many people does Israel need to kill in order to be satisfied? How much blood? How many Palestinian kids? But we're not also leaving because we don't want another Nakba, because next time Israel is going to push us into Khan Yunis and then into Rafah and then into the sea and that's why some people decide to stay. Some people decide to go with their relatives and many people could be staying out in the street in this dangerous situation.



And then comes the act of why – Everytime Israel does this, throws pamphlets, you know, from the war planes that are as dangerous as the bombs and then tell people to evacuate, a million people, half a million people, evacuate! And then people start saying I can't evacuate, or I don't want to evacuate. And then it's like, look, we are humane. We are good. We are cute. We're telling them to leave. And you can see this all over Twitter, for example, people saying “Israel told you” and even American politicians and journalists are saying, “but weren't you warned?” So this is a propaganda. This is a publicity stunt by Israel. And at the same time, it's dehumanizing, because Israel is going to say that, Oh, Hamas is keeping them. Hamas is preventing them. Hamas is not preventing anybody. Hundreds of thousands left. And it's understandable, it's justified why they left, and hundreds of thousands did not leave, and it's also understandable and justified.

And those people are on their own. Palestinians don't have to wait for people to tell them what to do and what not to do. They are the most highly educated people in the area, among the top educated people. But again, it's always Iran. It's always Hamas. It's always this. It's always that. It never stops. Even when we ask for our freedom and human rights, it's usually not the Palestinians demanding this. Somebody else is insinuating them and pushing them for a global agenda, an Iranian plan to control or to embarrass Israel. And then comes this horror, unprecedented horror. No book, no words, no articles will be able to just describe what we go through as Palestinians. It comes with a very systematic, nonstop, systematic targeting of homes or families and of people in their homes. 90% of the people killed, 1800 Palestinians were killed in their own homes. And those people usually were hosting relatives and friends and neighbors, because this is what Israel said, move. So people move. Where would you move? The schools are already full, full capacity and also targeted. The UN, a couple of days ago, said 16 of people taking shelter were injured, and two of them were in critical conditions.

So the schools are not safe. They're targeted. The Jabalia massacre, most of the people killed in the Jubilee massacre, were people evacuating their homes from Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia. And it was a local market in the most densely crowded area in the world. And the number of people killed here is also reflected in the number of children. Somebody updated a couple of hours ago and every time you refresh, 20 people or add 20 children, two families, three families, we speak about more than 50 families exterminated. And I am also being very careful about the number I think it's 100. The Shehab family, it's the whole extended family. But they are five, six families. We speak about 583 Palestinian children in seven days. In 2014, Israel massacred the same number or fewer in 51 days. Now it is in seven days, and I did the math here.

We speak about four kids killed every hour, for seven straight days. This is extermination. This is annihilation. This is genocide. Yes. One Canadian TV said, “Well, isn't this a strong term?” I said this is what the Israelis are saying. They're saying we're wiping Gaza out. “But they're targeting Hamas” he said and I replied if you're targeting Hamas, you don't say we're going to turn Gaza into a city of tents. We're talking about hundreds of thousands of collateral damage. So this barbarity supported by America, Germany, Britain, France and Italy and other western countries sending money, sending

billions against very small and very tiny space, sending warships against Gaza! This is what's going on now.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

Thank you Refaat and I know that our listeners and viewers around the world – We've been getting so many messages asking about you, about Khalil, and about our reporters in Gaza. Just, you know, people with broken hearts and rage that this is happening and that it is being cosigned and underlined and funded and egged on by the so called international community, especially the West. Khalil, you've been a human rights activist for many years. The scale of atrocities right now, how can you even begin to measure it?

**Khalil Abu Shammala**

The problem is that we spent long years to convince the international institutions including and mainly the United Nations, the Human Rights Council. There are many of the reports, which is well documented, against the Israeli crimes, but nobody hear even the ICJ and the International Criminal Court, they don't want to listen to us. Even they refuse to meet with the representatives of the human rights organizations, like what happened last year, with Raji Issam and the PCHR, Palestinian Center for Human Rights. They are captured and controlled by the American administration. They are employees just to do what Israel and American administration asked them to do. What are they waiting for? Opening the files, the Palestinian files, and what they want us to include and our claims and files to show them that we are subjected to the worst of the terrorism. People in all over the world – When we talk about human rights violations, how we can define occupation, how we can define the settlements, how we can believe or thing of thousands of prisoners who spent most of their life inside the jail, the Israeli jails.

What they ask us to do. It is not the international law. We know this. Our problem is not with the law. Our problem is not with the conventions. Our problem is not with the human rights principles. Our problem is with how they politicize the international law to support the victimizers, the occupation, against the Palestinians who are struggling and asking for their rights. They recognize that there is an occupation and people who live under occupation for many years, what we did Oslo accords, and they throw it in the basket. They killed Yasser Arafat, their friends, according to them. They killed even Rabin, because he was he was looking for recognizing some of the Palestinians rights, and now we are in a historical moment. They want to change and I believe that they will succeed by the way, they will succeed to change the Middle East. And as I mentioned, I don't like to talk about, in this moment especially, political issues or to analyze. And I cannot say everything that I believe in or see. But wait, wait and see. You will see a new look.

Hopefully, I will be true. It is not Saini, one of the possibilities, one of the concerns of most of Gazans but the situation which will come is a new look. People with maybe good level of life, but with no rights to continue as before. Sorry, because of the electricity, it is out in my brother's home, but once again, we



should not leave the home. We are in a situation that, yes, we cannot do anything now. Because while coming to my cousin home, I heard that they may cut the internet. I don't know if Refaat also heard about it or not. No electricity, no life, no goods, no food even in the markets. And as they continue to prevent the services from the Rafah border. Look how they are arrogant and they deal as if they are the only. They live using Holocaust for 70 years. We are innocent, we have no relation. Now, they will use what happened last Saturday to describe and they already described it as a second Holocaust. This is what we have now and hopefully I believe in you to continue working together. Wherever we can meet again or talk together again or to continue having and keeping our message and the Gazan message, the victims, the infants, the children, the women, people who have no ability to continue.

**Ali Abunimah:**

Kalil, we take very seriously that duty and I know that you sent a message that you should leave because of the situation. So we don't want to keep you longer than you can stay safely. But we hope to meet again, soon, Alaa Khair [in a better situation], as Refaat said, and we will continue this duty as long as we can and with all our energy. And that's what we can do. And all our work is motivated by the hope that we will prevail over this. So I just want to say to you and your family that even when we can't see you or talk to you, we're thinking of you and praying for your safety and for the safety of people in Gaza. Thank you, Khalil.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

And Refaat, we know that your battery and internet is also running low. So we want to let you go as well. But, I mean, I I'm just struck by, you know, the media blackout here in the West about what it actually looks like and feels like for Palestinians right now who are trying to move from place to place to place to find any semblance of safety for them and their family. Can you describe to us what it looks like when Israel carpet bombs the Gaza Strip, which is only about 24 or 25 miles long and maybe five miles wide at its widest? Can you talk about that?

**Refaat Alareer:**

For us and who is following the news, this is more than complicity. The other night I was with Chris Cuomo, he is in the occupied Palestine and I was expected to speak about around 25 minutes or 20 minutes of Israelis, poor Israelis, many of them admitting, yeah, I am in the Army. I was in the army. I'll join the army. And I was bombarded by all these, you know, humane stories of the occupiers, the settlers stealing my grandmother's land. And then unexpectedly, I've done scores of dozens of talks, interviews, and each one of them starts with, how's it going? But the first question was about Hamas and not allowing people to – And I was like, where do you get this from? Hamas would like for Palestinians with American passports to leave. Because Israel is not allowing them to leave. It's not allowing anybody to leave. And then he keeps going on and the framing and even when he introduced me, he said, Okay, wait a minute, you might be surprised. But he was too scared, really.

And at the end of the interview, I told him, Chris, you're framing is riddled with inaccuracies, with fake news. And if you think this is what's going on, if you start the story from B, you blame the Warsaw Ghetto rebels, you blame the Native Americans, you blame the slaves that rebelled against the slave owners, and you blame the Palestinians. If you believe in this, then you're not paying attention. And to me as a Palestinian and I, when people always ask me, so what's going on? I tell them that this time is different. Somebody put it accurately on Twitter, the political and media class, they're all in one club together, they care for each other, they benefit from each other. It's mutual. So this class, is now hellbent on demonizing and dehumanizing the Palestinians because they want to justify the genocide that is happening right now. So when people ask me, I say it's different this time. It's very systematic. It's like, everybody is pledging allegiance to Israel. Everybody, especially coming to a presidential election with many horrible hopes calling for Netanyahu to finish us out, finish them, Netanyahu, Nikki Haley says, I think it was Lindsey Graham that said these are savages.

**Ali Abunimah:**

Refaat, I'm sorry, I just wanted to say I think one of the hardest things to come to grips with is that the people who always scream the loudest about the Holocaust and say Never Again, Never Again, and we have to learn the lessons of history, particularly American and European leaders, are the ones who are most actively supporting this Holocaust in Gaza. It's a genocide in Gaza. They're sending airplanes full of bombs to drop on Palestinian babies. And this is the thing that has for me broken any sense and any belief I have in all the supposed principles we were taught to revere human rights, international law, democracy. The people who come to lecture us about human rights and democracy and international law, are the ones who are doing this to you, to your family, to 2.3 million people in Gaza. They're the ones who are doing this. The ones who build museums to the Holocaust, and say, we need to take Palestinians and Arabs to the Holocaust museums to educate these savages and barbarians jungle people as Joseph Burrell, the EU foreign policy chief called them.

They're the ones. The White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said that calls for a ceasefire for Gaza are repugnant. What kind of world do we live in where calling for a ceasefire is repugnant? These people worship war. They worship death. I'm 51 years old and I wake up every day as angry and as enraged and as outraged as I have been my whole life at what they're doing to us. But you know, Refaat, they want us to be nice victims. They want us to be polite. They will they don't like it when we're angry. I get messages saying, oh, you know, you should present yourselves better. You won't win support, if you're angry. What support did we win for all these years? All these years of advocacy, of meetings, of lectures, of speeches, of meeting with politicians, not one European politician objected to cutting food and water and electricity from children. Not one. I'm saying not one leader. Yes, there were a few politicians, a few members of parliament here or there, but not one leader, not one Arab country, let's aside the European countries, not one Arab country of those regimes run by traitors withdrew their ambassadors from Israel or close their embassies with Israel. What is this? What is this hell we're living in? People come to us for analysis. I don't know how to analyze this. I don't know what to say to people. Our hearts are in pain. Our hearts are broken. When we see this world that allows the scenery that we're

seeing in Gaza today, massacre after massacre, after massacre of whole families. 583 children as of this morning, by the time we finish this livestream, the number will have gone up and people are digging in rubble in their bare hands. And this is a world that lectures us about human rights and democracy. I don't know what to say to you Refaat. I don't know as you have said and as Khalil said he doesn't know how to face his children. I don't know how to face you and to face people in Gaza and I don't know how to say to you that I'm sorry we failed.

**Refaat Alareer:**

Thank you Ali. I think we didn't fail. We did not. And that's when it all comes to end. No, we didn't. We didn't submit to the barbarity. We didn't submit to their brutality and even when this attack came when Gaza was in its weakest time possible. Look at what they did to the most invincible army in the area, the fourth strongest army in the world. [Look at] the humiliation, but it's not only about that, this is not where we get our pride. We get our pride from staying principled at a time when everybody is not. I saw a friend you know thrashing somebody saying like he was posting some anti-Semitic stuff on Twitter, replying, you know, with anti-Semitic things, and he was like, don't do this! We're not them. And I was very proud. It is at this time that people, their metal can be tested, and who they are and what their character is like. Those people failed miserably. We didn't. They failed because when it came to the Ukrainians, blond hair, blue eyes, everybody was sending money. Everybody was posting even the Israelis were posting pictures, how to make cocktail Molotovs. How little children are carrying guns and fighting the Russian barbarians.

Politicians sending money, billions of dollars, competing to send billions of dollars to Ukraine, but when it came to people with darker skin, they failed and they failed miserably. And I don't want to say I don't know how they sleep because they don't have a conscience. There is this anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian, anti-Muslim sentiment that is deeply rooted and normalized in the media and among politicians. It's always been there, but it has just been exposed. And I think there has to be this day, this week has to be a time of, you know, reconsideration. Muslims, Arabs, pro-Palestinians free people all around the world, there has to be something that comes out of this, something stronger than before, more powerful, to learn the lesson that those people are unreliable, because some of those even Bernie Sanders, I don't want to name names but they were horrible. I don't want to name any names.

**Asa Winstanley:**

Names the names. Now is the time.

**Refaat Alareer:**

People in the Congress, and everybody saw this, Israel was heading towards a genocide. And you post ten tweets, explaining why what happened from the Palestinians is wrong, for God's sakes. So Ali I think we you didn't fail. We didn't fail as Palestinians. We stayed principled, believing in that we don't want war. We want it to end because only poor innocent people get killed. And the politicians benefit, they get more money, and the companies, the arms – There was somebody posting, the stocks of four

companies, I forgot the names, skyrocketing. And they know this. This is beneficial for them. And for Israel, this is again, it's a cash Gaza. It's a cash cow. In 2014, according to one Israeli economist, more than 70% of the money that came to Gaza reconstruction ended up in Israeli coffers. It's not about money now, this is about displacing and pushing Palestinians to Sinai and to the sea, or killing as many of them as possible or killing all the intellectuals and all the leaders, whoever they are. And then Palestinians and Israelis can live in peace for ten or twenty years. They can. Okay, you can live in peace because there were times when Israel lived in relative peace with the subjects, the Palestinians. But what happens in two decades or three decades?

**Ali Abunimah:**

Refaat, we're supposed to be the ones sending you love and support in Gaza. And you are reassuring us and raising our spirits and we have tough moments and we all do. I'm sure we all have. Our belief in this cause is unshakable. I hate to use that word because it's the word Joe Biden uses for US support for Israel, but truly our faith in this cause is unshakable and we will never give up. We will never give up. And we know that our elders, our parents, grandparents, who lived through the Nakba, who lived through wars, who lived through intifadas, saw things that are just as horrible. We know Israel's history. We think about all of the black pages of history written by Israel, and [yet] they never lost hope, and they never lost the determination. And we won't either. I just want to make that very clear. And thank you.

**Refaat Alareer:**

Thank you, everyone.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

Thank you so much. Refaat, you know, I used to tell people when they were reporting from Gaza, and you know, the 20 years that I've been doing this to please stay safe. And I had some sort of confidence that that held water and I know that nowhere is safe, but please don't take any unnecessary risks. We're with you.

**Refaat Alareer:**

No promises, but I'll do my best. Again, this is what my friend Ahmed posted on Twitter, "everything we did we do, we have in mind that this is going to be our last."

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

It's unbearable.

**Refaat Alareer:**

So hopefully, we'll meet Insha'Allah [God Willing], but if we don't, we've done our best. Thank you very much.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

We love Refaat. Thank you.

**Ali Abunimah:**

Thank you Refaat. God bless you.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

As we catch our breath. That was Refaat Alareer. He's a writer and contributor to The Electronic Intifada. He's an academic whose university was bombed by Israel, a few days ago, classrooms, books, eviscerated, eliminated by Israeli bombs, US supplied Israeli bombs. We're going to bring in our good friend Jon Elmer, longtime journalist, and he has covered the wars inside Gaza and the West Bank and he is my co-host over at the brief podcast. Jon, thank you so much again for being with us.

**Jon Elmer:**

Thanks for having me. I've been listening to that the whole time, Refaat and Khalil. That's tough to follow.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

Yeah. But we do want to have, you know, the kind of analysis that you are known for. For, you know, the next 20 to 30 minutes maybe, just to talk about the military aspect of – Again, it's hard to get the lump out of my throat, but I'll try. We want to talk about what has unfolded on the ground over the last week. What does it mean when Israel is telling people, half of Gaza, 1.1 million people, to evacuate from the north to the south, as though there are safe places anywhere? Of course, the North of Gaza is where al-Shifa hospital is and it's the largest medical facility in all of Gaza. What is it? What are you looking at carefully right now?

**Jon Elmer:**

I mean, that's just, like people said, a ludicrous order that is completely separate from any basic understanding of the Gaza Strip, the number of people, the density, the danger of moving under bombardment. I think people are concerned, you know, as Khalil and Refaat said, that it's propaganda that it's making people exposing military movements. Israel is trying to get intelligence that they clearly don't have, by forcing movements by getting people to break their patterns to try to understand what's going on. I think Israel has gotten itself into this point where it seems as though there's no way and there's not going to be a ground invasion and the Palestinians are ready for that ground invasion and have been ready for years and years for that. I think that as Ali said earlier in the show with Saleh al-Arouri's explanation of what happened on Saturday. Listening to Israeli commentators, nothing like that has happened to Israel in 50 years.

They're trying to find examples of parallels to that. You know, Qassam Brigades fired more rockets in the first two hours of that operation than Hezbollah fired in the entire July war. More Israelis died in that 36 hours than died in the intifada. It was a strategic. Calling it barbaric, the Holocaust, all of this talk is

to divert attention from the devastating strategic failure and success of the Palestinian resistance in this case. And so many years, we talked about, you know, how strong Hezbollah was and how that was the model. And then, over these years, we've seen the capacity of the Qassam Brigades put Israel in a place that I think even Hezbollah must have been surprised by to completely collapse the Southern Command, the Gaza Command, to have captured all of the commanders in the first moments of the attack. Their commanders were in custody of the Qassam Brigades before Netanyahu knew that anything was happening before he'd even gone to the Defense Ministry to oversee the massacres.

And just to step back to the population, the reaction from the civilians in Gaza, honestly, it's the thing that brought me to this work, or at least didn't let me leave the work. The way that the courage that they have on the ground, to open up your computer and see that they're having demonstrations in Gaza, they're protesting in bigger numbers, because they're saying we're not going anywhere. They're standing out in the street, in the hundreds, kids standing out in the streets saying we're not going anywhere, and we will not leave our house. This idea that, you know, Israel can move the Gaza strip to the Sinai, which is the long Zionist dream, that's not going to happen because of the civilian population. It's not a separate thing from the resistance. The civilian population is supporting, you know, like Refaat and Khalil said, they didn't want to get into political issues; you can separate the Qassam Brigades from Hamas as a political party.

The Qassam Brigades as a resistance movement are deeply popular, almost uniformly popular across the Gaza Strip. And what is about to unfold is a humanitarian catastrophe. But it's also a strategic catastrophe for Israel that I believe has the possibility, you know, as the Israelis have said, to change, strategically, the conflict for the next, you know, and to have altered the conflict. And we're seeing just well. We've been on the air in Lebanon. Fighting has increased in Lebanon, and Israel just killed journalists on a live camera shot. The number of journalists killed in Gaza in the last week –

**Ali Abunimah:**

It's now over 10. At least 10. In Gaza.

**Jon Elmer:**

Yeah, the level of courage in the face of that is amazing. And I feel like we needed to talk to Refaat and Khalil and to just be reminded that how unfazed, you know, nobody's panicking, and just the dignified – I don't want to say steadfast, because it's a bit of a cliché, but the steadfastness of people just refusing to be subjugated under any circumstances, including the most brutal circumstances they've lived in their whole lives. And when they're saying that, you know, I lived in Gaza over a number of years during the intifada, and afterwards, and when they're saying that this is worse than ever, they're saying that based on, like, 15 operations, isolated operations, that each time they said were the worst. And so I think that it is hard to do analysis, especially after that human toll. The human toll was explained to us like that, in that honest and articulate way by Khalil and Refaat, and I do see hope in the catastrophe. I do see a Palestinian national movement that's stronger today than when I first encountered it as a teenager.



**Ali Abunimah:**

I just wanted to say that nobody is saying “we give up”. Nobody's saying that. It hasn't happened. It won't happen. And our colleague, Maureen Murphy, in the brilliant roundup she put together last night all the latest events. There is a video of man from Gaza who lost his entire family and it's hard to watch, but his message is very clear. He says, we will never give up and –

**Asa Winstanley:**

I can play that clip, actually.

**Ali Abunimah:**

I think it's worth playing. That's what gives us I think the sense that we cannot be less than the people who are under this horrifying situation that words fail us to comprehend.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

Yeah, let's play that clip.

**Asa Winstanley:**

I mean, what can you say to that? I mean, he's just narrowly survived the bombing of his entire apartment block, and he's called for Netanyahu to bomb him again, if he's a man. You know, we will not leave. They do not know the nature of the Palestinian. He says it all.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

Yeah, I mean, the Zionist project drastically underestimated the resilience and the stubbornness of Palestinians for the last 75 years.

**Asa Winstanley:**

Absolutely. John, I've got a question for you to maybe bring us back a little bit more to your usual analyst mode. But, you know, we've seen, you know, as we said earlier in the stream, I think there's been so many killings in the West Bank recently, in the last few days. It would normally be a major story itself, but it's been almost completely ignored by the Western media. And we've seen today, actually it was yesterday, the Israel's Interior Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, you know, infamously co harnessed, you know, this extremist member of the Israeli cabinet, preparing to distribute up to 20,000 rifles and small arms to settlements in the West Bank. Could you talk about that, and the, you know, your assessment of the current state of the armed resistance in the West Bank?

**Jon Elmer:**

I mean, I think that there's a lot of the sort of calling up reserves and handing out guns. That's part of the national project for the Israelis. It's part of the, you know, bringing people together in the way that they

see that. I think that the settlers are already heavily armed, right. Their settlements are heavily guarded. I'm not sure. I mean, if Israel is in a point where handing out 20,000 small arms is so crucial, I think it shows a failure of the military that has been on display for the last week. I mean, the West Bank settlements are military positions. The settlements in Gaza were military positions. They were built for military purposes, to divide the territory, to have forward operating bases, to have, you know, a beachhead in each individual area and then you connect these; you set it out and then you connect them and that's how the Zionist project has worked. And the settlers have worked hand in hand with the IDF through this whole process because the army gets to claim this sort of arm's length thing. Like, we didn't do it. We just armed them. We just held the Palestinians back while the settlers attack.

But, what it shows, I think, to me is that this vaunted Israeli military that we heard about for our whole lives, and we've watched the Americans pour billions of dollars to build their own weapons industry with American money, the fact that they're so quick to make it seem as though they're handing out guns to individuals to protect themselves because the army just clearly cannot, the fact that the West Bank, it's hard to even keep the numbers straight, because it's happening all the time, but the numbers killed in the West Bank in the last week, were in the 30s, right?

**Ali Abunimah:**

It was 39, this morning. It may well have gone up by now.

**Jon Elmer:**

And that hasn't made the news at all. The fact that that's happening, there's clashes on the border with Lebanon, the concentration of Israeli forces on a ground invasion in Gaza, there's still so much of Israel to there's still so much resistance around in the North, you know, from Lebanon, in the West Bank, the resistance movements that we've covered on the show are significant. And they're not fully participating in something that feels as though Israel is courting that, which I think could, it doesn't seem to me and my assessment that this is a beneficial thing for Israel that they come out ahead in a ground operation in Gaza against the Qassam Brigades who have been dug in for, you know, 15 years preparing for this. Hezbollah has been in the North since, you know, before 2000, but at least since 2006, preparing for the next war.

**Ali Abunimah:**

If they are saying to people "evacuate", you know, million plus people from the north of Gaza, including the whole of Gaza City, the most densely populated part of Gaza. What's their conception? They don't intend to go in and do street to street and house to house fighting. They may think that they're just going to go in and level it all. Is that what you're seeing? What's your sense of the strategy that they have? If at all they have one? We know that most of what we're seeing is just pure bloodlust and vengeance, but to the extent that they have a discernible military strategy, or a strategy to try to foil any preparations the resistance have made. What do you see? What do they have?

**Jon Elmer:**

It's not clear to see, I mean, you're talking about one week removed from the collapse of their Southern Command, and then they're going to within a week prepare for a ground invasion on piles of rubble. They've destroyed so much. They have to move through, you talk about going street to street, I mean, the streets don't even exist anymore. But there are piles of rubble with a tunnel network all underneath them. So when they're saying these open things like we're going to destroy Hamas, like the international community destroyed ISIS or whatever, it's not comparable. It's not the same thing. It's not possible to do for one, for all of the human elements that we've been talking about for the last, you know, hour and 15 minutes, that it's not possible to do that you can't destroy Hamas. You can't destroy a political movement, a guerrilla movement, I mean, you're getting more and more people signing up for these movements that they're claiming to destroy.

I mean, I don't have a good answer for what for what this looks like for Israel. I feel as though just entering the Gaza Strip is going to put their soldiers at very, very significant risk of massive casualties in a conscripted army that just watched how incapable this Gaza fortress that they had built for all these years just for billions and billions of dollars building above and below ground walls, you know only to be destroyed within 30 minutes and then you're relying on conscripted soldiers who are reservists. They're talking about these reservists that are coming from being school teachers. These are not frontline combat troops. These are not the troops that they're sending into Gaza.

**Ali Abunimah:**

John, talk a little bit more, if you can, the structure of the Israeli army because we hear about all these reservists coming up, but they do have a standing army. They do have professional military units. Tell us about, you know, what the capabilities of those are! How big are they? What are they trained to do? Surely they've got some units that are capable of fighting?

**Jon Elmer:**

Oh, they do, absolutely. And they have units that have been training for this operation for, you know, at least a decade. So, I mean, they have 150,000 standing force. So when you talk about calling up 300,000 reserves, you're talking about, you know, double the standing army. I think both of the early fight is going to be special forces on both sides. I think that the bombing is likely to make it easier on the soldiers to see that they cleared out that area. The moving of the civilians is as was said on the show, right? The moving of the civilians is a pretext for Israel to say we did everything that we could do. You had Israeli ministers yesterday talking about Dresden, right, in World War Two where they firebomb the place.

If you're talking about just destroying Gaza, I do believe that Israel has the capacity to do that, but the ability to go in and occupy the territory on top of the tunnel network, on top of the, you know, Abu Obaida said that there was 4500 troops involved in support and directly involved in that operation. That just gives you a clue at how many troops they have at their command. That's just the Qassam Brigades.

There's also other factions. The amount of military force that it would take to destroy competent guerrillas fighting in a tunnel network, it's just not clear to me that that's possible. I don't believe it's possible, and I think that they're about to get hit hard.

**Ali Abunimah:**

And they made a lot of noise over the past few years about how they were inventing tunnel detection technologies. And I think the United States put a lot of money into that with them. Talk about – Can Israel detect tunnels? Can it map out this tunnel network? What could Israel know?

**Jon Elmer:**

No, they can't get proper technology to penetrate the ground to see the depths of the tunnels. They really are completely blind. And since they've been outside and clearly have, they don't even have the human intelligence to see a year and a half planned attack involving 4500 people that completely collapses the Southern Command. They don't have the nitty gritty that's necessary to understand where the tunnels come up and to understand even how much capacity is able to be underground. The military, the bombing is attacking civilians. The resistance has moved underground many years ago. And so I think that the ability for them to withstand the attack, and to continue fighting is immense. And anything that Israel saying about, I don't know, I haven't even really heard them say anything about tunnels in quite a long time because the last war really showed them that there wasn't going to be ground wars where you attack the tunnels because when they come in to deal with a tunnel, there's a tunnel that comes up behind them. And they have a rear flank, that they're fighting.

People are coming up in the buildings that they're in and fighting which, incidentally, is also what happened when the Southern Command collapsed. They built this wall and surveillance network around the Gaza Strip within an automatic machine gun that's manned by somebody in a situation room in Re'im at the main Southern Command base. The Qassam Brigades disabled the gun, and then quite literally went on to the base and fought in the control room of the person who fires that gun that the depth of the collapse of the Israeli system, would you call it technological superiority, this startup nation thing that we, you know, where they mixed military money with technology, they created this thing that costs, you know, billions and billions of dollars that collapsed in minutes. They didn't have the human intelligence; they didn't have the signals intelligence. They didn't know what was going on at that moment. Wow is that going to be different when they're fighting under this, like densely populated rubble in the Gaza Strip? The ground war is going to be awful for people living there. But it's going to be awful for the Israelis there. They stand, I think, to take a big hit.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

Well, we're going to wrap it up by in just a minute. But, Jon, I just wanted to see what you are looking at closely, as we head into the weekend. What should people be aware of be skeptical of? What are you watching?

**Jon Elmer:**

I mean, it seems imminent. At this point, it seems like the Israelis are saying that the ground invasion is coming. You know, Israel has, again, this reserve base that Israel relies upon is, you know, halting their economy. They can't do that indefinitely. Their airports are closed, The economic war, when you call up that many people from your society, it's just that they don't have the ability to withstand the fighting. What we've seen just in chatting today with our friends in Gaza, like that kind of resolve, I'm looking at that and wondering how, yeah, wondering how Israel's going to handle that because it doesn't look promising for Israel. And then you have Hezbollah in the North with the possibility of just expanding the war, like Asa said in the West Bank, the possibility of intifada in the West Bank. These all feel like very real possibilities right now, and in a way that – I think we're all trying to digest something that is of a scale larger than anything that we've seen. And I think that's important to keep in mind because it's hard once we go off the air, and everybody's relying on crappy media. That's almost worse than not listening to anything.

**Asa Winstanley:**

Yeah, well, thank you. Can I just very briefly mention that Seymour Hersh has put out an article which I think I can probably get up on the screen, which kind of confirms some of what you were saying there, Jon, where he's talked to an Israeli, whereas it sounds like it's a retired Israeli spy who used as a source for his famous book in the early 90s, the Samson Option, about Israel's nuclear weapon arsenal. And according to this former Israeli spy, he says, “the reality is that the ground forces are not trained for combat. There is confidence in the spirit of the troops but not in their abilities to succeed in the ground assault in Gaza Strip and reservists, the 300,000 reservists they’re calling up, are undergoing crash training.” So, you know, it speaks to this, the just the simple fact that the Israeli occupation for decades, their primary task has essentially been to bully civilians or not to actually carry out any kind of, you know, military operation against trained determined guerrilla fighters.

**Jon Elmer:**

Yeah, and they've attempted to mirror the trained guerrilla fighters. I mean, they set up units after they got smoked by Hezbollah in 2006. They tried to set up similar units, smaller units, that had the ability to operate somewhat independently when their command and control breaks down, which is what happened on Saturday. They, the Israelis, had no concept of the scale of the attack that what was happening, because they had relied on these tools, rather than their own personal acumen or military acumen, or, yeah, and then just abandoned those communities in the South. And all of Israel watched that. The credibility of the Israeli Army as a partner, you know, in this kind of global empire, which was their, you know, the villa in the jungle idea of the Forward Operating Base that Israel is, has been compromised.

There's deep strategic, the strategic failures and strategic successes by the Palestinians that will reverberate, I think for generations, to study the attack of the ghettoized population, breaking out of the ghetto is something that the entire world, you know, we get crappy news here in the West, but a lot of

people that live in ghettos are looking at that kind of situation. Just the visual liberation of that space that Israel had convinced everybody was impregnable, and that their startup nation, you know, had made them this military power in the world. And all of a sudden –

**Ali Abunimah:**

And I'm just thinking, as I'm listening to Jon, that that, in a sense, explains, I mean, you'd think, okay, well, we can understand, I mean, of course, we can't accept or justify, but we can understand, in a sense, why the Israelis are having this, you know, crisis of panic and rage and vengeance, because it was so unexpected for them, and so overwhelming. But we might think, well, why would the United States and Europe go along with this level of revenge and destruction? And I think in a sense, it's because Israel is a bulwark of their empire. And if Israel goes, then anything can go, because you know, they have all of these client regimes all over the region. And Israel is, in a sense, the jewel in the crown in the region of the American empire. So the vengeance that Israel is meeting out against the Palestinian people, is not just Israel's vengeance alone. It's America's vengeance, it's Germany's vengeance, it's France's vengeance, it's Britain's vengeance for challenging their dying Empire, and they are lashing out like a wounded animal.

That I think is what we're seeing. Because remember, in 2006, Jon, you, of course, know a lot more about this, when Hezbollah humiliated and defeated the Israeli army at that time, and Seymour Hersh, who you just mentioned, but at the time of 2006, Seymour Hersh had written a very important article, explaining that the Americans saw the Israeli attack on Hezbollah as a model for how the United States was going to go after Iran, and Israel was going to destroy Hezbollah, and that would send a message across the region, and then the Americans would be able to do the same elsewhere. And, you know, with a lot of hubris, Condoleezza Rice, the Secretary of State, called it the birth pangs of a new Middle East, a very horrifying kind of terminology. But that's the confidence they had in Israel to show that yeah, we can take on forces like Hezbollah and defeat them. The opposite happened, of course.

But I really think that's part of it here is they need to send a message that if you come after Israel, you're coming after Washington, and we will destroy you because it really shows how fragile their empire is, you know, all this string of American military bases along the Persian Gulf, are extremely vulnerable. And that's a factor when you have the Houthi movement in Yemen, who were able to strike a devastating blow a couple of years ago, at the Saudi oil infrastructure. When the Houthis say we will respond to Israel's attacks on Gaza, I think that that, in a sense, provides an explanation of why America and Joe Biden are so determined to support Israel in this horrifying genocide.

**Jon Elmer:**

And didn't the mask just fall off so quickly? It was all of a sudden that Israel was this weak army that couldn't do anything and Hamas were terrible to civilians, and there was nothing anyone could do to defend themselves after 70 years of propaganda in the opposite way. And then all of a sudden, we find



out that actually all their soldiers are from other countries, and they're saying, oh, you have 29 Americans and 17 British and all of a sudden all –

**Asa Winstanley:**

This was great that Hamas's militarily leader definitely also mentioned in his speech as well.

**Jon Elmer:**

Yeah, I mean, it's impossible to miss, right? Like on Haaretz, they put the foreign soldiers in their own category, like as a separate category outside of the, after all these years of telling, trying to tell us that they're indigenous and that the you know, and even the stories of who was in those settlements, right, like we get the idea that it's all like Holocaust survivors who are out there tilling the fields. Washington correspondent wrote a piece in Haaretz saying that they moved there, him and his family moved there, after the 2014 War, because it was a bit of adventure, they were subsidized, and they wanted to live the dream, right. So they're saying, you know, these truths, I guess you can say these truths, that they're a foreign army, that Israelis hold dual passports, that Israelis immediately asked for airlifts from Canada out of Tel Aviv.

The pathetic nature of that, I don't know what other words to use. Palestinians in Gaza aren't asking for airlifts out of the Gaza Strip, even just rhetorically but Canada's flying warplanes over to bring people who were two weeks ago Israelis and now all of a sudden, they're Canadians. Oh, they're Canadians. They were just going to Israel for their wedding, but they're actually Canadians, but everybody here they're telling that they're Israelis. So it is really, I think one of the surprising things and one of the things that I was watching with surprise, even cynical us! I couldn't believe how fast they went to worst days since the Holocaust. We can't defend our people, even the, you know, beheaded babies and these lies that presume that you have unlimited amount of time to carry out atrocities. Well, where was the army for all of these hours? You know, the army abandoned these people. Are they going to move back into those settlements after they were abandoned by the army?

The position that Israel has put itself in doesn't, I don't see their position improving by the hysterics, and by, you know, coming out and telling the opposite of what they've been telling us for all these years. I just think that's telling in Canada, I get the Canadian news that they find any Israeli that they can find to talk to and they're panicked, they're second guessing their decisions. They're saying we shouldn't have had our wedding here, you know, and then Refaat and Khalil come on, and it's just, like, it's such a different world and the ability to, I mean, just to witness the Palestinians handle this situation just doesn't seem like the war escalating helps Israel. I don't see that. I think that a ground war is going to be devastating to them. And you can only imagine that the Qassam Brigades knew that this was part of their operation that I think, I imagined, that they expected the war to start on Saturday.

They didn't expect the entire Southern Command to collapse. They didn't expect that there wouldn't be war planes in the air, helicopter, gunships, air cover, armored support, that that wouldn't happen for 12

hours or for 24 hours. And then Tuesday night, we're hearing that they're still control these communities, and then Israel evacuates these communities. I mean, how much longer before they're going to evacuate the communities in the North? Things with Hezbollah are ratcheting up. It becomes a little, you know, like a little bit of a spiderweb like Nasrallah said like it, it does look really thin once you get up close to it, and you watch it happening. And it's a bad time to make predictions, of course, because things can happen so fast, but I don't see Israel strategic position as anything but set back decades by this.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

[It is] Jon Elmer here, our good friend, writer, researcher, contributor. And we always appreciate your very grounded, very extensive and thoughtful analysis. Thank you so much. And I did want to just kind of wrap up and just express our gratitude, of course, to our guests, to our friends, to our colleagues, to Tamara the behind the scenes and also to our viewers. There have been a remarkable amount of comments we can't of course address or you know, get to them all. But Asa if you wanted to put up a few of the best of the best. I think that would be –

**Asa Winstanley:**

Yeah, we got some nice comments tonight. Della McGrath says this conversation has both pierced my heart and even more deeply and enlightened me about the horrors. I wish that this could be shared widely throughout the US so that people will wake up and stop killing. So do we, thank you. There's been lots of support for Refaat and Khalil. Thank you Refaat, Ali, Khalil, Nora, Asa and Jon. So, thank you Kaya. Sam Bas says thank you again for your precious time and valuable knowledgeable input on the right side of history, Free Palestine Insha'Allah [God Willing]. Thank you, Sam. Trade Alpha says, can you please have these EI live chats regularly? [It] keeps me sane in this crazy world to hear intelligent humans discuss what is going on. Thank you, Trade Alpha . Yeah, we're trying to do these for as long as possible.

**Ali Abunimah:**

And you know what, it keeps us sane too because as you can see, we need to be reassured by Refaat and Gaza of all people. So I mean, the truth is, this is, you know, we can't compare our situation to that of the people in Gaza, but the truth is, this is hard for all of us. There are moments of elation. And there are moments of where we really feel deeply the pain of seeing so much horror and suffering and so the fact that we come together like this, and with so many supporters and readers and listeners, it keeps us sane too. It really does. So thank you so much for joining us.

**Asa Winstanley:**

The last comment I wanted to read was of course we need to donate \$\$ to The Electronic Intifada. Absolutely, Magdi, thank you very much. For all our viewers and listeners tonight, if you want to keep up with our daily written updates and all our updates, go to [electronicintifada.net](http://electronicintifada.net) and click on the top left and you can sign up to our mailing list. And you can go to the same address, [www.electronicintifada.net](http://www.electronicintifada.net), and click donate now on the top right.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

Thank you, everybody. And once again, we appreciate you. We're grateful for all the support.

**Ali Abunimah:**

We'll be back soon. we'll do another live stream so now when you sign up for the mailing list, for the email list, you'll not only get our daily newsletter with all our headlines, but we will send out an email letting you know when a live stream is coming up so that you won't miss it.

**Nora Barrows-Friedman:**

It's great. Thanks, Ali. All right, everybody, thank you again and we will see you next time. Take care!