

# Palestinian Resistance from the PLO to Hamas

[Kathleen Densmore] (0:04 - 0:54)

My name is Kathleen Densmore, I'm with Voices for Justice in Palestine, and along with friends of the Mount Diablo Peace and Justice Center and the Peace Center itself, the three organizations bring you our program today. And the program is on Palestinian resistance. And it is really great to see so many people who want to learn about this, want to learn more about this, want to compare what we've heard and read about Hamas to what people who've studied Hamas for years have to say about it.

So thank you for coming, and at this point I'll turn it over to Rick. Okay, Rick.

[Rick Sterling] (0:54 - 3:43)

Hi, everybody. My name is Rick Sterling, and today's event is also being sponsored by the friends of the Mount Diablo Peace and Justice Center. And we're happy you're all here today.

We're very happy to have with us today Helena Cobban. Helena grew up in the U.K., went to Oxford University, migrated to the Middle East, spent seven years in Lebanon at a critical period, writing for various publications, Christian Science Monitor, doing reporting for the BBC, ABC, and other publications. She became very much aware of the Palestinian resistance because there's a huge Palestinian population in Lebanon, of course.

And then later on she went to Harvard on a research project which produced her authoritative book, *The Palestine Liberation Organization*. At some point along the way she married her husband, William Quant, who is a professor at the University of Virginia, and we're happy to have Bill with us today as well. Where is he?

Oh, there he is. Okay. So happy to have Bill and also Helena's friend Zaina.

So welcome to them, to the Bay Area, and to Walnut Creek. So Helena, I know Helena because she invited me to join the board of the Just World Educational, and I was happy to do that, and I've seen how, what a dynamo she is. She really makes things happen, and she's also the founder of Just World Books.

How many people here have read *The General's Son*? Lots of people. Helena's publishing house is the publisher of that outstanding book.

She's done a lot of, they've got an amazing collection of titles from Gaza, *Gaza Writes Back*. Some of those authors from Gaza are now dead, tragically, and so she's got intimate knowledge of that. And today she's going to be talking about the series of interviews and discussions that was recently hosted by Just World Educational on Hamas.

It was called *Understanding Hamas and Why That Matters*. The latter part is important. Why does it matter?

So without any more, I'll be happy to turn it over to Helena Colvin.

[Helena Cobban] (3:51 - 6:03)

Thanks, Rick, and thank you to everybody on the various wonderful peace committees you have up here for inviting me. This is my second time at Rossmore, and first time I was talking about Ukraine and the need for a ceasefire in Ukraine, and now here I am talking about Gaza and the need for a ceasefire in Gaza. Rick did mention, well, he made indirect mention of my friend Refaat Alareer, who was a professor of English literature at Gaza Islamic University, and it is the case that Refaat Alareer, whose only two books I published was killed by the Israelis on December the 6th, along with many of his colleagues from the faculty of the Islamic University of Gaza and from Gaza's nine other universities, all of which have been leveled to the ground through explosives and bulldozers quite deliberately, not because of war damage or whatever. So I'd like to just start with a moment of silence for all the casualties of this horrible writing. So before we proceed further, I actually am really happy to recommend and to have Rick here organize the showing of a very short video about Hamas that was made by my friend and colleague Dr. Sara Roy, who has done a lot of work on Gaza in particular, including what she calls the Israelis' de-development of Gaza. But she has also interviewed Hamas people, and as the daughter of two Holocaust survivors, she has really taken a remarkable journey and really taken up the challenge of speaking up for Palestinian rights. So this is a short video, and then I will get into my presentation.

[Sara Roy] (6:09 - 10:34)

Hamas itself is a far more pragmatic movement than its typical representation in the West. And Hamas' election was not based on a belief or a desire on the part of the Palestinians to see an Islamic government in Palestine. Absolutely not.

Hamas' election was, one, a vote against the corruption and betrayal, as Palestinians thought, of the Fatah government during the ISIL period, and was also a result of a party platform, a political platform, that promised change and reform, that promised some very real and pragmatic changes in the lives of Palestinians. So it was twofold. And several people have written about Hamas, and I myself am completing a book now.

If you look at the history of this organization, since its inception 20 years ago, you see that this is not a group that is the same by any stretch of imagination as the Taliban or the kinds of government you would see in Iran. To the contrary, in fact, interviews with Hamas officials over the years have shown, and they themselves have made a point of emphasizing to me, that they are not like the Taliban and like these groups. And if you look at their political platform, and you look at what they've been saying for the last 20 years, they have, of course, matured.

They have grown, and they have become a far more sophisticated and far more complicated organization than they were when they began. In the final analysis, whether we like it or not, it's clearly not up to us to like it or dislike it, but Hamas is a part of this landscape. It's a part of this society.

And through its social service work in Gaza and the West Bank, especially in Gaza, they have played an increasingly important role in society. And unlike many of the secular political movements, the secular nationalist movements during the Assad period, they maintained their ties to the grassroots. A lot of these groups cut them for various reasons.

And that's made very consistent and very deeply connected to the community and to society. And, you know, of course, people say this is elated by political support, and they promote their ideological vision and so on and so forth. But Palestinians aren't that stupid.

People are not going to support an Islamic state because they receive relief assistance from an Islamic organization. It's a little bit more complicated than that. And in the final analysis, I just want to say they are elected, they have been elected by the Palestinians.

They are a part of the political and social landscape. And if we want to see a resolution, they have to be incorporated into any kind of political process. They are a part of that society, and it's certainly not up to the American government or the Israeli government to decide who is acceptable on the Palestinian side to talk to.

When you talk to the representatives of that group, it's like Palestinians coming and saying, well, we don't like George Bush. We're offended by him, so we're not going to negotiate with the Iraqis. It's the same sort of thing.

These people have been elected. They have made it clear that they are willing to talk, which is precisely the reason, I believe, that they are being continually demonized. It's not because Israel and the West believe that they cannot talk to Hamas.

It's because they know they can.

[Helena Cobban] (10:34 - 11:20)

I should have said before we showed the Sarah Roy interview that that was filmed in 2008, shortly after, well, two years after Hamas won the legislative elections in Palestine. So anyway, I'm going to take us through a very quick tour of Palestinian resistance since 1948, as it happens. First of all, I just wanted a show of hands.

Anybody here think it's okay for people under military occupation to use all means necessary to resist that occupation?

[Speaker 7] (11:20 - 11:21)

Sure, yeah.

[Helena Cobban] (11:22 - 47:24)

Yeah, some people think that's okay, good. And anybody here think it's okay for people who are the targets and subjects of colonialism to resist colonialism with whatever means they have at hand? Now, we've got some good hands. We're off to a great start. Gaza. Gaza has always been the crucible of Palestinian resistance in the modern era.

So what happened in 1947-48 was that the Israelis, they weren't even Israelis, they were Zionist militias, had this plan called Plan Galit to ethnically cleanse every area that they could control, which was considerably more than the United Nations had given to them, to ethnically cleanse as many of the indigenous Palestinians as possible. And that was the origin of the Palestinian refugee problem. Today, you find large concentrations of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, but most of all in Gaza, where something like 70-75% of the population of Gaza, which is 2.3 million, or was 6 months ago 2.3 million, something like 75% of them are either refugees or

the descendants of refugees. And under international law, the descendants of refugees have the same rights as their predecessors, their ancestors, including the rights to the properties and farms that their ancestors were ethnically cleansed from. And I just want to keep this kind of timing in mind, because in 1945, thank God, the scourge of Nazism was eliminated from Europe, and ever since then and until today, Jewish people and other people whose property was seized by the Nazis have been able to retrieve it and recover it. And I have friends who have properties in Czechoslovakia, as it then was, now Czechia or whatever, and they can go back to their properties.

That was a resolution agreed upon in 1945, and yet the Palestinians who were chased out of their homes in 1947-48 have not been able to regain their homes and properties, real property, inside what is now 1948 Israel. So I think that's worth keeping in mind, because Gaza has this very intense concentration of refugees, much more than the West Bank, which is the other part of occupied Palestine. And those refugees from the late 40s through the 1950s were seething with desire to return to their homes and properties.

And that was the origin, really, of the Palestinian guerrilla movement that arose in the late 1950s. And as it happens, I did write a book about this, and you can find the book. It's actually in the public domain, so you'll find the reference to it on the handout that I gave you.

So I need to go through that whole thing. You can read it all online. Cambridge University Press did that to me.

They just put it in the public domain, and I'm no longer getting royalties. I don't know how that works. Anyway, that's all right.

I'm glad it's out there. So, Gaza as an incubator for Fatah. So the main Palestinian resistance movement was called Fatah, which is an acronym, a reverse acronym, for the movement of the...

Palestinian Liberation Movement, but it's called Fatah. And that was headed for a long time by Yasser Arafat, and you'll find lots and lots of information about that in my book. So they started that in Gaza.

They also, because there were so many refugees in Gaza, and they started to get really good education through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and UNICEF, they started to get good jobs. Well, jobs, you know, jobs in the Gulf countries. So you've always found a lot of Palestinians in the Gulf countries, specifically Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia.

And Fatah from the very beginning had strong cells and roots in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates and Qatar and Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, as well as in Gaza. And then they had other people in the West Bank and in the refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, and so on. So the PLO is kind of the umbrella organization for Palestinian representation.

It was founded in 1964. Now, does anybody here know, apart from my husband, what was the body that founded the PLO? Okay, it was the Arab League.

It was the League of Arab States, who after the... Well, I'll back up. They founded it.

Just let's leave it at that. And then you have the 1967 war, which was a huge defeat for the Arab states, for all the Arab states, militarily and politically, you know, regarding their standing at home. And at that point, these guerrilla groups, Palestinian, indigenous Palestinian guerrilla groups, took over the PLO in 1968-69.

And they've been running it, well, Fatah and its allies, most of whom are very secular, although Fatah also has strong Islamist trend within it, so that they're all pretty secular. And they took over the PLO. And then they ran their guerrilla war somewhat in the West Bank in the years 1968-69.

And then the Israelis chased them out of the West Bank, and they went to Jordan, and they were very active in Jordan. And I guess we're all, more or less, all of us, old enough to remember when there were, like, the big airplane hijackings. And then the Kera incident at the Munich Olympics in 1972.

All of those were essentially done by Fatah and its affiliates. And then they got chased out of Jordan in 1970-71, and that period is called Black September. So this organization, this Fatah-affiliated organization that did all that terrorism in the early 70s was called the Black September Organization.

So fast forward a little bit more. They got chased out of Jordan, went to Lebanon, and that's where I encountered them as a very young journalist in the mid-1970s. I interviewed people up and down all these organizations, from the leaders to the grassroots organizers to the women organizing kindergartens, all kinds of different activities that Fatah and its affiliates set up in Lebanon.

Then in 1982, the Israelis invaded Lebanon and had a terrible war and managed, through that war, to get a ceasefire agreement with the PLO under which the PLO would exit Lebanon. And this was all negotiated by the Reagan administration. And the PLO agreed that all its fighters would leave Lebanon on the basis of a guarantee from President Reagan for the well-being of the Palestinian civilians left behind in Lebanon.

And then, within about three or four weeks of that, the Israelis came and committed the massacres at Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. So the word of the United States on that occasion was worth nothing. So after the PLO and Fatah had been expelled from Lebanon, that's when I wrote my book.

I had a fellowship in Harvard, and I came and wrote my book on the PLO. And one of my main conclusions was that this idea of combating Israel and regaining the Palestinians' rights through guerrilla activity launched either from within the West Bank and Gaza or from surrounding countries was going nowhere because there were no active guerrilla movements anywhere around Israel. When the PLO evacuated, some of them went to Tunis, some of them went to Yemen, which you know is a very long way away.

So one of my conclusions was that the center of gravity of the nationalist movement is going to shift from the Palestinians who are in the diaspora communities to the Palestinians who remained inside the homeland in the occupied West Bank and Gaza and to a certain extent

inside 1948 Israel, where today roughly 22% of the citizens of Israel are actually indigenous Palestinians. They are not Jewish immigrants. But these days they're keeping their heads down and they are subject to really terrible, just terrible crackdowns by the Israeli authorities.

So we don't hear much about the Palestinians who are that small section of Palestinians who are citizens of Israel. But after 1983, after 1982, 83, when the PLO got expelled from Lebanon, we started to hear a lot about new forms of resistance that the Palestinians who were still living in their homeland in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and occupied Gaza Strip were mounting against the Israeli occupation. So in 1987, we saw this phenomenon called the First Intifada, which was...

Now I'm going to try and connect everything up. So here we go. 1987 is when we had the First Intifada broke out, and that's when we start to meet Hamas.

So prior to 1987, there had been something called the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, which was affiliated with all the Muslim brotherhoods that are like in Jordan and Egypt and Syria and the whole region. There's this network of organizations called Muslim Brotherhood, which they take on different colorings depending where they are. And until 1987, the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, which was led by somebody called Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, they were very focused on trying to get members of the Palestinian Muslim community to live a righteous life.

So I'm a Quaker, and I find this very familiar in Quakerism, and it's definitely maybe amongst Catholic orders of nuns and monks. Some of them just want to live the righteous life, and some of them want to be out there and be active. And maybe it takes all kinds to make a good Quaker meeting, for example.

So from, let's say, the 1970s onward, the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood was very focused on spreading the idea of living a righteous life and on building social service networks, all kinds of really rich, grassroots social service networks. In late 1987, when the first Palestinian Intifada against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza broke out, the Muslim Brotherhood decided to form a kind of political organization called the Islamic Resistance Movement, Harakat al-Muqawwama al-Islamiyya, Hamas for short. The word Hamas also means zeal, in case you're interested.

So then in August 1988, they issued their first charter, and it was a fairly anti-Semitic document. But, as I said here, they kind of drew a direct line from the Crusader kingdoms in Palestine of the 11th to 13th centuries of the Common Era down to the Israeli state of today. So then the first Intifada kind of went on and on for a number of years.

Overwhelmingly, it was non-violent resistance to the occupation, but there were also armed actions during the first Intifada. And then in September 1993, the PLO, led by Yasser Arafat, signed the Oslo Accords with Israel, which created the Palestinian Authority, which is now located, headquartered in Ramallah. So under the Oslo Agreements, Israel and the PLO both agreed to finish their negotiations by mid-1999 for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the occupied territories.

So that should have happened by 1999. We should have had the final agreement in place, and maybe it would take two or three years to implement, but it would be well on its way by the turn of the century. Hamas had been strongly opposed to the whole Oslo process, largely because it did involve, from the get-go, explicit recognition of the state of Israel, which they were not ready to give and not willing to give.

So along the way there in February 1994, an Israeli settler called Baruch Goldstein, went on an armed rampage in Hebron's ancient mosque, killing 29 worshippers. In response to that, Hamas started sending suicide bombers against civilian targets in Israel. And at that time, Fatah helped Israel to crack down on Hamas.

But I've got a lot of Israeli friends who remember that period of the Hamas suicide bombings. What they don't remember is what happened before that, the massacre of the worshippers in the mosque in Hebron. So anyway, by 2000, it was clear that Oslo's promise of an independent Palestinian state had failed, and Israel, in the meantime, over those preceding seven years, seized a whole lot more land in the West Bank, and crucially also, they created roads and a lot of infrastructure that made quite clear that they were going to stay there.

So in September of 2000, the second Intifada erupted. This was spearheaded, I want to say, by Hamas and its allies, but it also included many grassroots organizations from Fatah who were really disappointed and felt that their leaders had betrayed them. And Israel's prime minister, Sharon, responded very harshly to that.

But in the end, he figured that the best way to actually play divide and rule, I mean, I grew up in England. I know exactly how colonial powers do this. You play one side off against the other.

So in 2005, he pulled the Israeli settlers and soldiers out of the interior of the Gaza Strip without negotiating it with anybody, and of course, the PA people, by that time, Yasser Arafat, he was kind of dying at that same time. They had wanted to be negotiated with and were not. So instead, Sharon pulled the settlers and soldiers out of the interior of the Gaza Strip.

And Fatah was actually in deep crisis at this point because Arafat was dying and then he died, and he was the historic leader, although he had many faults. He had a kind of credibility that nobody has had inside Fatah since then, most certainly not the man who replaced him, whose name is Mahmoud Abbas Abu Mazen. So Fatah was in crisis because Sharon had not negotiated this withdrawal with them, but had just done it unilaterally.

And so Fatah and the U.S. and Sharon agreed to hold new elections for the PA parliament. So the PA is this supposedly interim body that was established in 1994. In fact, its full name is the Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Authority.

So it's supposed to be an interim prior to the Palestinians' attainment of their national independence. So it has a parliament, and I've got lots of friends who are in the parliament. They had the elections for the parliament in January 2006, and crucially Hamas was invited to run in the elections, which was interesting.

So that was the George Bush administration who negotiated with Hamas indirectly to have them participate in the elections. So they were invited to do so, and they agreed to do so. So those are two really interesting things that happened around those elections, and the elections were held in January 2006.

There were monitors from the Carter Center here and from the European Union and from various election monitoring bodies. And to the complete surprise of the Israelis and the Americans, Hamas won those elections, which takes us to what Sarah Roy was saying about Hamas having won the elections. They ran under the name of something called the Change and Reform Party, but everybody knew they were Hamas.

They were very well organized, and a lot of women voted for them. I'm happy to talk more about Hamas' attitudes towards women if you want to hear about that in the Q&A, because I've done quite a lot of work back in the day when I was more active as a reporter. I spent some time with Hamas' women networks in Gaza.

So Hamas agreed to join the elections, and then they won. So Israel, Fatah, and the U.S. government were horrified, and they started immediately planning a coup to overthrow the PA's newly elected prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh. I went to Gaza.

I was doing some reporting down there, and I interviewed Haniyeh. I interviewed a lot of people right after the elections. It was a fascinating time to be there.

He tried to make a kind of broad government of national unity, of which he would be the prime minister, or he was even prepared to have somebody else be the prime minister, but the Fatah leaders were completely opposed, as was Israel and as was our government. So they immediately started planning this coup to overthrow Haniyeh, and in 2007, Hamas' security police preempted the coup in Gaza. They kept control of civilian life there, while Fatah and the PA kept control of civilian life in their tiny portions of the West Bank, which has been made into a series of little, like the holes in Swiss cheese, because there's so much surrounded by the Israeli settlers and the settlement infrastructure.

So that administrative split continues, and of course successive Israeli governments, including the present one, have worked really super hard to try to keep that split going in pursuit of divide and rule. So in 2007, at that exact time that the split happened, Israel started its tough siege of Gaza, which has continued until now, so that is, gosh, how many years? 17 years.

17 years of very tight siege. And they've punctuated this with periodic, harsh military assaults that they call, and I find this an obscene name, mowing the lawn. With the idea that the grass is going to grow again, and in another five years they're going to have to do another one.

And if you've read the book *Gaza Writes Back*, that was edited by my friend Refaat Alareer, that contains many just really poignant short stories written by young writers in Gaza in response to, I think it was Operation Cast Lead of 2008, 2009. So we have these periodic assaults. Then in May 2017, the Hamas leaders adopted a new revised charter with some key changes from the 1988 version.



It removed all anti-Semitic language. It was much more focused on Palestinian political issues and less focused on piety and religious issues. And it opened the door a tad toward accepting a two-state solution.

It also stressed that Hamas is now quite separate from the Muslim Brotherhood. And the reason to do that is because in Egypt, Egypt has the only land border with Gaza. And it's a small land border, but it's very important for the people of Gaza to have that land border.

And Egypt, the present Egyptian government, is extremely opposed to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement. So that's why Hamas is saying, no, we're nothing to do with the Muslim Brotherhood. No, no, no, no, no.

And indeed, they do have periodic negotiations and actually a lot of business dealings with the Egyptian government at this point. And as you probably know, the Egyptians are one of the two key interlocutors in the current negotiations over a ceasefire. They are the two parties that talk directly to the Hamas leaders.

So I know when I've done a talk of this nature before, people want to know what was Hamas doing on October 7th. And if you go to our... the online learning hub, and I hope you all have the little handout, on that online learning hub that we created, and we put it up just a few weeks ago, about understanding Hamas and why that matters.

We did a really good conversation with somebody called Dr. Azam Tamimi, who is close to Hamas. Historically, he was even closer than he is now, I think. He's located in London.

And we asked him what Hamas was thinking on October 7th. And basically, it came down to the idea that what they were doing was a military occupation... sorry, operation against military targets.

And it's absolutely true, if you look at where they were going for the first hours of this operation on October 7th. First of all, they blinded the entire surveillance system that the Israelis had created around Gaza. If you think of Gaza as a concentration camp, which essentially it is, because that's where, after the ethnic cleansing of 1948, the Palestinians had been concentrated into Gaza.

And then they were given no future. And it's become more and more of a concentration camp ever since. So this was the surveillance system.

They blinded that. I mean, I have to say, the Palestinians of Gaza are extremely smart. You know, in many ways.

Like, they're poets. There's a poet called Fadi Joudah, whose poetry you must read, almost like Musaab Abu-Toha. I mean, these people have such smarts and such sensitivity and such understanding, including of how to break out of the concentration camp.

So first of all, they blinded the surveillance systems, and then they had learned how to go to the key military outposts around Gaza, which they managed to conquer within very short time, like three or four hours. Because the Israeli military had kind of... They thought that the surveillance systems would keep the Palestinian militants of Gaza contained.

And in fact, I mean, I have a friend who's written a book called Gaza Contained. A lot of people prior to October 7th thought that... No, no, no, Hamas contained.

And it's a good book by Dr. Tareq Baconi They thought, the Israeli military thought that Hamas was contained in Gaza. So the breakout...

Oh, so the Israeli military planners were extremely like, oh, let's go and prepare for something on the Lebanon border. Let's send soldiers to support the settlers in the West Bank. Gaza's okay.

Hamas is contained. We don't need to really... So they'd actually moved a lot of people out of there, and they were not watching what was happening.

Hamas was watching. Hamas was watching as the readiness of the Israeli military around Gaza, in what the Israelis call the Gaza envelope, which is the region that is meant to envelop Gaza. Hamas was watching the Israeli military readiness just go down and down and down.

And then they broke out, and they took over the headquarters of the Gaza Command, of the Southern Command, and they took the leaders and many of the officers of these important command positions with them back to Gaza. I mean, when they were taking hostages, their main goal was to take military hostages, because that's what the Israelis will really negotiate over. But I think...

I have described what happened on October 7th from Hamas's point of view as a catastrophic success, because they actually breached that border wall in more than 40 places. So all these people... You can call them the hoi poloy of Gaza.

You know, they've been living this really crappy life for the past 17 years, or the past 77 years, however you like to look at it, under military occupation since 1967, and suddenly the concentration camp walls are broken down. They rushed out. And you can see the successive waves, how first of all it was the very organized and disciplined Hamas, it actually had popular front people coming out on paragliders, on motor scooters, organized groups going directly to their military target, seizing the military target, taking the military people back to Gaza.

And then you see the hoi-poloi of Gaza coming out with their pickup trucks, and they did a lot of looting. They knew that one of the orders of the day was to capture hostages, so they captured whoever, you know? Let's take hostages.

They were very undisciplined. And so as a result, like of the hostages who are in Gaza now, well, the women, most of the women who were not military women, and nearly all of the children were released in the hostage exchange of late November, which was negotiated between Israel and Hamas with the mediation of Egypt, Qatar, and the United States, and which was successful. It actually resulted in the freeing of 105 Israeli hostages.

And then the ceasefire broke down, and since then, the Israeli government has not wanted to have another ceasefire because they have just been intent on leveling the whole of Gaza and starving its people in what is clearly a deliberate campaign of starvation. So I think I'm

going to leave it there, except I have one paragraph I want to show you, which I find really interesting. Yeah, this was an opinion poll taken.

It's a periodic opinion poll taken every three months by this organization based in Ramallah called the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research. So these are two of the three of their regular opinion surveys, and I just found this about a month ago. And if you look over on the right, so the question is, now I will ask you about several Palestinian actors and whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with their performance in the current war, and these are the figures for satisfied.

Over on the left, you have the total between the West Bank and Gaza. Then you have the West Bank, and then over on the right, you have the Gaza numbers. So in early December, 52% were satisfied with the performance of Hamas, which is blue.

And in early March, that had gone up to 62%. So to me, this is fascinating. And then the numbers for Fatah and President Abbas are the gray and the yellow much lower.

So it's fascinating because I've seen interviews with Israeli strategic specialists who say, you know, it's a pity what we are forced to do to the civilians in Gaza and to the civilian infrastructure. We can have normal lighting now. It's a pity what we're forced to do, but the goal is that when the Palestinians, when the Gaza Palestinians are able to go back and see the ruins of their homes, the ruins of their schools, of their hospitals, their bakeries, when they go back and see the level of ruination, that they will turn away from Hamas.

And between December and March, the exact opposite happened because the Palestinians of Gaza, as Sarah Roy said, they're not stupid. They know who's been destroying the schools and the hospitals and the universities and the bakeries and the homes, the homes that carry them, you know, the memories of whole families. So I'll just leave it by saying that it's really important for us as Americans to understand the history of Hamas, the position of Hamas within the Palestinian resistance movement, and to understand that the Palestinian resistance movement has a lot of different strands in it, but a very important one is Hamas.

So that's it.

[Rick Sterling] (47:33 - 50:23)

Thank you very much, Helena. We'll be getting to the Q&A very shortly, but first I wanted to do a couple things. One is to invite people to support Judge World Educational, and we encourage people to go to the website and look at it and see the work that Helena and the other, that organization is doing.

So we're going to pass around a basket, and we've got somebody on this side, and I think, Dottie, could you pass around the back? Yeah, Dottie or Bob, on that side over there. And also, yeah, maybe on that side there, Bob, please.

And please go to the website and look at the depth of the material there, and also consider making a donation online if you support the work and you support what Helena is doing. The other thing that we're going to do today, and we're trying to combine a little bit of... This is mostly an educational event, of course, for Ross Moorer and other brands, but we also want to sometimes encourage people to do some action.

So we've got an open letter, a petition, that's going to our state representatives and to the congressman from Walnut Creek, and I'll just read it out here. It's very short. It's only about eight sentences.

I'll read it out so that you know what you're signing. If you want to sign it, or if you don't want to, you know what it says. And it says, Dear Senator Padilla, Senator Butler, and Representative DeSaulnier, The recent killing of 274 Palestinians, including dozens of women and children to rescue four Israeli hostages, is symptomatic of how atrocious this conflict has become.

Instead of agreeing to a ceasefire, Israel attacked and killed hundreds of innocents, including at least one Israeli hostage. We are outraged the Biden administration and Congress have made us complicit in Israel's war crimes. We call on you to do everything you can to stop this atrocity.

No more weapons or any support to Israel. Do not attend or stand up for Netanyahu if or when he comes to Congress. So it's pretty short.

It's to the point. And if you want to sign it, we would encourage it. And we can just pass it around along the front row and then backward.

No, no, I don't think so. I don't think so. It can be for anybody.

But we will be sending it to those three people.

[Speaker 6] (50:24 - 50:26)  
And what was her question?

[Rick Sterling] (50:27 - 50:42)  
She was asking if only constituents should sign it. And I don't think that's necessary. So let's see.

I think on to Q&A. And I'll turn it back over to Kathleen.

[Kathleen Densmore] (50:43 - 51:58)  
Okay, Q&A. How we thought we would do this. Well, we thought we would try to get in as many questions as possible.

And all questions are fine. I don't know enough to ask a good question. Whatever question you have, please ask.

We'd like to get in as many as possible. So a short, concise question is best. Those are most welcome.

Now, if you have a question, but you'd like to preface it with a statement, you know, that's often the case, that is fine. We can learn from statements from you as well. The only restriction is you need to keep the statement within two minutes.

Okay? So this is a good brain exercise, nice and concise thinking. You know your two statements and then bam, a question.

If you go on, you'll be cut off. Hopefully politely. But we do that so everybody can get a chance.

Okay, so if I could see hands. And why don't we start right here in the front row and speak right into the mic, please.

[Speaker 11] (51:59 - 52:15)

I don't know if I get two questions, but maybe... One is, why doesn't Hamas release the other hostages as a goodwill gesture? And the other is, well, what next?

How can there be... Is the two-state solution the best thing? I don't understand.

[Helena Cobban] (52:17 - 56:30)

Very concise. So why doesn't Hamas release the other hostages? Because there are, you know, more than 8,000 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails.

So the goal of... One of the major goals of the October 7th operation was to take military people as hostages. Those are held.

Those military, including the very high-level military hostages, are probably held very close to the Hamas leaders, and they're not going to be released absent a very broad release agreement that includes the thousands of Palestinians who are held, many of them without trial, in Israeli prisons. And you have to also remember that hundreds, possibly thousands of Gaza men, predominantly, have been picked up off the streets and are being held in horrible situations in this place called Sidi Touman. So there has to be an exchange.

But the other part of this is what happens to the governance of Gaza and the rebuilding of Gaza after all this intentionally directed Israeli destruction in Gaza. This is not like the previous mowing-the-lawn operations, after which there was a ceasefire, and then the Palestinians of Gaza got back to running their schools and their universities, their bakeries, their businesses. And there was some rebuilding was needed, but it was affordable, and actually the Europeans and the Japanese and, to a certain extent, maybe our government came in with aid to rebuild portions of Gaza, certainly Arab states did.

And all that rebuilding material had to go in through Israel, and Israeli contracting companies made a huge amount of money out of it. So that's one thing. But this time, the task is very, very much larger.

It's exponentially larger, to rebuild the whole of the infrastructure of the Gaza Strip. And no Palestinian that I know would be happy to have the same arrangement of the aid going in through Israel and Israeli companies and middlemen making a lot of money out of it. So from that point of view, the rebuilding will be huge.

It has to be done not under Israeli control. It has to be done under the control of the United Nations. And one thing that I've been writing since November is that this will actually constitute the end of Israel's 57-year-old occupation of the Gaza Strip.

Because if you can have it happen under UN control, that's very different from American control, by the way, then Israel's stranglehold over Gaza can end. Gaza was historically, in antiquity and indeed until 1967, well known for its port. Prior to 1967, the whole of the Gaza Strip was a free trade area for Egypt, and economically bustling.

So the port, once you can have the end of Israel's control of the maritime border, then Gaza can be reopened to the world. That's in a nutshell. Of course, there are still massive questions about the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

[Kathleen Densmore] (56:30 - 56:35)

Thank you. Okay, one more question. This side of the room, and then we'll take two from that side of the room.

[Speaker 12] (56:37 - 56:46)

As a Quaker, I'm wondering if you mentioned that it had been a nonviolent movement at one point, but I'm wondering if you think that could have been viable.

[Helena Cobban] (56:50 - 1:01:08)

You know, I went and did a lot of research in the West Bank and Gaza during the First Intifada, which was overwhelmingly nonviolent. And it was very inspiring to see people try to create community networks for agriculture or for medical relief, and just not use Israeli military services for anything. And they suffered very badly from it.

What it resulted in was Oslo, which most Palestinians now think that Oslo, of course, was just a betrayal of their national movement. So you could say that nonviolent, when you talk to a lot of Palestinians about nonviolent resistance, they kind of say, well, we tried that and it ended up in Oslo, so it was no use. Except that in 2018, grassroots organizations in Gaza who were very, very frustrated with the repeated Israeli military assaults on Gaza said, let's try and mount a massive nonviolent campaign to retrieve our rights.

So they founded something called the Great March of Return in 2018. And it went on for months. Basically, every Friday after Friday prayers, people would stream towards the border, totally unarmed and nonviolent, with flags and banners and say, we want to go to our grandfather's home, we want to go home.

And the Israelis positioned snipers on those earth berms all around Gaza and sniped them in the legs. So I think they killed, actually, north of 200 nonviolent resisters in the Great March of Return. And they made thousands of amputees.

There are entire football clubs in Gaza that are made up of amputees who play soccer. So I think that they tried, is all we can say. And what's happening now is just unbelievable suffering for the people of Gaza.

But my reading of those opinion polls is that it's actually very similar to the Viet Cong. The Vietnamese people suffered under French and even more under American military assault. I mean, we tend to forget the whole Agent Orange thing, Operation Phoenix, everything that was inflicted on the people of Vietnam.

And essentially, they stuck by the Viet Cong. They stuck by the North Vietnamese and their demand for national independence. And, you know, that's how most countries in the Third World, in the Global South, attained their independence from colonialism.

I mean, people love to talk about Gandhi and, like, why can't the Palestinians be like Gandhi and just do it with salt marches and nonviolent this and that? Gandhi succeeded during a particular time in the history of the British Empire when the British Empire was totally exhausted and falling apart. You know, so from that perspective, you could say he was kind of lucky.

Nowhere else in the Global South that I know of have people won their national independence using wholly nonviolent means.

[Speaker 12] (1:01:09 - 1:01:10)  
Well, Martin Luther King...

[Helena Cobban] (1:01:11 - 1:01:13)  
Well, he's not in the Global South. Yeah.

[Kathleen Densmore] (1:01:13 - 1:01:27)  
No, but the similar things. Well... Years and years of subjugation.

So, Helena, why is it important to think in terms of the Global South? Oh, good question.

[Helena Cobban] (1:01:28 - 1:02:43)  
Because of, you know, Western imperialism and Western hegemony of the world system that most... Like, the white nations of the world constitute today roughly 12% of humankind, which is roughly the same percent that the white citizens of South Africa constituted back in the days of apartheid. So the idea that white people...

Like, I grew up in England. I grew up in England in an era of decolonization. You know, when practically every week a new country in Africa or Asia or wherever would, you know, haul its flag up and the British governor general would leave.

And that's how things should be. Like, you know, people in those countries should be ruling themselves. And I like that thing that Sara Roy was saying. Like, it's not up to us to determine who should represent the Palestinians. It wasn't up to us to determine, you know, who should rule in Kenya or in Aden or Malaysia or any of the other places where the British Empire was overcome by the National Liberation Movement.

[Kathleen Densmore] (1:02:44 - 1:02:49)  
Thank you. Another question from this side of the room. Oh, come on.

Yeah, go ahead.

[Speaker 10] (1:02:52 - 1:03:07)  
Could you say something about what we're hearing that may be propaganda, but that from the river to the sea and that, you know, Hamas wants to destroy Israel. That's their justification.

[Helena Cobban] (1:03:09 - 1:10:24)

So, from the river to the sea is a very ambiguous slogan. First of all, it's used by Likud, meaning one thing. And it's used by a lot of Palestinian rights activists, and that's when it gets ambiguous.

I have a lot of friends, including Quakers and others, who say, you know, from the river to the sea there shall be full equality, which is a wonderful thing. If there is full equality between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, right now you have a majority of Palestinian Arabs, so it would be a very different thing. It could be kind of like South Africa, where, you know, you have a one-person, one-vote system in which the rights...

There are language rights in South Africa for Afrikaners, and sure as heck they kept their control, the white people in South Africa, over the whole of the economy, which was a real problem. So there are people who think... I want to say that from the river to the sea is not actually a slogan I've heard a lot from Hamas people.

What I hear from them is that while they are very unwilling or completely unwilling to recognize that the State of Israel has any right to exist, that meantime they are actually interested in being part of a negotiation for a two-state situation. And that is quite clear from a lot of the leaders right now. So it's hard.

First of all, I don't know, apart from my friend Zaina, is anybody else here Palestinian? Good, okay. So for the rest of us, it's not up to us to say what the situation should be.

What I would say, from an international law point of view, is that the Palestinians who are forced into exile, who for the last 77 years have been forced into exile, should have the full rights to the political community and to their homes and properties inside historic Palestine. So that actually increases the numbers to where you have something like 12 million, 14 million Palestinian Arabs and 7 million Jewish Israelis. But the South African whites managed, they've done very well out of the deal that they did with Mandela.

There are so many different ways of looking at this. I've got a lot of friends in Ireland and growing up in England in the 1960s and early 70s. The IRA was like, oh, and Sinn Féin and the provisional IRA.

The way the media went on and they were battling them and the IRA is terrible. But actually, back in 1923, it had been the same in the whole of Ireland. And then the Irish nationalists got 26 of their counties for their independent state and they left six of their counties that had a Protestant majority in the United Kingdom.

And that has caused all kinds of problems with Brexit and everything else going on. So to me, it's bizarre. I don't know how many of you know this, but the current prime minister of the Northern Ireland government, which is part of the United Kingdom, is a member of Sinn Féin.

So go figure. You know, over time, even if you accept just your 26 counties of your 32 counties, maybe through the democratic process, you get something that is more like what you want. So I can't advise Palestinians.



They have to live with this. They have to deal with it. But there are all kinds of potential ways forward.

What I would note, since my real focus is global politics, is that the traction in international diplomacy these days is for a robust two-state solution. If you look at any resolutions from the United Nations or from the BRICS grouping, which now actually is economically more powerful than the Group of Seven, that little Group of Seven that Biden is currently visiting, or any other international grouping, including all European countries and our own government, give some degree of lip service support to a two-state solution. Now, what kind of a two-state solution?

Our government happened, under Trump, to recognise Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem, quite in contravention of international law. When Joe Biden got elected, what did he do? Did he immediately rescind that recognition?

No. So our country is like a major international scofflaw on this issue. I don't think any other country in the world, maybe Vanuatu or one of these tiny little places in the Pacific, recognises Israel's annexation of Jerusalem and of Syrian Golan.

But if you're going to have a robust two-state solution, then you go back to the pre-1967 borders. The settlers in Israel will be the main obstacle to that. And these are very violent, very nasty, very greedy people.

So, you know, somebody's going to have to deal with them. And they are now, and they will continue to be the major problem. Thank you.

Here's a question right here.

[Speaker 9] (1:10:26 - 1:10:40)

Well, I guess you just answered my question. What is a two-state solution going to look like with all these settlements in the West Bank? What would it look like for you?

[Helena Cobban] (1:10:41 - 1:10:45)

Well, like I said, it's not up to me. What is the possibility?

[Speaker 9] (1:10:46 - 1:10:50)

You get all the settlers out of there?

[Speaker 6] (1:10:51 - 1:10:53)

Yeah. Pull down the walls?

[Helena Cobban] (1:10:54 - 1:12:01)

Yes, absolutely pull down the walls. You know, the United States has completely dominated all the diplomacy on the Arab-Israeli agenda since 1973, which was 51 years ago. And through that period we had, you know, like the fall of the Soviet Union and this and that, and the U.S. being the hegemon, the global hegemon. That era is coming to an end.

Thank God, you know. So once the U.S. hegemony is challenged effectively by the global majority, then everything will be possible because nobody other than the U.S. government

will support Israel's settlement project or the settlers in the West Bank. Many of the settlers are American citizens.

Let them come home. Okay, let them come home.

[Speaker 8] (1:12:01 - 1:12:30)

Here's a question right here. So historically speaking, Britain created Israel, and yet they abandoned the Palestinians. Britain's not involved in any of these negotiations or anything.

And why is it just the United States? That's a question in my head.

[Helena Cobban] (1:12:31 - 1:13:38)

That's a great question. You're right to a certain extent that Britain created the problem through, you know, Lord Balfour and his declaration. But it was handed over.

I don't want to apologize or cover up for the British government. But in 1947, they just, like, abandoned the whole thing and handed it over to the United Nations, and it was the United Nations that then enacted the partition resolution, which was so grossly unfair to the Palestinians. And it did so in an era of sort of, let's call it, white guilt, white Christian guilt over the Holocaust.

You know, the Holocaust was not a Middle Eastern problem. It was a European problem. So they thought, well, let's compensate the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and give them a little settler colonial state in Palestine.

And the Palestinians were not consulted at all.

[Kathleen Densmore] (1:13:39 - 1:13:42)

OK, thank you. Here's a question back here.

[Speaker 7] (1:13:45 - 1:14:10)

Elena, thank you for your scholarship and for your activism. I have two questions. The first question is, can you speak about Christian Zionism?

And if that's not enough, would you say a word about, you mentioned you had something to say about the women in Hamas and Hamas. Thank you.

[Helena Cobban] (1:14:11 - 1:20:50)

Oh, two great questions. I'm not an expert on Christian Zionism, except to note that it's like probably the majority of people in this country who now call themselves Zionists are evangelical Christians. They're not Jews.

And Zionism, as a sort of an idea, does go back to the Reformation. I mean, my husband Bill and I collect old maps. Well, he did mainly before he married me, when he still had disposable income.

And some of these maps from the time of the Protestant Reformation show the land of Abraham the Patriarch and tracing where he went. And they're fixated on maps of Palestine. So I think this Christian Zionism thing, or Christian whatever, Christian something to do with the Holy Land, it goes back a long way, but primarily to the Protestant Reformation.

And now in this country, it's big time. So I'm not an expert. Hamas and women is a fascinating topic.

Because right after October 7th, the big slogan was, Hamas is ISIS. And your second request after you were told, do you condemn Hamas? And then you would say, well, I'm not so sure, blah, blah, blah.

And they'd say, yes, but Hamas is ISIS. You know? It's not ISIS.

So I can tell you many ways in which Hamas is not ISIS. One is their respect for religious minorities in the Palestinian body politic. In ISIS-controlled Syria and Iraq, they would gruesomely behead anybody who was a Shiite Muslim or who was a Christian, including members of some of the oldest Christian communities on God's planet.

The Hamas leaders that I've talked to and interviewed are full of respect for their Palestinian Christian colleagues, *compañeros*, people in the struggle. Right now in Gaza, the Palestinian resistance, the active resistance, which has both military and political wings in Gaza, consists of, mainly, of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which is another Sunni Muslim organization, and the Jabha Shaabiyah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which is a very secular organization, leftist, founded by Dr. George Habash, well-known Palestinian Christian leader and with many Palestinian Christians in the PFLP.

So that's one way in which Hamas is very different from ISIS. Another is in their view of the role of women in society. So I have spoken at think tanks in Gaza that were kind of Hamas-affiliated.

Lots of young women in the audience and on the panel, the contributors to... I mean, these are not Hamas people, but this is like the Islamic University of Gaza, which was founded by Sheikh Ahmed Yaseen. Very strong programs for women's education, including doctors and teachers, business people, all kinds of women in the professions.

When they had the elections in 2006, four of their Hamas parliamentary candidates were women. I interviewed two of them. One of them I thought was tremendous.

I mean, she and I were like... We could have yakked away for hours and hours about how you do kind of grassroots organizing things. So in a conservative Muslim society, if you want to persuade, let's say, fathers and older brothers that it's OK for your daughter or sister to go to a university or to get a job in commerce or in journalism or in a hospital, you can reassure those male authority figures better if you insist that the woman be covered.

And, you know, if you go to Gaza, the vast majority of women there are covered, like the hijab over the head. Very few of them wear what the ISIS women have to wear, which essentially is like a kind of a COVID mask. You just see their eyes poking through.

Some of the Hamas women are a little super pious, from my perspective, and wear this little thing over their mouth and nose and insist on putting on gloves when they go out, which is weird. I find it weird. But most of them are not like that.

And actually, once women are appropriately hijabed, they can be loud, they can be funny. It's not like your idea of a pious Muslim woman. In fact, my friend Laila El Haddad, two of whose books I've published, *The Gaza Kitchen You May Have Seen* or *Gaza Mom*, if you meet Leila, I mean, she is loud, she is funny, she is in your face, and she's veiled. So that kind of engagement of women in society is very much supported by Hamas. It was not supported by ISIS or by the Taliban or any of those other extremist Muslim organizations.

[Kathleen Densmore] (1:20:51 - 1:20:57)

Okay, we could probably take two more questions. Barbara.

[Speaker 6] (1:20:59 - 1:21:24)

Thank you. Considering the fact that Arabs are Semites, we really can't call them anti-Semitic. I guess all she could do is call them anti-Zionist.

You know, I mean, they're all... God, they're not related. So, I mean, I just thought that was something that a lot of people might not realize.

[Helena Cobban] (1:21:25 - 1:23:49)

Well, I want to take issue with that a little bit. I mean, I understand the problem with... What we're talking about in this country, generally when we say anti-Semitism, is anti-Jewish discrimination, acts of hatred, whatever.

Anti-Jewish. But being Jewish is not the same as being Zionist. In fact, we just heard, you know, about the many Christians who are Zionists.

But there are also many, many Jewish people in this country and worldwide who are not Zionists. Zionism is a specific political project which aims at implanting Jewish settlers in the historic land of Palestine. So, I mean, there are Jews of many different kinds in this country, from ultra-secular to ultra-Orthodox, who oppose this project.

I mean, honestly, my friend Miko Peled, you know, when he does a public event, his biggest supporters are the, you know, the Hasidim that have these big furry hats and their little side locks. And so I think it's very important not to conflate anti-Semitism or anti-Jewish feeling with anti-Zionism. Anti-Zionism is a political stance.

And being a Zionist is a political stance. Being Jewish, it's a lot of things. It's spiritual, it's religious, it's cultural in many cases, and it's, you know, for a lot of Jewish people, it's who you are.

But Arabs are Semites. You know, but, I mean, yes, that has to do with, like, language. But I think the Semitic languages, which are different from Indo-European languages and many other languages and whatever.

So there is a lot of anti-Arab hatred in this country, and there's a lot of anti-Muslim hatred. And generally, you know, I would call that Islamophobia or anti-Arab hatred. I would not call that anti-Semitism.

No, it's not.

[Kathleen Densmore] (1:23:50 - 1:23:54)

Okay, one last question over here. Okay.

[Speaker 5] (1:23:55 - 1:24:12)

Yeah, I have a question. Seems like you know a lot about Hamas. So can you tell me what Hamas was thinking about when they attacked on October 7th, murdering and burning alive Israelis?

What was Hamas thinking?

[Helena Cobban] (1:24:14 - 1:25:08)

As I think I was trying to explain, there were a lot of people who participated in the breakout from the Gaza concentration camp who were not Hamas, who were not part of the disciplined, organized military action. And including the fact that many of the people who took hostages, they were private families in Gaza, which is why, you know, for a lot of those hostages who were civilians, who were taken from the NOVA, whatever, music festival, they were taken by just regular Gaza people, not by Hamas. So you asked about burning and what else did you say?

[Speaker 5] (1:25:08 - 1:25:09)

Raping.

[Helena Cobban] (1:25:10 - 1:25:43)

Well, I don't think you said that the first time, but I know there is a lot of, let's call it propaganda, that has been generated by the Israelis to accuse Hamas of mass rapes and of planning mass rapes and of deliberately burning people inside their houses. I don't know, do you read Haaretz's newspaper? In English or in...

I mean, Haaretz has actually...

[Speaker 5] (1:25:43 - 1:25:55)

There's a documentary on what happened there. If you watched it, you would know that what you're saying is true. They actually did shoot women in the genitalia.

[Kathleen Densmore] (1:25:56 - 1:26:01)

Okay, do you know the name of that documentary? Because we always talk about sources. We know about that.

[Speaker 13] (1:26:02 - 1:26:06)

Okay, well, the other thing is...

[Speaker 5] (1:26:06 - 1:26:20)

So if you're telling me these citizens in Gaza have these hostages and it's not Hamas, why didn't they return the hostages?

[Helena Cobban] (1:26:22 - 1:30:25)

So what happened in November during the ceasefire and the exchange of hostages for Palestinian captives, that was very successful for seven days. It was originally going to be four days and then they extended it by a further two days and then a further one day, so it was seven days. 105 Israelis were released.

Hamas went to extraordinary lengths to locate these people who were all non-combatants and who had not been taken by Hamas. Hamas had to go out through the communities and find where these people were and I imagine in many cases they had to actually pay money to the families so that they could get the non-combatants and they were released and that worked. So, you know, if you could have another ceasefire, then the remaining non-combatant hostages would be the first to be released and there aren't many remaining non-combatants.

Most of the ones who are currently held were military people and they're held overwhelmingly by Hamas and by Islamic Jihad and a few of them perhaps by the Popular Front. So, you know, let's just work for that for that ceasefire and for everything that needs to go with it so that the Israelis who are denied their freedom and the Palestinians who are denied not just freedom but also life and livelihood and a safe home so that all of that can be made whole again which will be huge and, you know, I know the Israeli propaganda machine has been, I mean, I've worked in journalism for 50 years, I don't know they have a very sophisticated propaganda machine and they put together all these like Joe Biden will stand up and say I've seen videos or pictures of the 40 beheaded babies nobody has found evidence of even one beheaded baby then, what's her name, Sheryl Sandberg comes up and says, you know, I've heard I've seen the evidence about the mass rapes the UN rapporteur woman Pramila-- yeah, has looked at the evidence she has not found the evidence but meantime, the Israeli propaganda machine has been working overtime to try to persuade people around the world including here in the United States that all these atrocities, number one took place and number two were committed that's wrong were committed by Hamas so there were some horrible casualties during the fighting in which the Israeli military sent tanks and Apache helicopters to combat the Hamas fighters in some of these little military outposts and there were some horrible civilian casualties including by burning but it's absolutely not established who did the burning and it's much more likely to have been Apache helicopters and Israeli tank rounds than it was to have been very likely armed Hamas fighters so it's all tragic I wouldn't use a much ruder word but I'm not going to

[Kathleen Densmore] (1:30:26 - 1:31:45)

OK, before we thank Helena two things Helena referred to the educational hub the project of understanding Hamas and why that matters five different people are interviewed and if you go into that website you can either listen to the interviews or you can read the transcripts I read the transcripts I couldn't put them down it was like a good book that I just didn't want to put down so if you're interested in knowing more and understanding better Hamas I strongly recommend you read those or listen to those interviews second, a number of people asked about what on earth could happen after a permanent ceasefire if you're interested in that July 9th at 4 o'clock in the Dollar Clubhouse Voices for Justice in Palestine is going to have a speaker and talk about something like what happens after a ceasefire so July 9th it'll be in the paper now, let's give Helena a big thank you