

1 Recognition is the Beginning Conference: Professor Adam Sutcliffe's Welcome

We're going to hear from a very wide range of informed experts on the current situation in Palestine and from leading protagonists working in a variety of ways for justice, for the protection of human rights, and for genuinely constructive international engagement in the region.

We obviously need much more than conferences to bring about the change that Palestinians so desperately need, but public debate matters. Without it, the calamitous conditions faced by Gazans in the fraction of the strip into which they are now penned, the Orwellian dissonance between the name and the reality of Donald Trump's Board of Peace, and the ever more violent threats to Palestinian lives and livelihoods in the West Bank; All of that risks becoming part of the familiar, tacitly accepted background warping of the unstable and unjust world in which we live.

And to a large extent, I fear that sort of tacit acceptance through familiarization is what has happened in much of the world since we last gathered on the Strand Campus of King's about a year ago.

Our eyes over the past year have often been focused elsewhere, and sometimes necessarily in response to the widening of the circle of American and Israeli aggression in the region. Yesterday, and who knows, maybe again tomorrow, our anxious eyes have been above all on Beirut. Many people, though, and certainly us here in this room, have most certainly not forgotten about Palestine.

And the pressure we bring to bear in our societies, the arguments we develop and put forward, and the work of persuasion we engage in politics and in the media does make a difference. Our keyword for this year's conference is recognition. The importance of which in diplomatic terms we've discussed at all of the 2 conferences that we've had at King's College London.

And we have here today His Excellency Husam Zomlot who has regularly participated in these conferences previously, and we've introduced him in the past as the head of the Palestinian Mission to the United Kingdom. And it's a real pleasure that in a moment I will be handing over to Andrew Whitley, who will be introducing him as the Palestinian Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

And as we know, the work of the British Palestine Project has certainly played a significant role in leading to that step forward. But as our conference title

reminds us, Recognition is only the Beginning. It's not sufficient in itself. And also recognition isn't by any means only about diplomatic recognition.

It means a lot more. And I want to share a few words with you now about what I think recognizing the reality faced by Palestinians truly requires us to do. It requires us, firstly, to recognize a huge immensity of human suffering which is continuing as we speak in that fraction of the Gaza Strip and beyond. And genuinely recognizing that is itself deeply painful and difficult. It also requires a recognition of how we reached this situation in the short term and in the longer term. And it requires recognizing (and this is particularly important in the United Kingdom) recognizing the complicity of Western governments, in bringing us to this calamitous situation. And we also have to recognize the constraints on public debate that impede us doing what we're trying to do, which is work towards a just way forward.

So there's a lot for us to think about and to recognize. And once we even begin to recognize all those things that I've mentioned, I think we can't fail to realize and recognize two further things which are both central to what today is all about:

Firstly, the more we learn, the more we realize how much more we need to learn. We all need to inform ourselves more about Palestine and the wider issues that relate to it, so that we can deepen our own understanding and help to promote a wider recognition and understanding of these issues in circles within which we move.

Secondly, and this is the most important aspect of today, we have to recognize that the recognition of understanding is only the start, and it prompts the immediate follow-up question, what are we going to do about all of this? What are we going to do to contribute to positive change in Palestine and in the wider region?

Today's event will certainly not provide an easy answer to that question. But I can guarantee that it will generate for all of us a great deal of informed and productive thinking about that question, about what we most need to do and how to do it. And I'm confident that it will fortify our commitment to go out into the world afterwards and put that thinking and discussion into concrete action.

In the light of the pressures brought to bear to constrain, to marginalize, and to silence the kind of discussion we will be having today, I'm particularly grateful to my employer, King's College London for unhesitatingly, for the fourth time, welcoming us here for this conference. I'd also like to thank many colleagues of

mine at King's in various divisions: security team, events planning team, audio visual team, catering, for the work they have done and will be doing today to make the event a success. And I know you will all be courteous and appreciative in your interactions with them throughout the day. And it goes without saying, we will not tolerate any unpleasant, discourteous or disruptive behavior. I'm sure we're gonna have a fascinating and very productive day.

2 Recognition is the Beginning Conference: Andrew Whitley's Welcome

Distinguished ambassadors, dear colleagues and friends, all of you who are present here today, as well as the hundreds who I know are following us online; we're absolutely thrilled to be partnering once again with Adam Sutcliffe and King's College London for our annual conference. We all look forward to a really absorbing day. Hopefully we can leave this building tonight, the end of the day, with a clearer sense of what needs to be done, especially by our government, and how you too can be the change makers that are needed.

To help us get to that point, we have a brilliant lineup of speakers. Friends, I don't need to emphasize the gravity of the present situation. The prospect of a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians and the realization of Palestinian rights, individual and collective. The two go hand in hand inextricably.

As I speak, the historic Jerusalem district of Silwan, just outside the walls of the Old City, is being cleared of its longstanding Palestinian population. The status quo in the holy places in the Old City is under serious threat. These are simply the latest in a string of actions being taken by the Netanyahu government alongside Jewish extremists acting with state backing.

They are accelerating annexation with the explicit aim of making a Palestinian state impossible. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is simply unspeakable. No human beings should be obliged to suffer in such dreadful conditions for so long, and yet nothing is being done to alleviate it.

Why not? It's a good question to which no one of good conscience appears to have the answer. But let's draw a parallel closer to home. How would we in Britain react if, for example, the entire population of Birmingham, some two million people, was kettled (to use the police term for people being forcibly confined), occupying much of the city by foreign soldiers, bombed and shot at on a daily basis while being squeezed into an ever-shrinking smaller space?

Friends, as we at the Britain Palestine Project base our work on three platforms: history, education, and advocacy; all three of them will be in play during today's conference. We're really fortunate to have been able to secure the presence today of our newest patron, the distinguished historian and writer William Dalrymple. Best known for his magisterial works on South Asia, William recently turned his attention to an earlier love, the Levant, including Palestine. His forthcoming book is going to be something for us all to wait for. William will be joined on the stage by an old friend of our charity, the distinguished Oxford professor and author of many highly regarded books on the conflict, Avi Shlaim.

On your seats, you will find a document in the folder that we commend to your attention. It's a Statement of Principles we developed earlier this year with the help of an external group of experts, some of whom are present here today. In our view, these principles should serve as a guide to our government's future dealings with this particular issue.

As a growing number of politicians in Britain are saying out loud these days, it is high time that the government practices what it preaches when it comes to the rule of law. It must act on the glaring inconsistency between its robust approach to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Israel's illegal attacks on Palestine and other states across the Middle East.

Dear friends, much media attention these days, at least in the British media, has been devoted to the UK's defence strategy review. It's been sitting on the Prime Minister's desk for many months awaiting his sign-off. Much less attention, however, has been given to another dossier in Prime Minister Starmer's pending tray. That is the legal advice provided by his Attorney General and friend, Lord Herma, on the implications for the UK of the World Court's advisory opinion in July 2024 on the illegality of the occupation of Palestine and what must be done by all states in response.

That opinion was delivered two years ago. We understand that the Prime Minister is a busy man. He has a lot on his mind these days. But this is a very simple action for him to take. It wouldn't take him more than five minutes at the most. It's really not complicated. It's simply doing the right thing for Palestinians, consistent with the UK's recognition of their statehood and consistent with our own values.

So we at the Britain Palestine Project call on Keir Starmer today to publish the document immediately and accept that Britain has a responsibility to act on the findings of the International Court of Justice. Please do echo that message yourselves through your own networks and with your MPs.

In closing, may I take this opportunity to thank all of our donors, both large and small, for their generous support. Many of them prefer not to be named. They know who they are. But I would like to single one out for special mention today, and that is the continued generous support that's been provided by the Council of Arab Ambassadors to the UK over several years. We're deeply grateful to all of you.

3 Recognition is the Beginning Conference: Palestinian Ambassador H.E. Husam Zomlot's Opening

Sabah al-khair. Good morning.

Wow. You have defied the strike, and you have defied the weather. Many are here, and it's such a pleasure and an honour, my dear friends, to be joining you today. Let me begin by a sincere thank you to Professor Adam Sutcliffe for hosting us here at this very renowned institution. I want to extend to you our sincere thank you and gratitude. But also to thank my very good friend, comrade, and brother, His Excellency Manar Dabbas, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, for being with us today for his support and close cooperation on so many issues of critical importance to the Palestinian cause, particularly over the last few years, Manar and I have been working side by side over the years waging many battles, winning some, losing some, but continuing. From Liz Truss moving the British embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, to the recognition of the State of Palestine, Jordan and Palestine have been working together. And I want to salute him, and salute on his behalf the people and the leadership of Jordan for their historic position and continued support.

Of course, my absolute sincere appreciation goes to the Britain Palestine project. To our good friend, Sir Vincent Fean, to the chair of the trustee of the board, Andrew Whitley, to the brilliant director, executive director, Dr. Brian Brivati, to Diana Safieh, who's doing wonderful work for your communications, and for the entire team for their tireless work, for bringing us all together here today, and for all the brilliant work that has been done over the years.

I also want to welcome here a very close beloved friend, Shawan Jabarin from Al-Haq, who is joining us today from Palestine. Al-Haq is a leading Palestinian human rights organisation and a pioneer that has faced systematic attacks by Israel as part of its broader prosecution of Palestinian civil society. Despite this, Al-Haq continues to work with determination, resilience, and impact, and I invite all of you to support Al-Haq and our civil society.

The Palestinian people have many agencies. It's not just the political agency standing in front of you. The civil agency is as important as the political agency. The cultural agency is as important as the political agency.

It is such an honor to be among such a distinguished line of speakers today. We're really proud of all of you and what you have been doing. But Nick Maynard, your testimony is becoming the voice of Gaza and the voice of Palestine.

Now I just returned, my friends, from the occupied territory, the West Bank. And I knew how bad the situation there was, but what I saw still shocked me. I was shocked by the number and severity of the atrocities committed there by the occupation, be it soldiers or settlers, on a daily basis all over the West Bank, cities, towns, villages, communities.

Israel is moving quickly to implement facts on the ground, escalating its campaign of ethnic cleansing, annexation, and the displacement of the Palestinian people. And yet we rarely hear about any of what is happening in the West Bank in the international or British mainstream media.

Gaza has also largely fallen out of the headlines, especially since the ceasefire last October. But I am sure you are all aware of how catastrophic the situation in Gaza remains. Not only catastrophic, but worsening. Israel has repeatedly broken the terms of the last October ceasefire. Speaking at an illegal West Bank settlement last week, Netanyahu announced that Israel's occupying forces were unilaterally taking control of seventy percent of the Gaza Strip. They already took control of fifty percent, the Yellow Line. The Palestinian people in Gaza are being kettled into an ever-smaller parcel of land, making the overcrowding worse and further worsening deteriorating conditions there.

My own family in Gaza tell me that every day is a living hell now, not before October. Israel's Minister of Defence, Mr. Katz, stated last week that he is committed, and his government, to the large-scale displacement of the Palestinian people in Gaza as part of Israel's long-term plan of the territory. So make no mistake, the only plan Israel has for Gaza is ethnic cleansing, depopulation and mass transfer of people. It did not change before October. It is not changing after the ceasefire announcement of October. Same plan. Meanwhile, Israel continues to deny the reality of what is going on, claiming it is acting in the interests of its own security. But the bitter truth is that Israel has never been serious. It has never been serious about peace. Israel has refused a comprehensive peace with the Palestinians and the Arab world since the Arab League first proposed it in 1981. By the way, everybody talks about the Arab Peace Initiative in 2002. The Arab world offered a peace plan in 1981. This offer has been renewed many times, in Oslo, in the Arab Peace Initiative, and more recently, the Gaza Peace Plan. And every time, Israel has violated the terms of every agreement it has had the opportunity to conclude. We started the Oslo Accords with less than 100,000 illegal settlers. Today, we're talking about more than 750,000 illegal settlers.

In talking of peace, Israel has only been playing for time. Whether the use of war or the use of peace, it is just playing for time until it could make that final move to take over Palestine from the river to the sea. And as events in Gaza, in

the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem, now make devastatingly clear, the time for Israel to do so is now. This is Israel's final push. We have not yet seen the light at the end of the tunnel, but we have seen a light in the middle of the tunnel. So we have to change that saying, a light at the end of the tunnel, to a light in the middle of the tunnel. That light is the recognition of the State of Palestine and the wide support of the Palestinian people that have won for our cause after decades of unrelenting struggle, sacrifice, and steadfastness.

Over the last year, ten more countries have recognized the State of Palestine as sovereign and independent, bringing the total to over eighty percent of the international community. One of those ten was the United Kingdom. This was particularly significant for us, the Palestinian people, because our long national nightmare of occupation and disposition began here in London over a century ago with the Balfour Declaration. So yes, the recognition goes way beyond symbolic. Our issue started here with the negation of the existence of the Palestinian people, let alone our national collective rights and our right to self-determination. So recognition by the UK has a very particular historic, legal, and political significance, and we realize that. We thank all those of you here in this room and beyond who have worked with us to arrive at that moment in September last year.

And therefore my friends, in pushing back the Israeli agenda, in pushing its genocidal settler colonial ambitions so hard, Israel's mask has slipped. Israel has laid bare its total disregard and contempt to the very basic provisions of international law, of our universal values. The people of the world have seen this, and the public opinion everywhere is shifting. The tide has shifted.

Our cause now stands at the epicenter of the global progressive struggle for peace, justice, and human rights. One cause, one struggle rooted in our recognition of a common humanity. I see it everywhere. I see it here in the UK. I see it all over Europe. I see it in the US. I see it in Africa, in Asia. It has become global Palestine.

Because... Let me go off script here. Because, those who have been colonised, oppressed and discriminated against identify as Palestinians. Palestine represents them. And who supports Israel? Who is allied with Israel? The colonisers, the oppressors, the racists. So this has become the divide now worldwide, and this is the light in the middle of the tunnel.

But while recognition, my friends, is a major step, it is only a beginning. It must be accompanied by substantial action to make self-determination and statehood a reality, to implement international law equally. That must include a

coordinated international effort to hold Israel to account for its numerous violations of international law, and to stop what Israel is doing in the occupied territory. The UK and all countries committed to the rule of law must act to prevent Israel's blatant violations of international law and prevent further regional destabilisation.

The United Kingdom must use its permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council to advance immediate international action to alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, and to stop Israel's creeping annexation in the West Bank. The UK has a responsibility to act. The Security Council should also act to bring the Gaza peace plan under its direct supervision. We cannot leave it to the whim of some individuals, ensuring Israel allows its full implementation. All states must endorse and fully support the ruling of the International Court of Justice. For the love of God, I do not understand why the UK government up until this moment did not come out of the closet to support the ruling of the International Court of Justice. This is the epitome of quitting one's responsibility. Now the UK should immediately suspend its trade and partnership agreement with Israel, which is clearly in violation of the agreements and of the commitments by the UK towards human rights, and in the clauses of that agreement itself with Israel.

The UK and other states should sanction settlements and the entire settlement movement, not just a handful of the most vocal settlers and political firebrands. The occupation is unlawful. Therefore, trade in goods or services, including financial services conducted under its unlawful being is just illegal.

Ban all trade with the illegal settlements. Not label - outright ban all trade with the illegal settlements. Ban any financial dealing, and don't advise companies or banks not to deal with these illegal settlements. Sanction these companies. Sanction these banks. Enough of advising them. For thirty years, the UK government issues advices: It's illegal to work in these settlements. Illegality has consequences. What we need to see is the consequential arrangements whereby working in these illegalities are marked. This approach of quitting responsibility, of dodging the responsibility has to end.

Recognition will only have a meaning if it is followed by serious action to raise the cost of illegality. And we will be working with you, with the Britain Palestine Project, with all the institutions, with the Parliament, and with the British people to make sure that this will happen.

I want to end by saying this, my friends. Recognition is an important step, but it is only a step on our long journey towards justice. We must build on it. That is

the least we owe to those who live in the bitter and brutal reality of Israel's occupation every day. Together, let us ensure that recognition becomes not a symbol, but a foundation.

A foundation for freedom, accountability, and a just, lasting peace. Thank you very much.

4 Recognition is the Beginning Conference: Jordanian Ambassador H.E. Manar Dabbas' Opening

Good morning, and always I'm at disadvantage when I speak after Husam who's always been eloquent and a dear friend, a brother, and I just want to salute Husam for a tremendous effort that he's exerted for the past few years, which led to the long overdue historic decision by the UK government to recognize the State of Palestine. So thank you for this effort, Husam.

I would also like to start by thanking the organisers of this conference. My dear friends Andrew Whitley and Vincent Fean. And of course, the heartwarming thank goes to the team at Britain Palestine Project, to Brian and the rest of the team for arranging such an important gathering, and for also the continuous efforts in keeping this conversation alive.

I just want to take us through quickly on what happened after Britain recognized the State of Palestine last year. And if we take a stock at the state of play today and start with Gaza. At a time when our region is preoccupied with too many crises, we risk losing sight on what's really happening in our part of the world. We risk losing sight on the big elephant in the room, which is the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory.

In Gaza, months after a ceasefire has been reached, aid is not coming to Gaza in any significant quantities yet, and rebuilding has not started. Ceasefire has been violated hundreds of times by Israel. Over 600,000 Palestinian kids have not gone to school in almost three years. What kind of future do they have? I always use the analogy of the American game shows when they tell you there is a door number one, and door number two. Door number one is hope and prosperity. Door number two is indoctrination and radicalization. We want to push the Palestinian youth to door number one, but if they open door number one, they have to see rebuilding. They have to see reconstruction taking place. They have to see a total change of scenery, and unfortunately this is not happening.

What's happening in the West Bank is critically dangerous; West Bank is undergoing tremendous pressures and attacks, systematic attacks from Israel. Annexation and confiscation of land is happening de facto. President Trump says he will not allow annexation, and yet if you monitor the facts on the ground, annexations are happening systematically, day in, day out.

The settlement expansion and settler violence are at unprecedented levels. The number of settlements have increased by almost 80% last year under the guise of regional turmoil. In just one week, more than 50 attacks by settlers across the West Bank, with an average of six such attacks per day in 2026. The E1

settlement plan would further fragment the West Bank into two halves, and will cut the whole concept of contiguity of any future Palestinian state.

Palestinian Authority, as we speak, is being suffocated economically. Five billion dollars of withheld Palestine money have not been released by Israel for many years. And then you hear the narrative of the current prime minister of Israel that they don't have a peace partner on the Palestinian side. Seriously? While undermining that partner for the past 15-20 years, and then you have the guts to say we don't have a peace partner? I think today the whole world sees who's the partner and who's not the partner on the peace side.

We speak about respecting faith, but even the right-wing minister in Israel, Ben-Gvir, who calls Palestinians animals, has violated the sanctity of the holy sites in Jerusalem numerous times. Al-Aqsa Mosque was closed during the month of Ramadan under the pretext of protecting worshipers from the ongoing war with Iran. Even when the mosque is open, restrictions on age and gender are enforced. We have seen that not just Muslim holy sites, but Christian holy sites as well, are under tremendous pressure and systematic attacks by the current Israeli government. Most recent of which, the closure of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. And adding to that, Christian communities and institutions are being harassed and assaulted even through imposing taxes on Jerusalem churches. And since they cannot pay, the Israeli authority confiscate and take properties. What do we do about that? We speak of international law, yet despite the most recent ICJ advisory opinion and conclusion, Israel continues unabated in its flagrant violations of international law.

The current state of play is extremely destabilizing to the whole region, and unless we are able to have a Palestinian and Israeli peace, the whole region will continue to be hostage to the potential of conflict erupting at any given moment.

Jordan has been committed to a just and lasting peace. We've signed a peace treaty with Israel over 30 years ago, and we maintained that treaty despite the tremendous challenges, because we believe that peace is the ultimate answer to all problems we have in the region.

But in order for peace to be lasting, it has to be just, and it has to be accepted by the people. If we look at the actions of the current Israeli government, they are not conducive to peace, and definitely they are conducive to more conflict. The Israeli government are not just destabilizing the region but are hurting Israel itself. We all want to live in peace in the region, and we want a Palestinian state to live side by side with Israel in peace and security, but this is not going to happen while ignoring the big elephant in the room, which is the occupation.

We all believe in the two-state solution. However, Israel is undermining that reality. So the question to Israel should be: What's the other solution? Five to seven million Palestinian people under occupation as second-class citizens? So if that's not an apartheid state, then what is the solution? So we raise alarm bells today on what's happening in the West Bank.

That is extremely dangerous and not conducive to peace, and it's hurting Israel. And we tell all our partners that by supporting the current Israeli government and its policies, they are not supporting Israel. On the contrary, they are hurting Israel. It is undermining thirty years of efforts to normalize the idea of peace with Israel.

Also, look at what's happening in Syria, for example. Syria is rebuilding, having emerged from years of devastation. The government says they don't want to have any problems with Israel, and yet Israel is occupying more territory there, and the same applies to Lebanon. We don't have the time to go over what's happening in Lebanon, but you all are pretty familiar with what's happening. So perpetual conflict seems to be the course of action of the current prime minister of Israel because he's eyeing elections and wants to stay in power.

We go back to the earlier title of this conference, Recognition is the Beginning. So we must recognize what Israel is doing in Gaza is abhorrent and in stark and flagrant violation of international law and humanitarian law. We must recognize that Israeli legal actions in the West Bank are dangerous and will undermine the essence of the two-state solution. We must also recognize that incursions in the holy city of Jerusalem and the systematic attacks on its Muslim and Christian holy sites is a recipe for a bigger explosion. We must recognize that Israeli policy of drawing lines: yellow line in Gaza, yellow line in Lebanon, yellow line in Syria, will undermine the very essence of stability and security of the region and will never bring Israel any inch closer to peace and security. We must recognize that our messaging of peace and stability should be addressed to the Israeli public. We must recognise the important and tectonic shift in the world's public opinion, and this is something that we need to utilise as soon as possible. And finally, we must recognise the fundamental need to draw attention and raise awareness on the current accelerated illegal measures in Gaza and the West Bank and Jerusalem, and make sure that every party here is fully aware.

There is a village on the coast of Palestine, five kilometers from the shore of the Mediterranean, that appears in the historical records for the first time more than three thousand years ago. Egyptian royal inscriptions mention it. Assyrian campaign records mention it. The Hebrew Bible mentions it. Herodotus mentions it. Ottoman tax registers mention it. Nineteenth-century British antiquarians from the Palestine Exploration Fund mention it. For three millennia, this village, its mosque, its ancient olive press, its wells bored deep through limestone to the water table below, its Wednesday market, its two schools, survived every empire that marched through: Babylonian siege engines, Macedonian phalanxes, Roman legions, Byzantine generals, Arab cavalry, Crusader knights, Mamluk tax gatherers, Ottoman census takers, and finally, British mandate officers in armored cars. Its name was Esdud.

On the morning of the twenty-eighth of October, 1948, Israeli trucks drove into the village. Only 300 people remained. The war had been coming towards Isdud for months and most had already fled, and those that remained were the old, the infirm, the stubborn, and those who convinced themselves that surely there would be a negotiation or a truce or a term. They raised white flags on their rooftops.

According to Benny Morris, working from the Israeli State Archives, they were almost immediately expelled southwards. Two villagers were shot dead in the square. The rest were herded into trucks like cattle. One of those who survived, Zarifa Atuan, described what she saw: *"It was so sad to see men, women, old people, and children hurrying away, carrying everything they could in hand carts or cloth bundles. Suddenly we heard a lot of trucks coming into the village and the sound of shots being fired into the air. We could hear loudspeakers, and we rushed into the village square to see what was going on. It was the Israelis, and they were saying in Arabic, 'Leave your homes and go to Gaza where you will be safe. If you don't leave, we will kill you.' People started to panic. Nobody knew what to do. Then we heard gunshots. The Israelis killed two men from our village at point-blank range. They were lying dead on the ground in a pool of blood, and their women and children were hysterical. The villagers were herded into the Israeli trucks like cattle. The killings made them silent and obedient. Everyone was in a state of complete shock. We got into the trucks too. We didn't have time to pack. All we had were the clothes we were wearing, and all around us was the sound of women wailing and explosions of Israeli mortar fire."* That evening, an Israeli Air Force reconnaissance patrol reported, "A vast

stream of refugees with cattle, sheep, mules, and wagons flowing along the entire coastline between Esdud and Gaza."

A few days later, an Israeli patrol reported not a living soul in Esdud. An IDF veteran, Uri Avnery, wrote afterwards, "We moved from village to village without thinking about the people who had lived there hours or days before. Their lives, their past. For us, they were all the same. Poor, dirty, alien villagers."

The people of Esdud never returned from Gaza, and they and their descendants are still there. My friend, the journalist Sarah Helm, interviewed two survivors, Mohammed and Nafisa, several times after the 2014 war. They told her how "We left with our donkey. My mother took some blankets, but not more. No documents. She brought one key, but I didn't look after it and I lost it." But all the time, the people in their mind were thinking they would leave for one week and return. "We crossed the fields and went to Gaza." But he said, "I go to my village when I dream. And I see where I hunted birds with my friend. I remember walking to the school. I remember where my mother had a little vineyard in the Esdud sands. I'm still connected to my village in my dreams."

Within a few years, the village, its mosques, its schools, its olive press, its market square, the cemetery on the hillside, where several hundred years of the village's dead lay buried, all of it was razed to the ground.

The modern Israeli city of Ashdod, and the port where the flotilla were brought in last week, was founded in nearby land in 1956, consciously reviving the ancient Hebrew name for what the Bible explicitly said was always a Philistine or Palestinian village. But here I want to hold in your minds this morning the names. The Arabic name Esdud was not some arbitrary coinage. It's a direct phonetic descendant of a word that had been spoken on that same low coastal ridge for more than 3,000 years. Ashdod in the Bronze Age, Ashdudu in Assyrian, Azotos in Greek, Asdud in Arabic, Esdud again. One word, 3,000 years. One continuous community of people who answered to it generation after generation, through every conquest and conversion and transformation.

And the people who called Esdud that name in 1948, as ancient DNA analysis has now confirmed, are the biological descendants of the people who first called it Ashdod. They were not, in the founding mythology of the Israeli state, Arabs who had drifted in at some point after the seventh century, after the Islamic conquest. They were there before. They were there before the Romans. They were there before the Greeks, before the Persians, before the Babylonians. They were always there. The story of Esdud is in miniature the story I'm writing at the

moment, in a book on the history of the Palestinians from the Neolithic to the Nakba, attempts to tell in full. And I'll just give a small glimpse of it to you this morning because I believe that without grasping the full depth of that history, we cannot understand what we are gathered here to do.

In 1969, 21 years after the people of Esdud had been expelled, Golda Meir declared to a British journalist that there was no such thing as the Palestinians. It remains for many of us one of the most notorious distortions and acts of erasure in modern history. Not because it was believed everywhere, but because it was politically very useful in the places that mattered most: in Washington, in New York, in London, in the editorial offices of newspapers that shaped Western understanding of the conflict. And it has never been adequately refuted in the public culture of the nations most responsible for making it possible

We know now from ancient DNA studies published in the journal *Cell* from the work of the geneticists at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, no less, and David Reich at Harvard, from the Wellcome Sanger Institute research of Mark Haber and Pierre Zalloua, we know now beyond all reasonable scientific doubt that modern Palestinians derive between 81-87% of their ancestry from Bronze Age Levantine populations.

The farmers who worked the terraced hillsides of Esdud in 1947 were, in a direct and measurable biological sense, the descendants of people who first terraced those hillsides three thousand years earlier. A population that changed its language, its religion, its political masters, but not its bones, not its blood, nor its attachment to the olive trees and the limestone springs and the sacred hilltops.

And the same DNA evidence reveals something more remarkable still. Israeli Jews, particularly Mizrahi Jews, share a very substantial proportion of that Levantine ancestry, as Palestinians and Israeli Jews are not, at a genetic level, two alien peoples fighting over someone else's land. They are, in the most literal, biological sense, estranged children of the same ancient civilization, divided not by blood, but divergent paths of history, faith, and language. Cousins who have forgotten they are cousins amid the violent family quarrel, where both sides have lost sight of their common source. This is not a political statement. This is the findings of modern science, of genetics, and it's a finding with profound moral implications. What the Zionist founding mythology required, and what it got for a generation from the lazy complicity of the Western media and political class, was the erasure of this deep history.

The transformation of a people of 4000 years of continuous rooted habitation into what Netanyahu calls Arabs, late arrivals, incomers, people with no serious claim. Milan Kundera put it with devastating precision, "The first step in liquidating a people is to erase its memory, destroy its cultures, its history, then have somebody write new books, manufacture a new culture, invent a new history. Before long, the nation will begin to forget what it is and why it was."

We are gathered here today to confront the consequences of that erasure and the beginning, at long last, of its reversal. Let me take you briefly into the depth of that history, because the conference theme, Recognition is the Beginning, cannot be fully understood without grasping quite how ancient, quite how deep, and quite how remarkable is the civilization whose recognition we are discussing. The oldest known fortifications in human history were built in Jericho about 8000 BCE, defending a pre-Neolithic sanctuary beside a spring. Jericho is one of the very oldest continuously inhabited urban sites on the planet. So is Gaza. Signs of occupation there date from the fourth millennium BCE. Gaza appears by name, Gazatur or Gajat, in Egyptian inscriptions from the reign of Thutmosis III in the 15th century BCE. The Bronze Age Levant, the world the Egyptians called Canaan, was already by 1200 BCE, one of the most sophisticated, commercially vibrant, internationally connected civilizations on Earth. The great city of Hazor in Galilee covered seventy-five hectares and housed eight thousand people at a time when Jerusalem was still a modest hilltop settlement.

This was the world and the people that produced the world's first alphabet. It invented the long-distance wine trade long before the vine arrived in France. Gaza wine was shipped in distinctive torpedo-shaped amphora and was already an Egyptian royal monopoly because it was so highly regarded, the Château d'Yquem of the ancient world, straight down to Memphis. It was still flourishing as late as the sixth century CE when Gaza torpedo jars found their way as far as Dark Age Cornwall. They've been found in Tintagel, King Arthur may have drunk Gaza wine, and Merovingian France. By the fifth and sixth centuries of the Common Era, Gaza was one of the greatest intellectual centers in the Mediterranean world.

Its school of rhetoric competing with Athens and Alexandria. Its biblical commentaries shaping the theology of Anglo-Saxon England. The Gaza scholar Procopius of Gaza invented the catena, a chain of biblical commentary that became the model for every subsequent work in the genre. When Theodore of Tarsus from Syria became one of the first archbishops of Canterbury, he carried Procopius' commentaries in his baggage to Canterbury. That is the civilization we're talking about. That is the depth of what was lost.

And the name Palestine itself, a name as old as literacy itself. The Peleset appear in Egyptian temple hieroglyph inscriptions at Medinet Habu around 1186 BCE. From Peleset to Palestine in Hittite, to Palashtu in Assyrian, from Palastine in the Greek of Herodotus, to Syria Palestina in Roman Latin, to Philistine in Arabic. The name has never at any point in recorded history fallen out of use. It is a late Bronze Age name worn smooth by 3,000 years of continual utterance. It is not a minor etymological footnote. It's one of the most important facts about Palestinian civilization and one of the most important rebuttals to the lie that the Palestinians do not exist. The identity of this people has been transformed many times across those three millennia, from Canaanite paganism, through Judaism, through Christianity, to Islam. From archaic Canaanite, through Aramaic and Greek, to Arabic. But the population, the people who farmed the coastal plain, pressed the olives, drew water from the limestone wells, raised their children in the same villages, remained largely the same. The long history of Palestine is best understood as a series of identity changes, Canaanite to Israelite, Jewish to Christian, Christian to Muslim, in which each successive layer left a trace without entirely erasing what came before.

The village, the landscape, the olive, the orange grove, the family structure, the sacred spring, or the saint or prophet's tomb on the hilltop, these persisted across conquests, across conversions, across the passage of empires and faiths. The Maqam on the Palestinian hilltop sits on the site of a Byzantine martyrium, which itself sits on the site of a Canaanite high place.

The same spring, the same sacred rock, the same instinct to locate the holy in a specific landscape of home persists through 3,000 years of religious transformation. This society absorbed many waves of conquests, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Crusaders, Ottomans. Yet the brutal history of the region belies its archeology, which demonstrates settlements that over again show signs of coexistence and continuity, of hybridity, mixture, and impurity, of complex and cosmopolitan identities, waxing and waning with periods of prosperity and turbulence over the centuries.

The Arab conquest, which is always cited in official Zionist historiography and still in the literature of the state of Israel as a major breaking point in the archeology and in the history, is archeologically invisible. Michele Piccirillo, who's the Italian archeologist who's been working on the Umayyad period, says he cannot see the conquest anywhere that he has dug. Three centuries after the Arab conquest, the geographer Al-Muqaddasi recorded that the province of

Philistine contained more than seven hundred churches and three hundred monasteries, but only twenty mosques.

Palestine was still, three centuries after the Islamic conquest, an overwhelmingly Christian country. The conversion was gradual, peaceful, and left the population in place. Arabic began to be spoken widely around two or three hundred years after the conquest, but Islam only became the dominant religion during the period of Saladin in the wake of the failure of the Crusades. Wonderful new evidence has come to see this key hinge in history, this moment of transformation called the Naşana Papyri, a cachet of tax documents recently discovered in the Negev. And in that, you can actually see the names of the different families during this period, and a name of the Greek Stefanos becoming, in one generation, the Arabic Istifan of the next. It is the absolute proof that these are the same people who were the Byzantines, who were the Romans, who were all the different succession of peoples that came and went before.

And this is not Palestinian special pleading. It is the application of standard historical methodology to a case which, for political reasons, that methodology has been suspended. And the suspension of methodology in the service of colonial myth is something that this country knows about because it was, in considerable part, our doing.

The Nakba did not take place in a vacuum. It was made to a degree that our political country consistently refused to acknowledge it was made in Britain. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 is, of course, the original sin. Balfour knew his Bible but was unaware that the country was then 96% Muslim and Christian.

And when he wrote his letter pledging British support to the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, it being clearly understood, he wrote, that nothing should be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. He was telling a lie. Not a well-intentioned promise that was later broken, but a formulation that Balfour himself knew to be incompatible with the commitment that was being made. He wrote privately with characteristic candor that in Palestine, we do not propose to go through even the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country.

The four great powers are committed to Zionism, and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age long traditions and present needs and future hopes of far more profound importance than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit this ancient land. The number was actually 1.4

million Palestinian Muslims and Christians, not consulted, not mentioned by name in the declaration, referred to, if at all, as existing non-Jewish communities. As if the indigenous 94% of a country were a set of minor encumbrances to be accommodated around the edges of a project destined for someone else. Then came thirty years of the British mandate. Thirty years during which Britain systematically encouraged Jewish immigration on a massive scale, and systematically disarmed and disempowered the Arab Palestinian population while helping train the Haganah and the Palmach, the special night squads, and their leaders, people like Moshe Dayan.

The Arab revolt between 1936 and '39, the most sustained anti-colonial uprising in the Arab world before Algerian independence, was crushed with extraordinary brutality by British forces using techniques of torture, collective punishment, village demolition, and mass detention, that my friend Caroline Elkins has documented in devastating detail. Techniques that would later be redeployed in Kenya, Malaya, Cyprus, and in Northern Ireland. And that the state of Israel would inherit and deploy against Palestinians ever since. Britain arrested the Palestinian leadership, exiled them, silenced them, and then in 1948, when the moment of decision came, left the field and walked away.

The Nakba happened because politicians in this country enabled it. They enabled it with the Balfour Declaration, and they enabled it with thirty years of British colonial rule in Palestine, during which the indigenous inhabitants were disarmed and their leaders arrested and sent away. We designed the architecture within which one people's catastrophe was made to fall upon another's heads, and then we looked away. And then in the most culpable act of historical amnesia in modern British public life, we forgot, and we never taught it to our children. 78 years ago this summer, 750,000 Palestinians were driven out of their homes and villages from Tiberias, Beit She'an, Safed, from the great Palestinian ports of Jaffa and Acre, driven out with napalm and machine gun and machetes, forced to flee from olive trees into the barren sand dunes of Gaza, where their descendants remain.

At the end of 1948, less than 15% of Palestinians remained where they had always lived. 85% had been ethnically cleansed, despite Lord Balfour's solemn promise. Many of those who carried out that ethnic cleansing had been trained and armed by Britain. This country has a historic responsibility, more than anywhere else, to see the establishment of an actual viable Palestinian state, not just a shadowy entity that exists only on paper. And not out of guilt alone, though guilt is appropriate, but out of recognition that we built the Palestinian catastrophe, and we have a corresponding obligation to help dismantle it

This year, the UK has finally recognized the state of Palestine, and it's wonderful to be in the room with Ambassador Zomlot here today. And it's important to say that recognition matters. Your work, that you've worked so hard to achieve this year, is very important. It matters because it asserts formally an international law that Palestine exists, that there is a people, a history, a legitimate claim that cannot be wished away.

But recognition without the effort to enable that state ever to be born is just an empty gesture, and this distinguished audience knows that better than anyone. Britain has led coalitions, imposed sanctions, opened its courts, and sent weapons in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. That principle being asserted is clear and right. That military occupation of another people's territory, in flagrant violation of international law, is an intolerable affront to the national-international order, and states with the capacity to act have the responsibility to do so. That principle is exactly what is required for Palestine.

And Britain's moral responsibility for the plight of Palestine, given the Balfour Declaration, given the mandate, given thirty years of colonial administration, is considerably greater than its moral responsibility for Ukraine. We did not cause the invasion of Ukraine. We did enable the dispossession and eviction of the Palestinians, and we did train up and arm their dispossessors.

I cannot stand here and speak only in the *longue durée* of history without acknowledging what is happening now in front of our eyes. At this moment, nearly the entire Gaza Strip remains in emergency conditions, with roughly 1.6 million people, 77% of the population, facing crisis-level hunger or worse, including more than 500,000 in emergency conditions and a 100,000 in catastrophe-level hunger. Famine has now been formally confirmed, with the number of children at severe risk of death from malnutrition expected to reach 43,000 within weeks. The healthcare infrastructure of the territory has been systematically disabled and destroyed. Deliberate targeting of hospitals, universities, archive buildings, mosques, and churches is not an accident of war. It is a continuation by twenty-first century means of the same project of erasure that Kundera described. The erasure of a people's memory, their culture, their history. A people without memory is a people without rights. A people without rights, whose history is erased, whose very name is subject to censorship, is a people you can drive out. Human Rights Watch has written that Israel's blockade has transcended military tactics to become a tool of extermination.

The International Court of Justice has ruled on the plausibility of genocide. The International Criminal Courts has issued arrest warrants for the Prime Minister and the former Defense Minister. These are not pronouncements of fringe

activists. These are the central institutions of the international legal order, the order that Britain helped build after 1945 at enormous cost, precisely so that this kind of atrocity would never happen again.

And yet our RAF continues to fly intelligence gathering missions, feeding targeting data to the Israeli military. British manufactured weapon parts continue to be exported to the IDF. Far more arms have left the country under this Labour government than left under its Conservative predecessor. As a country, we allow Israel's ICC-censored president to visit while banning activists who work against genocide to speak at the Oxford Union.

We still provide diplomatic cover for Netanyahu's extremist administration, which has made its intentions entirely clear. Netanyahu has explicitly named the ethnic cleansing of Gaza as an official Israeli war aim. His government has begun establishing a bureaucratic machinery to carry it out, and we are complicit with this. I don't think it's through outright malice. I believe that this profound moral failure is more a failure of education, a failure of knowledge, and a failure of imagination.

The failure to see the burnt children of Gaza as children. The failure to see in the grandmother expelled from Esdud in 1948 and her granddaughter displaced from Rafah in 2024, the same lineage, the same catastrophe continuing. The failure to understand that there are moments when a government's neutrality is itself a form of participation in evil.

Everyone in this room knows about the slaughter of the last two years. More than 72,000 innocents have been formally confirmed as killed. Independent studies indicating the number may be significantly larger, well over 100,000. The rubble is not yet cleared, and we will not know until it is.

Golda Meir said there were no Palestinians. The bones of Esdud disagree. The DNA of the Fellaheen disagree. The torpedo-shaped amphora wine jars washed up on the shores of Cornwall disagree. The name itself, 3000 years old, worn by 3000 years of continuance utterance disagrees.

There is a people. There has always been a people. They are still there. And recognition, real recognition, full recognition, recognition that leads to action, to accountability and justice is not an end. It is, as this conference rightly insists, only a beginning. With Gaza flattened, with the West Bank on fire, with Lebanon under assault and a quarter of its population homeless, there is darkness all around us.

Every morning, everyone in this room wakes up like I do, I'm sure, with the same images on their cell phones of yet more slaughtered children. Children without limbs, mothers without children. A whole civilization methodically destroyed, and it sometimes feels though this darkest of nights will never end.

But it is in the darkest blackness of the night that we dream best, and our dreams are not fantasy, they are an urgent reality. For we dream of freedom and justice and dignity for the Palestinians. We dream of a world where Palestinians are not burnt alive in their tents. We dream of a world where they are not herded like cattle from refugee camp to refugee camp to the final slaughter.

We dream of a Palestinian state supported by our government, underwritten by international law, guaranteed by the nations that bear responsibility for its absence, where Palestinians can live in safety and without fear. We dream, and together must now work, for freedom, for Palestine. Thank you.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict was made in Britain. Britain was the original sponsor of Zionist settler colonialism. Noam Chomsky once observed that settler colonialism is the most extreme, vicious kind of imperialism. For the last century, the Palestinians have been at the receiving end of Zionist settler colonialism on the one hand, and Western imperialism on the other hand.

First during the British mandate and subsequently under American leadership. In nineteen seventeen, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration. At that time, the Jews were ten percent or less than ten percent; the Palestinians were ninety percent. Yet Britain accorded national rights to the Jews and only civil and religious rights to the Palestinians.

So this was a classic colonial document which denied the rights and aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the population of the country. The Balfour Declaration enabled the systematic Zionist takeover of Palestine, which reached its cruel climax in the war in Gaza.

Israel's savage war in Gaza is the direct result of the Balfour Declaration. Britain inserted the Balfour Declaration into the League of Nations mandate. The notion of a national home was always a euphemism. From the beginning, the British meant a Jewish state, not just a Jewish national home. The cornerstone of the British Mandate in Palestine was to deny democracy, to deny elections, to deny representative institutions until the Jews became the majority, and this happened during the 1948 war as a result of the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. Not to put too fine a point on it - Britain stole Palestine from the Palestinians and handed it over to the Zionists. Sir Herbert Samuel, the first British High Commissioner to Palestine, was a Jew and an ardent Zionist. It was he who set in motion the pro-Zionist policies that eventually led to the Arab Revolt of 1936 to 1939. This revolt, as William Dalrymple just reminded us, was crushed by the British Army with the most horrific brutality. In the course of suppressing this revolt, the British Army committed many war crimes.

Rashid Khalidi wrote a chapter on the Palestinians in a book that Eugene Rogan and I co-edited called *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*. In this chapter, Khalidi argued that Palestine was not lost in the late 1940s, as is commonly believed. It was lost in the late 1930s as a result of the decisive way in which the British crushed the Palestinian resistance.

In 1948, Three quarters of a million Palestinians became refugees, and the name Palestine was wiped off the map. This is the Nakba, the catastrophe. But the Nakba is not a one-off event. It's an ongoing process which continues to this day. It is driven by ethnic cleansing. And it is Britain, again, as William Dalrymple reminded us, which created the conditions that led to the Nakba. Yet no British government has ever acknowledged its responsibility for what happened for the Palestinian tragedy. I'm involved in a project called Britain Owes Palestine. It's a project which has two aims, the same aims as the Britain Palestine project. One is to increase public awareness of Britain's historic role for the loss of Palestine, and secondly, the second aim is to influence government policy. There is a website of the Britain Owes Palestine and a lot more details for those of you who are interested.

The driving force behind Britain Owes Palestine is Munib Al-Masri, a ninety-one-year-old Palestinian from Nablus. It was he who assembled a team of about five distinguished lawyers and barristers to create a record of British crimes against the Palestinians during the mandate. I was a historical advisor to this team of lawyers, and together we produced a dossier of four hundred pages which we submitted to the British government last year. We demanded an apology for Britain's wrongdoing and a start to a process of accountability and reparation. In this four hundred page dossier, we put forward incontrovertible evidence of what lawyers call internationally wrongful acts committed by Britain during the mandate. And this includes many war crimes. War crimes not by today's standards, but war crimes by the principles of international law that were applicable at that time. Eight months on, we haven't received a reply from the British government, but that's not the end of the story. We are going to continue the demand for an apology from the British government. And if we don't receive it, we will go to the High Court, to the Supreme Court, and the European Court for Human Rights.

In 2017, on the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, thirteen and a half thousand people, myself included, signed a petition calling for a British apology for the Balfour Declaration. We got a very belligerent reply from Theresa May, the then Prime Minister, who said there is absolutely no reason for Britain to apologize. On the contrary, Britain was proud of the part it had played in enabling the Jewish people to restore the national life in their ancestral homeland. Not a word about Palestinians or Palestinian rights. Keir Starmer's government continues in this conservative tradition of plainly pro-Zionist policies.

If I'm not mistaken, Keir Starmer described himself as an unconditional Zionist. No politician should be an unconditional supporter of anything, least of all an

issue that is serious as this. Surely his support for Zionism should be conditional on Israel's respect for Palestinian human rights and for international law. Britain's record in supporting Israel over the last two and a half years in the savage war in Gaza has been very fully documented in an excellent book by Peter Osborne called *Complicity: Britain's Role in the Destruction of Gaza*.

And there are several aspects to this British support for Israel. One is the supply of arms. Britain is the third-largest arms supplier to Israel after America and Germany. At one point, Britain suspended ten percent of the arms export licenses to Israel, but the other ninety percent remain in place, and since then Britain has issued many more export licenses.

Britain has also offer Israel diplomatic protection, and one particularly egregious example of this is when Britain used its veto on the Security Council to veto a ceasefire resolution. Just imagine a war raging relentless attacks on civilians, and Britain votes against a ceasefire. The RAF has flown seven hundred and thirty-eight intelligence flights over Gaza on behalf of Israel.

Britain also makes available both to Israel and America its bases in Cyprus as well as bases in Britain for the resupply of this hideous war. Israel has committed many crimes in the course of this war. Israel has destroyed 82% of the homes and civil infrastructure in Gaza. Israel is guilty of ecocide, the destruction of the ecology, econocide, the destruction of the economy, scholasticide, which is the destruction of the educational system, which is particularly interesting to me as an academic, and I've written an article in the *Journal of British Academy* on scholasticide in Gaza, in which I point out that Israel has destroyed, bombed, damaged or destroyed 512 schools and all 12 universities in Gaza. And on top of all that, Israel has waged a cultural genocide in Gaza. And finally, there is the crime of all crimes, genocide. I know this is a controversial subject, and the British government has denied that Israel is guilty of genocide. It has denied that in order to escape the consequences of admission, admitting that Israel is guilty of genocide.

But the International Court of Justice, the UN Committee of Experts, a lot of leading Israeli scholars of genocide, led by Omer Bartov, have all said that Israel is guilty of genocide, and Omer Bartov said this is a classic case of genocide. In 1948, the year that Israel was created the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was concluded. It was concluded in order to do what happened to the Jews under Nazi Germany from happening ever again. During the Second World War, it was the Jews who were the defenseless victims of Nazi Germany. Today, it's the Palestinians in Gaza who are the defenseless victims of the Jewish state.

Last year, Britain recognized Palestine. This is just the beginning. In my own view, this is far too little, far too late, and to be precise, it's 108 years too late. Britain should have recognized the Palestinian right to statehood back in 1917 when they were 90% of the population. Keir Starmer wrote a letter to President Mahmoud Abbas informing him of this decision by the British government.

It's a really feeble and almost discourteous letter: he says that in 1917 we recognized the Jewish right to nationhood in Palestine, and now we are recognizing the Palestinian right to statehood, and we support a two-state solution. So there is the same colonial disdain to the Palestinians that is evident in this letter, and this position is utterly inadequate to meet the requirements of a real apology and reparations to the Palestinians.

It is melancholy to have to conclude that there is no sign yet of a real change of the great betrayal of the Palestinians, which has been the hallmark of British policy since 1917.

Building on the theme of today's conference, that recognition is the beginning, I would like to argue that while we can take the statement in various directions, as we've discussed already, the UK's recognition of Palestine must be the first step towards full recognition of the rights of all Palestinians, including those outside Palestine.

So when we speak of ongoing Nakba, we tend to, with very good reason, highlight Israel's continuing ongoing shrinkage of Palestinian land, which obviously began in '48 with the original Nakba, which is continuing today with the de facto annexation of the West Bank, as we heard about this morning, the de facto partition of Gaza through the land grab of the yellow line.

And the shrinkage of Palestinian land is undoubtedly hugely important. But I would like to also think about Israel's effective shrinking of the Palestinian people in the global conversation, which I would argue has actually been one of Israel's biggest successes over the last eight decades or so. So when we speak about the Palestinian people today, especially in the context of international politics and Western-dominated diplomacy, we are typically referring to the Palestinians who live in the West Bank and Gaza, what we might call occupied Palestine, around five point four million people. But this constitutes less than half of the Palestinian people worldwide.

So the global Palestinian population, a conservative estimate places it at around thirteen million. The population of the West Bank and Gaza is actually less than half, and by focusing only on those, we exclude the majority of Palestinians, and this is something in itself that serves an anti-Palestinian agenda because it serves to fragment, disperse, and essentially undermine the totality of the Palestinian people and their rights; their collective and their individual rights.

So among those who we exclude are the two million Palestinians who hold Israeli passports, at least for now, and the more than six million Palestinian refugees who live in the Arab world outside of Palestine. And I would argue that this refugee population are especially significant because they historically and today have often been crucial leading critical actors in the Palestinian national struggle, as I'll come to discuss in a moment, and also because the nature of ongoing Nakba is really about a process of ongoing dispossession, displacement, expulsion, and depopulation.

As we heard this morning, Israel is constantly creating more and more refugees. During the course of the Gaza genocide, it has displaced nearly the entirety of the population of Gaza, around two million people. They have been forced or kettled into a tiny part of the already tiny Gaza Strip, and there are ongoing explicit plans to expel them from Palestine altogether.

We see how this is a process in the fact that the vast majority of Palestinians in Gaza are already refugees from the Nakba itself. So let's return to the original Nakba of 1948. I would imagine no one in this audience needs to have it explained to them. But I think this map is nevertheless useful as a depiction of just how total the original Nakba was, of how it left no part of Palestine untouched, and also of how chaotic it was for the people on the receiving end of the intentional, deliberate, planned expulsion of the Palestinians from their homes.

I would also argue there are some quite striking parallels with the events of the Gaza genocide over the last two years. So we know that over the course of the Nakba, first various Zionist militias, which Avi covered this morning, and then from May 1948, the Israeli army, which grew out of these militias, expelled and displaced the majority of the Palestinian people. It turned at least seven hundred and fifty thousand Palestinians into refugees. The majority of the remainder were internally displaced. Many fled to the two parts of Palestine that were not seized by Israel in 1948, so the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. But more than one in three were forced to flee outside Palestine altogether and to seek safety in the neighboring Arab states, or in some cases even further afield.

And we have a sense of that from the map here. Of these refugees, the most impoverished and destitute, those who had the fewest options or no options altogether, took shelter in the refugee camps that were established across the region in the wake of the Nakba, and that we can see denoted here by the purple triangles on this map. And if we want a sense of how ongoing and how long-term this process is, many, in fact, most of these camps still exist today in various forms. Although the Israeli army has destroyed nearly all of those in Gaza to varying extents during the genocide. And in fact, as recently as yesterday, Israel was seeking to depopulate the Palestinian camps in parts of southern Beirut in Lebanon.

So this is very much an ongoing cycle. And what's more, if we look at the early history of the camps, we also see one of the first post-Nakba moves to undermine the Palestinian struggle. Because in pretty much every international communication and document from the late '40s and from the '50s, the

Palestinians are described and classified as Arab refugees from Palestine. Not Palestinians, but Arab refugees from Palestine. And this was not simply a question of semantics. This was a very powerful way to strip the Palestinians of their national identity. Something that would be continued, as Avi mentioned before the break, by Golda Meir's statement in 1969 that they simply did not exist.

What's more, at the same time, the Palestinian refugee identity was depoliticized in the international discourse. It was treated as simply the unfortunate by-product of war, rather than the reality that the Palestinians had been deliberately expelled on account of their national and racial identity. This was despite the fact that at the end of nineteen forty-eight, as I would imagine people here know too well, the UN had gone some way to acknowledging the reality when it passed Resolution one nine four, which officially recognized the Palestinians' right to return to their homes.

And it is worth noting that both the UK and the US voted in favor of this resolution. But when the Israeli state made it clear across successive governments that they would not be honoring this right, that they would be denying this right, the global powers made no move to pressure its implementation despite their supposed support for the resolution. So already here we see how the Nakba has multiple elements to it. It's obviously the original expulsion, but it is also the denial of return. It's really the denial of return that turns the Nakba from just an event into a process. In fact, many Palestinian refugees rejected this. They knew that they had the right to return, and many of them tried to do so in the late nineteen forties and nineteen fifties. But anyone who was found trying to return could and would be shot by the Israeli military on site. And we know that as many as five thousand Palestinians were killed in this way in the early nineteen fifties, the majority of them unarmed. Again, clear parallels with the Gaza genocide and also with Israeli actions in Lebanon today.

Now, the pictures on the slide here were taken by the UN and circulated by the UN as part of its fundraising efforts for aid for Palestinian refugees at this time. And this formed part of the wider discourse whereby the refugees' plight was treated or spoken of almost entirely in terms of basic need, divorced from the political context. The refugees themselves, the Palestinians themselves, would soon make it clear how flawed this approach was. Because far from being apolitical spaces for the receipt of aid or the distribution of aid, the camps came to act as driving forces in the Palestinian national struggle for many decades. And this reality is summed up very clearly in a quote here from Fawaz Turki, who was himself a Palestinian refugee from Haifa, forced to flee with his family

in '48, and who spent the later part of his youth in Bourj al-Barajneh camp in southern Beirut. Incidentally, this is one of the camps that has been repeatedly forcibly evacuated, or to use another word, depopulated by the Israeli military as part of its occupation of Lebanon at the moment. Another example of the ongoing Nakba.

So reflecting on his life in the camps, Turki wrote later on, "As we grew up in the camps, we lived Palestine every day. We talked Palestine every day. For we had not, in fact, left it in 1948. We had simply taken it with us."

And by doing this, by refusing to abandon Palestine, the refugees effectively established their camps as key sites of the Palestinian national struggle against ongoing Nakba.

I want to share a couple of historical examples of what this looked like in practice. So let's start with the key UN agency that was set up to work with Palestinian refugees, or UNRWA, which we can see [here](#). Regularly in the news over the last three years or so as the target of an ongoing Israeli campaign to discredit and destroy the agency's work, really as a way or as a proxy for attacking and undermining Palestinian refugee rights. Netanyahu and many others in Israel have claimed for many years now that UNRWA is a pro-Palestinian agency devoted to the destruction of the State of Israel. I'd imagine many people here are aware that in recent years, Israel's attacks on UNRWA have escalated to the point of the Knesset outlawing it as a terrorist organization.

Now, there is a lot we could say about this. But the critical point I want to make right now is that this suggestion of UNRWA as some kind of politically pro-Palestinian, anti-Israeli body is entirely at odds with its historical origins. And in fact, Palestinian refugee communities always from the beginning had a complicated relationship with the agency, and their relationship with it has provided one of the earliest cases of their political activism. To understand this more, let's take a look at UNRWA's full name. So it's the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. The relief part is fairly self-evident. It's created to provide essential services. The works element doesn't really get much attention, and it might seem a bit unclear why works is even referred to in UNRWA's title. It is because UNRWA was created on the basis of a report that had been issued after the Nakba by the UN's Economic Survey Mission. And the Economic Survey Mission had recommended that Palestinian refugees should be permanently resettled outside Palestine in the Arab host states. So even though the UN had formally recognized their right to return to their homes, and even though every branch of the UN was at least ostensibly aligned with the recognition of this

right, behind the scenes, there was much discussion over how they could find a way to permanently resettle the Palestinians outside of Palestine. In other words, to make the Nakba a permanent state of affairs and to solidify the fragmentation and dispersal of the Palestinian people as a way of weakening them.

In the 1950s, in 1952, the UN authorized what it openly called a reintegration fund for Palestinian refugees of \$200 million, which was assigned for UNRWA to bring about the refugees' full integration into the Arab host states over a three-year period. And this is where the 'work' comes in, because although the reintegration efforts had different facets to them, the main focus was on job creation schemes, which UNRWA was responsible for.

The idea was that if the Palestinian refugees could be employed in the Arab host states in a gainful long-term sense, the thinking went they would eventually make new lives in exile and forget about Palestine. This did not prove to be the case. The refugees from the outset were largely hostile and suspicious of the work schemes, suspecting, not without cause, that the aim was to undermine their right of return. It's worth flagging at this point as well that many Palestinian refugees have been forcibly divorced, not only from their land and their homes, but also from their loved ones. Because if we flick back to the Nakba map, it's worth keeping in mind that often many families were dispersed. So you would have relatives of a single family suddenly finding themselves in different parts of exile, and the desire to return had lots of elements to it, but one element was the desire to reunite with lost loved ones. So as a result of this, the refugees overwhelmingly refused to participate in the UNRWA schemes. The largest number ever employed under the UNRWA works program was just over 10,000, and by the end it was less than 1,000. By the time we get to the middle of the 1950s, UNRWA management were quietly admitting that the refugees' opposition to the job schemes was making the program almost impossible to implement. And by the end of the 1950s, UNRWA had quietly dropped this element of its work altogether, although it retains the works in its title to this day. Now, why is all of this significant for our purposes here in 2026? I would argue for a few reasons. It makes it very clear that the Palestinian refugees were not going to simply accept the loss of Palestine or efforts to make them forget it. They were determined and actually very effective at utilizing the limited leverage they had, as they would continue to do it also showed their understanding of the inherently political nature of their exile, as well as their determination and their dedication to return. And what's more, it's also significant because of what happened next, which is that as UNRWA quietly wound down its jobs program, it shifted its focus to education.

So in the late 1950s, UNRWA's provision for refugee education expanded significantly. The number of UNRWA schools increased multiple times over. And from 1960 into the 21st century, education became the single largest program run by UNRWA in terms of both funding and personnel. What is crucial is that UNRWA's shift away from jobs towards education came about in a large part due to demands from the Palestinian refugees themselves.

The earliest schools for Palestinian refugees in exile had been set up by refugees, many of whom had been teachers or educators in Palestine. They set up makeshift lessons in tents or even in the open air, as we can see here. And as soon as UNRWA arrived on the scene in 1950, Palestinian refugees were demanding that it expand its provision of education. Again, they understood this as being inherently connected to the politics of their plight. They saw education as the key to improving their prospects, but many also felt that it was a key tool in the struggle for Palestine itself, and as such, it was seen as the opposite of the work schemes.

All of these themes have remained core to Palestinian history and to Palestinian refugee politics over the decades. The rejection of a suggestion that their plight is solely humanitarian and apolitical, their dedication to the right of return, and their assertion of political agency.

What's more, education itself has remained a site of major struggle for the Palestinian refugees. In 1969, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon forcibly took control of their camps by ejecting the state security forces that had guarded them up until then and had suppressed Palestinian political activism. Over the course of the 1970s and the early 1980s, Palestinians ran their camps themselves in Lebanon, and one of their key activities here was trying to bring in more teaching about Palestinian history, which up until then had been excluded from the UNRWA schools. In this sense, the camps provided a model for ideas and practices of self-sufficiency and national solidarity, which we would later see enacted in Palestine itself after the beginning of the First Intifada in Gaza in 1987.

And then in the current century, starting in the year 2000, we saw further assertions by Palestinian refugees everywhere of their right of return. In the year 2000, the Israeli army finally withdrew from Southern Lebanon after an 18-year occupation, an occupation which unfortunately has now restarted. At the same time, Palestinians across Palestine were rising up in the Second Intifada. And so in this year, 2000, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon traveled in huge numbers to the southern border to declare unity and solidarity with their compatriots there. This would not be a one-off. Eleven years later, in the context of popular

revolutions spreading across the Arab world, what is sometimes known as the Arab Spring in the West, Palestinians in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, as well as the West Bank and Gaza, marched en masse towards Israel to demand their right of return on the anniversary of the Nakba.

And this picture here is a picture of the march taking place in Lebanon at that time. As had been the case after the original Nakba, they were met with gunfire from the Israeli military. But again, this did not prove the end, and many here will remember Palestinians in Gaza organizing and enacting the Great March of Return in 2018 on the 70th anniversary of the Nakba, signaling again their continued dedication to it.

To wrap up, I would argue these commonalities are especially striking in today's context, coming into two and a half years of genocide in Gaza and a brutal repeated Israeli occupation of Lebanon, where although it has received very little coverage, the Lemkin Institute for the Prevention of Genocide has raised a red flag alert expressing overt concerns about the risk of genocide in Lebanon today.

I would also flag that in its attacks both on Gaza and in Lebanon as well as the West Bank, Israel consistently targets the refugee camps. It seeks to dismantle them and to depopulate them, and that is because Israel understands the significance of the refugees to the Palestinian struggle. And by way of conclusion, I would argue it is crucial that we understand this too.

Recognition of the state of Palestine must be the beginning and the first step to full recognition of Palestinians everywhere.

This question of Palestine in global public opinion is a very moving topic. Opinions have changed quite radically in the last two years, and I'd like to give you some facts, figures, and scenes to illustrate this. First of all, two scenes from New York City, followed by another city, Rome. But first in New York, just last week, a part of New York that is very tony and liberal and upmarket Park Slope in Brooklyn, if anyone knows the place. It's a bit like the sort of Belsize Park or Hampstead of New York. The Park Slope Food Co-op, which everyone has to belong to if you're a real citizen of Park Slope, you belong to the Food Co-op. But last week, they held a referendum at the Park Slope Co-Food Co-op about whether to have a boycott of Israeli goods, and this caused a lot of very heated debate as can be imagined. And it was noisy, it was unpleasant, it was argy-bargy, it was pushy. And in the end, the motion passed by a full sixty-seven percent of members; two-thirds of members of the Park Slope Food Co-op.

And of course, this is a liberal bastion in New York, but, at the same time, Brooklyn is the sort of undeclared capital of the American intelligentsia. This is where the top lawyers, the top media figures, the top publishers in the United States live. And needless to say, it is also the undeclared capital of Jewish America. And it is hard to understate the significance of this little vote in a very local place in the US.

Another scene in the United States, in New York City- Fifth Avenue in Manhattan this Sunday. the annual Israel Day Parade: record turnout, big crowds, lots of politicians. Of course, there had been big attacks on the new mayor of New York, Zohran Mamdani, because he was the first mayor in history to say he was not going to attend this parade. He took a lot of flak for that, big attacks on him, expectedly. But then at this parade, a pack of very far-right Israeli politicians showed up uninvited apparently, and by their act they gave much more credit to Zohran Mamdani and his position. I think many people who might have criticized him for not participating in this traditional parade in New York City now agree it would have been a mistake for him to show up and be seen standing next to characters such as Bezalel Smotrich, the chief architect of illegal settlement in the West Bank. So there are two scenes from New York City.

Two scenes from Rome, or from the Italian media in recent couple of weeks: the magazine cover of L'Espresso, the biggest selling magazine in Italy, and its

covers are a big deal, showed an armed Israeli settler snarling at a Palestinian woman. This created a furor. Israel complained, its ambassador complained. The Israeli Foreign Ministry charged the L'Espresso with antisemitism. There were claims that this was a fake picture. And then it turned out, of course, it was not fake. And this was a real photograph; there's plenty of evidence for that. And this sort of wolf warrior diplomacy by Israel proved to be an own goal rather like the Israeli ministers showing up at this New York march. And another scene that showed up in the Italian media was pictures of another Israeli minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, the interior minister in Israel, gloating over captive members of the Gaza flotilla that had been arrested and dragged off their ships and dragged to Israel and serially abused on camera. And this created outrage in Italy. So with just those two images in the space of a couple of weeks, opinion has really flipped in Italy and has never been quite so strongly pro-Palestinian or anti-Israeli. So that's just things that can happen in a very short time. So those are two scenes in New York, two scenes in Rome.

I want to take two words also. One in Arabic, one in Hebrew, which had very little currency in the world just a few years ago: one of them is the Arabic word Nakba, which we just heard about. A few years ago, your average person would have no idea what we're talking about. This is a very obscure little term for just the people in this room and very few others. This has become a much more widely understood term. And the other term is a Hebrew term, Hasbara, meaning explanation, the lawyer's argument. Propaganda is another word that people had not particularly heard of outside of this room or among Israelis. But I think now in the world, that is very widely understood, much more widely.

So yes, there's been a huge shift of public opinion, and perhaps more importantly, of global understanding of the issue in the Middle East or the Palestinian issue, and also a shift in Jewish opinion, which is very important. And it's interesting that this shift is largely due to Israel itself.

We all know this is happening. There's a lot of nuance here, but let me just quickly give a few numbers to show how the big picture's changed. Globally first, big picture in April, a poll by a Denmark-based international NGO that's focused on democracy, surveyed ninety-four thousand people around the world. And they asked people to score different countries by their perceptions of those countries, negative, positive, negative. And there were sixty-eight countries ranked. The high scorers, Switzerland and Canada, not surprisingly, plus thirty-six, positive. The EU, UK, and for, just by way of example, Egypt, all came in at plus ten, 11, something like that.

The very lowest ranking country among the sixty-eight was Israel, minus twenty-four. It came lower than North Korea, Afghanistan, Iran and of course, this is not entirely new. Israel has never been globally popular, but this situation of real isolation is quite unprecedented. In the US Pew, one of the top polling firms, has surveyed favorable or unfavorable attitudes to Israel for the last four years. And what this survey shows, this is before October 7th and after October 7th, and this survey shows a completely X-shaped chart. Four years ago, the score was sixty percent of Americans in favor of Israel, favorable opinion, forty percent unfavorable. Now it's exactly reversed. So it's sixty percent unfavorable to Israel, forty percent favorable.

And of course, there's a sharp division between Republicans and Democrats here, but more worrying for Israel, there's an even sharper division between young and old. Among Americans under fifty, overall, seventy percent view Israel unfavorably. And among Democrats under fifty, we're talking about eighty-four percent having an unfavorable view.

Europe also, rather like Britain it's an X-shaped curve with favorability going towards Palestinians rather than to Israelis, including among countries such as Germany which has been the most important supporter of Israel after the United States.

I'll just give one little information point. In a poll in September last year, Germans were asked, "Is the way that Israel is fighting the war in Gaza justifiable or not justifiable?" And even in Germany, which has this guilt complex and a really very slanted media I know very well, I lived there a couple of years, quite recently eighty-three percent of Germans said, "No, Israel's actions in Gaza are not justifiable." That's really pretty strong. And then just quickly, in the Arab world, there's been another very broad poll. Polling in the Arab world is notoriously impossible and difficult, but it's interesting that across thirteen countries last year, eighty-seven percent of Arabs opposed recognizing Israel, with only six percent in favor. And also, an interesting number there, eighty-seven percent also last year said they felt psychological stress, personal psychological stress as a result of the war in Gaza. In other words, they all identified deeply with Palestinians. Jewish opinion is also shifting worldwide, and there's strong evidence of that.

In the United States, for example, a survey just in April by J Street sponsored by J Street showed that among attitudes more broadly than just Israel-Palestine, sixty-seven percent of American Jews say they intend to vote Democrat in midterms. A very big majority deeply dislikes Trump. Sixty-two percent of American Jews oppose the war in Iran. Fifty-five percent oppose the way Israel

has conducted its war in Gaza. Seventy-eight percent favor either a binational solution for Israel-Palestine or a two-state solution, and only twenty-two percent of American Jews favor what the Israeli government is doing now, which is, to say it bluntly, annexation plus apartheid. That's the policy. Only twenty-two percent support among American Jews. And although a very strong majority of American Jews say they are attached to Israel, that's a continuing and big majority. It's interesting that when asked about political candidates they would choose and whether their attitude to Israel is important, eighty-three percent of American Jews said it's not a deal breaker for them, i.e., attitudes to Israel among American politicians are not high on the list of concern for American Jews. Plus, thirty percent of American Jews said they have more sympathy with Palestinians than for Israelis, which is a really striking number yet another poll, Washington Post very recently, sixty-one percent of American Jews say Israel has committed war crimes, and thirty-nine percent agree that this should be called genocide.

Thirty-nine percent, again, very striking number among American Jews. It's interesting also that these numbers change according to education. It's quite a deep poll. And the more educated you are, the more critical you are of Israel among American Jews. So I will stop the numbers because there are too many of them.

The numbers are the good news. The difficult news is actually the caveats that surround this. So these X-shaped curves that show increasing sympathy for Palestinians, declining sympathy for Israelis across all countries in the West, the largest number is not in those groups of anti and pro.

The largest number is the 'don't knows', undecided, and that's where the trouble comes. It is that zone where trouble lies and where Israel's new seven hundred and thirty million dollar a year Hasbara budget is going to make a difference. And we all know that converting opinion into political action is a very slow process. We have to look no further than the funny building up the river here with the spiky Victorian towers. And you'll find that MPs in Parliament here, as in Brussels, as in the United Nations, will all tell you that personally they feel very strongly about this, but getting action from governments, getting action from political parties, is very difficult.

It's interesting. Opinion is one thing but the actual power still lies elsewhere. I just want to give one last data point. One reason for this is that we have seen that youth opinion has moved very strongly. But in the United States, for example, weighted by who gives political money, the average age of a campaign donor in the United States is now sixty-seven and a half years old. The average

age of a US senator is now sixty-four. So these over fifties who are very pro-Israel are very much in charge of American politics still. Persuading the wavering middle is one part of our task. Gaining more people to jump out of that not sure category is another part, and moving up the influence chain is another part.

So that's a pretty huge agenda and it remains a very long uphill climb.

Thank you so much for inviting me. And what I'll try to do is lay out how I see public opinion addressing some of the main questions that we have on our mind.

I was actually asked to consider Israeli and Palestinian public opinion. I will leave most of the Palestinian explanation to Noor, of course. But I want to just highlight some of the numbers that come out of joint Israeli-Palestinian public opinion research, or really I'll talk about the trends, and that's because for most of my career, I'm actually a public opinion researcher myself, and I conduct those joint surveys together with my colleague Khalil Shikaki, who is a Palestinian public opinion researcher.

But I'm not gonna get too much into the weeds. I wanna talk about the big trends. One of the interesting things that we've seen over the years is that despite vast asymmetry of power in this conflict, we see very parallel trends in public opinion over the years in terms of how each side has felt about key issues like a two-state solution or diplomacy or the use of force or attitudes towards the other.

And so I can say that, after October 7th, this was obviously a turning point in public opinion, and I think the obvious trend that both sides once again displayed when we conducted our last Israeli-Palestinian public opinion survey in the summer of 2024. But even separately, the two sides had shown these trends for the right away within those first six months that both sides became more hard line on everything on the issues that are related to de-escalation.

And so a brief example from the Palestinians is that right away we saw elevated support for Hamas, particularly in the West Bank, but also a little bit in Gaza immediately in the first survey. This was a separate Palestinian survey also conducted by the same organization, the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research.

Actually, support tripled in the West Bank and rose just a little bit in Gaza. And in those first many months, a very high support for the phrasing, Hamas' offensive attack on October 7th, and that support was high for a long time. Both of those trends have been tempered somewhat over the last two years.

On the Israeli side, what we saw in all of these kinds of questions that would indicate escalation or de-escalation was extremely high support, almost

consensus really, on Israel's response, Israel's war in and on Gaza, with, I should say, a massive difference always between Jewish Israeli citizens and Palestinian citizens of Israel.

So we, in Israeli surveys, and including in the joint Israeli-Palestinian survey, we include Palestinian citizens or '48 Palestinians, and we count them on the Israeli side. So the average, will always show a weighted average, and it's brought down by far lower support from Palestinian citizens for everything to do with escalation or war or supporting the use of force.

But this is really driven by the Jewish Israeli population showing near consensus support for Israel's actions in Gaza, Israel's level of the use of force, and I mean in the early months. And those trends really went on with a couple of mitigating factors that from early 2024, through to the declaration of a ceasefire, I would hesitate to really call it a ceasefire, in October 2025.

So for almost all of that time, the majority of Israelis, a consistent majority including among the Jewish population, was supporting a ceasefire throughout that time as opposed to only about one-third, anywhere between one-quarter and one-third. And here I'm drawing mainly on public surveys from the media that were consistently asking this question.

So you had a majority that supported a ceasefire, which can be seen as something like a mitigating factor for the very hard line views that we saw in other ways towards Gaza. But I have to say that the reason why Israelis were supporting a ceasefire at that time, and this by the way was shared by Jewish Israelis and Palestinians from 1948 not at equal levels.

Palestinians had a consensus support for a ceasefire, whereas among the Jewish population it tended to be more like just over 50% or up to 60%, sometimes higher. But the reasons were not out of humanitarian concerns for Gaza or criticism of, how extensive the war had become and, how much of Gaza had been destroyed. It was really almost always, if you probe beyond the numbers, it was really about hostage release, and that's always how it was tested in surveys as well. The other reason why there were some mitigating factors particularly that higher support for a ceasefire, was because Israelis had become very critical during the war in Gaza because they viewed the war as Netanyahu's, a matter of Netanyahu's political interest.

And not only were they desperate to get the hostages back, but they had come to believe that the war on Gaza, which I think that through most of this time we can credibly call it a war on Gaza, they were seeing it as something that served

Netanyahu's interest and had used up even the kind of military or strategic value of destroying Hamas that Israeli Jews support.

And, that was driving their critique of the ongoing war at that time. It really was not about either humanitarian concerns or moral concerns, and it certainly was not due to any support for a diplomatic path towards Palestinians in general or diplomatic solutions. One of the things, the other parallel trends I should point out, is that really both Israelis and Palestinians certainly based on the joint survey we conducted in July 2024, showed that the vast strong majority of both sides, really I should say about two-thirds held the absolute worst view of the other in terms of assessing that the other side was trying to totally annihilate them.

We asked actually almost an identical question about what you think the intentions of the other side are. Almost two-thirds believe the other side was totally trying to completely destroy them, and another roughly fifteen or twenty percent thought they were trying to mostly destroy them or, really the second most extreme view in that question.

Both sides held very dehumanized views of the other based on scale where we asked outright how much humanity do you see in the other side. And so those were the parallels. Another divergence, however, was that Israelis displayed a decline in support for the two-state solution. And I mention the two-state solution not because it's the perfect solution or even a possible solution, but mostly because it has been a long-term kind of barometer question that we test in surveys.

And we've seen the decline from a firm majority among all Israelis, including among the Jewish population from 2010, that was a slow and steady incremental decline, losing the majority dipping below 50% already in 2018. And at this point, among the Israeli population in total, support for a two-state solution stands only at around 30% lower among the Jewish Israeli population because you always have very high support from Palestinian citizens in Israel.

And that is also a bit of a divergence. On the Palestinian side, we've seen that support went up a little bit and has leveled out at around 40% for that solution. Again, it's a very broad question, mostly just to test changes over time. There are some expectations that the people, the public, will somehow move the government because Israel's government is so extreme and really is filled with religious fundamentalists towards a more conciliatory approach.

I don't see that. What we did see that throughout the two years of the war in Gaza, that the public, the majority were hoping for a ceasefire, again, driven by hostage release. So they were ahead of the leadership in that sense. But right now the Israeli public, again, once again driven by attitudes among the Jewish public, they're ahead of the leadership in terms of wanting more escalation.

For example, on the front with Hezbollah and Lebanon. You have by, according to the most recent poll from the Institute for National Security Studies, 59% of Israelis, and that's all Israelis, want greater engagement or greater intensification of Israel's actions against Hezbollah.

So we know that's higher among the Jewish population. They're disappointed in the government's actions in ending the war in Iran. They were disappointed that the war didn't achieve what the prime minister had laid out as the main aims, and disappointed by the fact that a ceasefire was essentially imposed by the Trump administration.

So I feel pretty in touch with how Israelis think about things, but many of these things are unprecedented. And so everybody was complaining, and traumatized, and scared and life was deeply disrupted because of the war in Iran. But I myself did not predict that great majorities of the Israeli Jewish public opposed the ceasefire in April. And that's mainly because they think the war hadn't achieved the goals that the prime minister promised.

So we'll talk about young people afterwards, but briefly, Israeli Jewish young people are more hardline, in general, than the older populations. Among 48 Palestinians that sometimes is the case, but it's not as consistent. And in terms of changing global attitudes, we went through that in great detail very accurately.

The one thing I would say about that is that Israelis are aware of their deteriorating position, and all the data that we just talked about gets a lot of coverage in Israel. But Israelis always attribute it to either weak Hasbara, a word you now all know, which Israelis consider public diplomacy or propaganda, and they point to exactly the kind of, changing information environment which they believe allows lies to spread about what Israel has done in Gaza or in other situations. Global journalists that are somehow anti-Israel. And so they always attribute it to a campaign against Israel, but social media feeds that because they can look at social media and say, "This stuff isn't real." And so it feeds denialism, I think. And so I wouldn't expect Israeli public opinion to change because of global public opinion, but I do agree that in the long term changing public opinion abroad can change policy slowly and surely.

But we see how the Democratic Party, for example, in the US has recently held a vote where a much more significant number voted to limit arms export and, Senator Chris Van Hollen writing a very prominent op-ed calling to de-exceptionalize America's support for Israel. So that is probably the direction of change.

Let me start with the UK recognition of Palestine because I think it is very telling to what we're talking about. There is a shifting dynamic in global public opinion about Palestine, about the prolonged injustice that the Palestinian people have endured. But that shifting global public opinion is still not able to overcome the wall of established mainstream attitudes in politics. And the announcement of the UK Prime Minister about the recognition of Palestine, I think provides a very good example of that.

In that announcement, the words Palestine and Palestinian were mentioned seven times. The word Israel and Israeli was mentioned eight. Nowhere was the word international law, United Nations, self-determination. Those words were not included in that announcement. Now, why am I saying that and why am I picking on Keir Starmer? He deserves it, but it also tells you where we're at, the contrast between where global public opinion is heading about Palestine and where mainstream politics in the West, the former colonizers of Palestine, the Western powers who now have permanent seats at the UN Security Council are.

The issue of Palestine is moving in terms of policy only when it has to, only under extreme pressure, and only in as much as it doesn't really disturb the balance of power that has allowed Israel not just to maintain Nakba since 1947, but to also commit genocide live on the air since 2023, and to continue to commit ethnic cleansing in the occupied West Bank.

You see that contrast in the debate about settlers and settlements, where global public opinion recognizes that settlements are not just illegal, they are a crime. Their mere existence is a crime. It is violent because it is the taking, the usurping of someone else's land, of someone else's livelihood. And so there are no extremist settlers and peace-loving settlers. At the end of the day, they are in someone else's land. To use international law as an à la carte menu, and I'm talking about governments here, speaks to what Professor Avi Shlaim talked about, avoiding at all costs the taking of responsibility for what is happening and what has been happening to the Palestinians.

Now, the recognition itself, sure, I know that my friend Ambassador Husam considers it, and rightly an important milestone. But I think it can only become that if it is matched with actions that correspond to the recognition. If you recognize Palestine, you cannot trade with goods produced on stolen land. That is a position overwhelmingly supported by British citizens, but also by the

global trend towards Palestine. You cannot treat the Israeli government as a normal government because it is not, because the Israeli prime minister is indicted by the ICC, wanted on an arrest warrant, along with at least two other Israeli officials.

It's not just the ICJ ruling of 2024 that it declared all of Israel's presence in the areas occupied in '67 as illegal. It's the fact that this is a state that is acting as a pariah state, and that corresponding action by other governments have been met with thousands of separate sanctions wherein Israel exceptionalism continues to be the rule in the mainstream.

But what is that doing? And I'll tell you that from a Palestinian perspective, because I think one of the most interesting things that we've gone through as Palestinians since the onset of the genocide is to watch the world's people see what we feel and what we go through, and to reject the filter of mainstream, to isolate mainstream media, which has on many occasions been complicit in this genocide, and to be in a place where they simply cannot unsee the truth. And that will have, I think, long-term implications for mainstream media, which is losing its share of the pie. It's losing its integrity and its standing as a credible source of information because it has proven over the years that it's not objective, that it's not unbiased, and that it does not view Palestinians as of equal worth and equal humanity.

Global public opinion, which is shifting against genocide, against ethnic cleansing and being more pro-Palestinian has simply switched off the TV and does not visit mainstream media. And hats off to them for doing that. How do we go from where we are now with all that frustration, with all those shifting opinions, to a place where policy changes?

I think we keep politicians on their toes, which is exactly where politicians need to be at all times. It's not enough to tell them now you've done the recognition. It's more important, I think, for them to understand that upcoming elections, their fate will be decided by whether they match words with actions, and that performative steps simply don't cut it anymore. The world cannot unsee what they've seen since 2023. They cannot unlearn what they've learned. And Palestinians have a much lower tolerance for what they already knew was institutional bias and racism against them. For trying over the decades to show themselves, to prove their humanity in order to get the attention of the mainstream.

I think you will find less and less attempts to do that by Palestinians, and more alignment with the vast majority of people who understand that our fate as

humans is more connected than we previously realized. And to understand that solidarity with Palestine is not just not controversial, it is common sense.

Because what has been allowed, what has been normalized in Palestine, in Gaza, and in the West Bank, is now spreading across the region, and it will be normal beyond the boundaries of the Middle East if the status quo continues, if the mainstream is allowed to get comfortable and trade real policy change for performative actions, for nice declarations, for expressions of concern. And as a Palestinian, I do want to share with you two stories that happened over the past three years that I think brings this contrast between the mainstream politics and the change of public opinion into focus:

Two European politicians that I met, one at the beginning of the genocide who was outraged that I didn't understand why Israel had to do this to the Palestinians in Gaza. She said that out loud, and she did not find any problem saying it out loud, any problem expressing her outrage to me that I was shaken by watching my people being systematically destroyed and annihilated.

Another senior European politician who also said, without hesitation, that Palestinians must understand the trauma that Israelis are going through. And that is reflected in mainstream media. Reports about Israeli soldiers who now feel the trauma of the battle that they've waged on Gaza, on the Palestinians. The same soldiers you've seen over the past three years live stream the brutality, the depravity, the murders, the posing in the lingerie of dispossessed and killed Palestinian women, the playing with the toys of the kids who have been displaced from their homes in Gaza, and the cheering when homes were bombed and leveled in Gaza. Those same soldiers we are now, according to the mainstream media, expected to feel sympathy for because they're traumatized from the volume of crimes that have been committed. No mention of the indictments of war crimes, no treatment of those wanted on arrest warrants in the same way that other war criminals are treated.

That level of indifference to Palestinian humanity, to Palestinian feelings, to Palestinian rights continues to be, I think, part of the mainstream, and that is why you see snail-speed action at the official level. What I would argue is that moving forward this tension between the public opinion, and especially among the youth that sees this as intolerable and unacceptable, and the mainstream will not result in the public opinion withdrawing.

On the contrary, I think there is a bigger realization worldwide that what is happening to Palestinians, what is being allowed to happen in Palestine is part of a much bigger problem. And the alignment of interests is part of a much

bigger problem. So instead of trying to get into the mainstream, you will have more polarization and more pressure on those policy makers of the mainstream today.

The way we're seeing, for example, in the Democratic Party in the US, which continues to have the blinders on, save for the progressive bloc, which if they survive being primaried by AIPAC, will continue to apply the kind of pressure that you see in the debates about, about support and weapons supply and so on in the US.

But the fact that we're still not there and the fact that this shift in global opinion has not affected policy, I think should not be, it shouldn't be a reason to be discouraged. It's very difficult to be optimistic during these times, and I understand the enormity of the significance of what Dalia concluded with about Israeli youth, and the fact that they are more hardline and more right-wing.

And I don't think that we completely comprehend the effects of the genocide on Palestinians, not yet anyways. I don't think we've been able to process it all because it hasn't stopped. But I think at the end of the day, the only way for Israel to move from where it is now, a society that endorses genocide, that supports everything that has been happening, that sees the equation as zero sum, us or them kind of equation, is for th- for us to call things for what they are.

This is not about a peace process. This is about decolonization. This is about Palestinian freedom, and the expectation that if you can just pound Palestinians enough and force them to meet certain criteria to make Israelis comfortable, to give them some of their rights, that is no longer a workable formula. I know many of our politicians still think it is, but let me tell you the alternative view in Palestine. It is not. Three years almost after the onset of the genocides, the level of tolerance for this kind of dehumanizing colonial rhetoric is quite literally near zero. It is not what Palestinians want to hear, and it's not what Palestinians are willing to work with.

They're willing to work with people who see them as equals, with people who don't need them to prove their humanity, with partners around the world who understand that without Palestinian freedom, this region will continue to be tortured, and this world will continue to have that mirror facing them, showing them the hypocrisy, the duplicity, and their complicity in these crimes and the unraveling of this international order we keep hearing so much about from the countries that created it without, of course, Palestinians in mind, because we were supposed to have disappeared decades ago.

But we've proven very difficult to make disappear. We've proven very difficult to also be put on mute. And we're here, and we're here to stay despite the genocide, despite the apartheid, and despite the annexation. And the fact that we have more global partners in ordinary people and the human rights organizations and the civil society around the world, including brave organizations in Israel, only adds to my conviction that the way forward is not to appease the mainstream, but to continue to challenge it. Because playing by those rules that produced and designed the Nakba are not going to result in liberation or decolonization or even peace, which has almost turned into a dirty word at this point. But it will not bring justice, and that is not something that I personally think is tolerable after everything that we've endured and seen over the past three years.

So whether the mainstream is comfortable with it or not, I think the only way forward is to continue telling them that whatever they're doing is simply not enough. Thank you.

That picture on the left won first prize in the 2024 World Press Photography Competition. It's a lady holding her dead niece in a place called Jabalia, which you will have heard of. And that picture on the right won first prize in 2025, and it's a young nine-year-old boy who's lost both of his arms from an explosive injury. The figure on the left is taken from the United Nations OCHA website just the other day. The official death toll from, directly from trauma that we heard about earlier is 72,773.

The Lancet medical journal, which has published magnificently over the last two years, estimates that is at least, should be at least 53% higher. It doesn't take into account the many thousands buried under the rubble whose bodies have been undiscovered. So that means at least 100,000 have been killed directly by trauma alone.

We know that more than 22,000 children have been killed; 30% of the deaths. We know that more than 30 children have been killed on average every single day in Gaza. Back in November 2023, it was an average of about 100 a day. On March the 18th last year, the day the ceasefire was broken, 189 children were killed. But on average, 30 children per day over the last two and a bit years. The equivalent number in Ukraine is 0.7. In the Iraq war, 0.6. In Syria, three. Afghanistan, two. In Gaza, over 30 children per day. Over 40,000 children have lost one or both parents, and at latest count, there's more than 4,500 child amputees. The Lancet back in July 2024, when taking into account excess deaths, estimated that when you take into account the diseases that haven't been treated, like cancer, like heart disease, kidney disease, strokes, they estimated the death toll from excess deaths was about 180,000. They upgraded that number to 220,000 later that year. Last year, we heard it might be more than 350,000, and the latest estimate is that it exceeds half a million. Even if you take the lower of those estimates, it means that at least 10% of the population of Gaza has been killed during this military assault in the last two and a bit years.

This is a typical scene that I witnessed in my many trips to Gaza over the last two and a half years. This is the compilation of Al-Aqsa Hospital and Nasser Hospital Medical Complex. These are typical scenes that we saw every day during mass casualties. Not enough beds, so people being treated on the ground, the floor literally covered in blood, and the majority of them are women and children. This is a typical scene in the operating theater. That patient I'd just finished operating on from an explosive injury, and the missile of choice used in

the bombs are these fragmentation missiles which contain many thousands of very small metal fragments which tear through the human body causing the most appalling damage. And these are weapons which are designed to cause the maximum amount of tissue damage.

This is a day in Al-Aqsa Hospital which illustrates the appalling nature of these mass casualties. You can see me on the top left. I'm just tending to a six-year-old boy who'd just been landed on the floor of the accident emergency department there. His parents had been killed. He and his sister were the only remaining members of their family. And when I saw this little boy, he had a big hole in the left side of his chest, which for non-medical people leading to lung damage is a rapidly fatal condition. We picked him up, took him into the resuscitation room, which you can see there on the right. This resuscitation room had six patients in there, all of whom were children. There was only one trolley, and lying on that trolley was the lad, the eight-year-old boy you can see on the ground there with a bandage around his head. He had been admitted three hours previously with a catastrophic non-survivable head injury. His brain was exposed. He would never have survived in London, Oxford, let alone Gaza. But he had to be allowed to die because there was nothing that could be done, but he was very slow to die. He was still breathing. We had to pick him up, put him on the ground to let him continue to die so we could resuscitate this six-year-old boy. In the foreground of that picture is Aya, the sister of that little boy. Remember, the two remaining survivors of that family. She didn't have life-threatening injuries. She had a badly broken leg which was so broken, so displaced that she'd lost the blood supply to her foot. That foot was going to die unless that leg was straightened. And this was a day in Al-Aqsa Hospital where we had run out of all pain relief. We had no painkillers to give any patients that day, so this little girl had to have her leg straightened without any pain relief. And every time I tell this story, I can hear her screams as that leg was straightened. This was a typical day of mass casualties in Gaza, and they've been going on for two and a half years.

Aseel, a 28-year-old lady that I operate on, she was a victim of another explosive injury. She had severe damage to her liver and spleen. I operated on her. We saved her life. One of her daughters was killed. When I spoke to her the next day when she'd woken up, she told me about her daughter who'd been killed, and how she picked up her daughter, who was in four separate pieces, in order to hug her before she could be taken to hospital.

This is the reality. This is the reality of what the military assault by Israel is doing to an innocent Gazan civilian population. The hospitals are targeted. You'll recognize Al Shifa Hospital, the bottom left there. In the middle of the bottom is what it looks like now. On the right at the bottom is Nasser Hospital,

where I worked, and you can see me there with some medical students I'd been teaching in July last year.

Half of those students were killed four weeks later when the hospital was bombed, and that's the bombing there you can see in Nasser Hospital on the fourth floor, which the Israeli spokespeople said was a non-clinical area where there were Hamas terrorists masquerading as journalists. Let me tell you, that area they bombed was where I had been living for four weeks, where the intensive care unit was, where the operating theater complex was, and where medical students were learning. That top picture shows that they've been destroying hospitals for many years. It's a beautiful rehabilitation hospital called Al-Wafa Rehabilitation Hospital, which I visited in 2010-2011. In 2014, in Operation Protective Edge, that hospital was destroyed, and on the right there, you can see my close friend, Hamzy Alessi, showing me where his office had been.

So hospitals and healthcare workers have been targeted for many years. But clearly, at an exceptional level in the last two years. We know that more than 1,700 healthcare workers have been killed in Gaza. We know that more than 450 healthcare workers have been abducted, illegally detained without charge, tortured, many of them killed under torture.

Every single hospital has been attacked. And we know that more than 20,000 critically injured patients are awaiting medical evacuation. Which makes me ashamed of our country, which so far has managed to take 50 patients from Gaza. There are still 20,000 waiting to be evacuated. The healthcare system has been completely disabled.

There's no electricity. They're reliant upon local supplies of fuel. If the fuel runs out, there is no power for the ventilators. If the ventilators don't work, then patients on ventilators die. If there's no fuel, there's no power for the incubators. If the incubators have no power, then babies in the incubators being kept alive will die. And you may remember the story from Al-Nasser Pediatric Hospital in Gaza City, nearly about 20 months ago, when the Israeli military invaded the hospital, displaced all the staff, leaving six neonates in the incubators in the pediatric unit. When those medical staff returned to the hospital when the Israeli military had left, they found those six babies dead, their bodies decomposing. No drugs, often no painkillers, no blood products sometimes. Often running out of surgical gloves, having to wash gloves between operations. I had one two-week period when we had no sterile drapes at all to create a sterile operating field in the operating theater, and often no water to scrub up with, so we had to use just alcohol jelly.

If you're a healthcare worker in Gaza, you're three times more likely to be killed than any other civilian. 75 healthcare workers in Gaza are killed per 100,000 of the population. The equivalent number in Ukraine is 0.8, Myanmar 0.3, Sudan 0.3. Some of you may have seen this film, *Gaza Medics Under Fire*, which was commissioned by the BBC, but in their entirely predictable cowardice, they then refused to show it. So it was shown by Channel 4, and you can still see it on Channel 4 Catch Up, and it's describing the text in that document, *The Killing, Detention, Torture of Healthcare Workers in Gaza* by Healthcare. You can read that document. But what it describes is the systematic torture and abuse of Palestinian detainees.

Multiple examples, graphic evidence of male external genitalia being specifically targeted by the Israeli prison guards. Many examples of neglect, negligence, and even cooperation of Israeli healthcare workers in that torture. This is one man who was tortured to death in an Israeli prison, Dr. Adnan Al-Bursh, an iconic orthopedic surgeon in Gaza. Someone who I had coffee with in May 2023, my last trip in Gaza before this atrocity started. Before he was abducted, he was interviewed and said that, "Practicing medicine in Gaza has become a crime, and the penalty for saving people's lives has become detention and being tortured to death." Shortly after he said that, he was indeed abducted. He was detained illegally without charge in an Israeli prison. He was tortured daily for several weeks, and he was killed by torture. And a Sky investigative journalist and many subsequent witness statements from fellow detainees have determined that his mode of torture during those last two weeks of his life was being raped daily for two weeks until he was raped to death. This document summarises all the different modes of torture that have been used, and I won't read it out, but you can see it for yourself. These have all been detailed with copious witness statements and photographs and submitted to the International Criminal Court.

There is of course no protection of civilians. This is from the United Nations website, and indeed it states that the Israeli army own database suggests that the majority of the dead are civilians, which of course directly contradicts those many statements from Israeli propaganda claiming that the ratio of deaths between civilians and Hamas is 1:1 or 2:1.

That photograph on the right I took in May 2023 when I witnessed the largest sustained aerial bombardment in Gaza from Israel for three years. It has of course been dwarfed by what's going on now. But I witnessed this bombardment. I witnessed with my own eyes how sophisticated the targeting could be. I saw them take out single rooms, single floors of buildings with minimal collateral damage. This notion that they're only targeting Hamas

militants and they're protecting civilians is nonsense. What we've seen is indiscriminate, widespread, perhaps even deliberate targeting of large civilian populations. This is a paper published that I contributed to at the end of last year from the British Medical Journal, and a few of us who'd been out there have described the injuries we have seen in the people we've operated on, and all of us have described multiple examples of explosive weapons being used repeatedly in areas of dense civilian population, weapons that are designed for maximum tissue destruction. And what we've described is similar to the patterns described in between combatants, between soldiers and soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. And the injuries we saw in the civilians, we saw twice as many as described in the Iraq war and Afghanistan, indicating this is the first time such a volume of injuries have been seen like this in civilian populations, only previously described in combat situations.

This is what Gaza looks like now: mass destruction, particularly in the north and in Gaza City. I'm going to finish up by talking about malnutrition, which of course has dominated the narrative in Gaza and is causing many thousands of excess deaths. Many of my patients died because we couldn't feed them, because they were malnourished when they came in, because we couldn't give them nutrition. And those pictures on the right are people of mine, some of them children, who died because of the lack of nutrition. And there was a United Nations official who said, I think 18 months ago, that starvation is being used as a method of war.

Let me tell you about Habiba. I've been practicing medicine for 40 years now. This is the single most distressing case I've ever witnessed in my career. A little beautiful 11-year-old girl who came in with an explosive injury which shattered her lungs, her lower esophagus. That's what I do in Oxford. I operate on the esophagus. I spent the whole night operating on her, but we couldn't feed her afterwards. We had no nutrition to give her. She died four weeks later. Her esophageal repairs intact, she died because she had no nutrition. A preventable death.

Zainab, a seven-month-old baby who died exclusively of malnutrition, of starvation. She was so weak she couldn't swallow. She had a tube going down her nose. What she needed was formula feed. That carton you can see on the right. She died two weeks into my stay because we had no formula feed to give her in Gaza. And there was no formula feed to give her because the Israeli had blockaded all food going in, all medical supplies, and particularly all nutritional supplies. And what made this even worse was that four days before she died, some American doctors who came in and joined us at Nasser Hospital, knowing there was a shortage of formula feed, packed their bags with containers of formula feed, only to have every single one of them removed by the Israeli border guards. Every single one of them. Those feeds that could have saved this

little girl's life, a deliberate policy of preventing these coming in by the Israeli blockade.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, an obscenely named organisation, a collaboration between the US government and the Israeli government to replace UNRWA, which we heard about earlier, which had been providing food distribution. These were death traps. I spent most of my last trip there operating on young teenage boys who had been shot by Israeli soldiers at these food distribution points. On my fourth day, I was called to the operating theater by a Gazan surgical colleague who had a 12-year-old boy on the operating table who was bleeding to death. They asked me to come and help. I went to help. I couldn't save his life either. This 12-year-old boy bled to death under our hands, having been shot by an Israeli soldier. At the top there is a young lad who'd been shot in the liver. At the bottom is the kidney I removed, and the bullet that had been removed, that I removed from this patient, this 14-year-old boy.

And particularly distressing about this was the pattern of injuries that we saw. After that 12-year-old boy had died on the table, the local staff told me they were seeing a pattern of injuries, and we noticed the same pattern. One day there were 19 teenage boys brought in, all of whom had been shot in the head and neck. Nowhere else, just the head and neck. Another day they came in having been shot exclusively in the abdomen. Another day, the chest. On one day, four days before I left Gaza, four young teenage boys came in having been shot in the testicles. Nowhere else, just the testicles. The clustering of injuries, the pattern of injuries was so striking. It was inconceivable to us that this was coincidence, and it seemed like there was a game of target practice being played out.

A young preg- pregnant lady, three months pregnant, shot by a quadcopter. These remotely controlled drones with guns and cameras on them, spraying bullets over the tents in Al Mawasi, shooting this young lady who I operated on. The baby survived, and she survived. But she was resting there, simply resting while she was shot.

This evidence has been presented to our politicians. Those pictures are of people I have met. I've presented this evidence to all of those people you can see there. Other healthcare workers have presented it to other senior politicians. We've submitted a dossier on the right. Four of us who spent a lot of time in Gaza submitted a dossier recounting all these stories with pictures. We know for a fact it has been given last summer to every single cabinet minister. We can talk in the coffee break about the way some of these politicians reacted, but it made no difference to their subsequent output from the government. But look at some of

those comments from things we've said. One of my colleagues, "Gaza was the first time I held a baby's brains in my hand." And every single one of us have reported multiple examples of pre-teen teenage children being shot in the head or shot in the chest or the abdomen and been killed.

So Gaza has been failed. It's been failed by our governments. It's been failed by our media. It's been failed by our academic and medical institutions, with the honorable exception being King's College today. It's been failed by the GMC, by our royal colleges. The Lancet, at the end of last year, published on its front page, most medical and surgical societies worldwide have remained silent or issued vague statements about neutrality. Staying silent whilst pretending to be neutral is, in effect, a form of complicity.

There is no ceasefire. The volume of attacks has reduced, but since October the 11th last year, 929 Gazans have been killed, of whom 247 are children, 190 women. There are only two entry points for aid. Nothing like enough aid is going in, and living conditions remain dire. There are many considerations for the long-term recovery of the healthcare system in Gaza, and I won't go over them in detail. But there are currently 43,000 people still alive who've received life-threatening injuries, most of whom will need some form of reconstruction, whether it's limb reconstruction, abdominal wall, maxillofacial reconstruction. The many chronic diseases, like cancers that have not been treated, and of course, more than 2,000 medical students whose studies have been interrupted.

I'm gonna leave you with this picture because what you've heard from me, what we've heard throughout the day are the awful things that are going on, the evil that's being perpetrated, the war crimes, the genocide. But of course, there are also inspirational people out there. These are who keep me going. These are people why I keep going back. The Gazan healthcare staff, Yasser, Mahmoud, Mohammed, people who put their lives on the line every single day. Many of them have been killed. Friends of mine have been killed doing their duties. These are the people who inspire us and why we all hope and know that things will be all right for them eventually. Thank you very much for listening.

I was asked at relatively short notice to join again this year and I'm very glad that we did. I'll complement a lot of what Nick said, maybe bring it a bit up to date in relation to what the situation is. And also take this opportunity to say a few words about UNRWA.

UNRWA continues to face immense political and financial and operational pressures in Palestine, particularly in Gaza, where we're not able to bring any of our supplies in. Nick referred to that in relation to the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. And we're not able to have our international staff on the ground in Gaza right now as a result of legislation that the Israeli government brought into effect last January.

I was in Gaza from early 2024 until the end of March 2025. And just because the international staff left at the end of that period, the services continued. Those services haven't stopped, and it's the infrastructure, the know-how, the community trust the 11,000 people that we have on the ground every day that allows those services to continue, and it's absolutely critical for the welfare of Gaza that those services are able to continue.

So that's one message I wanted to convey at the outset. This time last year we were talking about a classroom full of children that were being killed every day. Right now the numbers have gone down. But let's be clear that the humanitarian situation for the two million plus people in Gaza remains a total catastrophe.

And any improvement both when it comes to levels of violence, but also when it comes to access for humanitarian supplies, is only relative to what we were seeing before the ceasefire that came into effect in October of last year. 16 people were killed on the first day of the Eid in Gaza last week. Colleagues, friends in Gaza were telling me, as I'm sure many of your friends were telling you, that this was really the first Eid since the start of the war that they'd been able to have a "normal" Eid-type experience. But of course they weren't. The fear that persists, random attacks that can happen any time in any place.

And I know that a colleague from Map UK and her newborn baby were injured in an attack on Gaza City just last week. Like many, after two years in a tent, they've made the decision to move home and that's what they got. And look the vast majority of the population continue to live in absolute squalor.

The UN estimates 1.4 million people are living in tents. More than 90% of school buildings have been destroyed. And whilst the access conditions have improved slightly again, this is only relative to those conditions that obtained before the ceasefire which as we know, led to famine being declared in the middle of last year. And also precipitated the killing of several hundred Palestinian aid seekers at the sites of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. And look, it's not just the conditions here and now, the conditions today that people are living in, as well as the fear of death. It's people spending all day looking for water to use for cooking, to use for drinking. It's looking for food to eat. Most people surviving on one meal a day. And it's people literally spending hours to find a toilet. Israel continues to ban the entry of toilets to the Gaza Strip.

And if that's the daily existence or sub-existence of people in Gaza, what makes it even worse is a couple of things. One is that this has now been going on for almost three years without any respite. The torture of respite that comes in for a few days and then is shattered because another family member is killed, or has lost their limbs or has been struck by disease.

But another element of this is that there is no real ceasefire. There's no proper cessation of hostilities. And yet there's no real recovery in terms of the items that are coming in and the prospects that people are able to look forward to. And this is six months on, as I said earlier, from the ceasefire agreement.

We appear to have been in a situation of complete deadlock and of managing the conflict. As has been the case following previous escalations, when the fighting and the killing more or less comes to an end, but the situation really doesn't doesn't improve. And look, it always felt for most that this conflict was so categorically different to the others that, that Gaza has been through over the last 20 years. That the international community would never allow this to happen. One thing that we've learned is that we can't rely on the international community, or at least not on all parts of it. But when the ceasefire came into effect, many of my colleagues spoke of fears that the conflict wasn't ending, it was just entering a new phase. And they were certainly wiser than I was, and that many of those who brokered that agreement were, because this indeed is what's happened. And somehow it's worse because it is a situation of total nightmare right now. At least when the conflict is ongoing. People have this hope of light at the end of the tunnel. And it seems that is completely absent, completely lacking right now. And the tragedy of all this, of course, is that, that none of it's new. These are pressures that have been placed on Gaza for decades now, not letting the population, the territory, the people breathe. And gradually making the the place unlivable for the two million people who are there.

And it manifests itself in different ways at different times due to the pressures that the population are under right now. The focus is on the vector diseases. Infants, you'll have seen the clips and you'll have read the media. Infants being bitten by rats and vermin. And this is only gonna get worse as the summer continues and the heat rises. The means to respond are extremely limited. Israel is not allowing sufficient quantities of vector control supplies in. The landfills that are critical for waste disposal are in the parts of Gaza that are non-accessible to the Palestinian population.

1.4 million people are living in tents. Many more living in the ruins of bombed out buildings where water is stagnating beneath rubble, where food is stagnating beneath the rubble. And as we know, there are several thousand bodies. These conditions are absolutely ripe for the spread of diseases, and that's what we're seeing. And look, the assumption is that this aspect of the humanitarian crisis will be eventually brought under control, most likely due to pressure that is exerted on Israel. But as I started with, then the crisis will just manifest itself in another way, as we've seen throughout the conflict. Malnutrition, hunger, hypothermia, polio. The Gaza population just wait for another way in which they can die and be killed. And what's been quite remarkable actually since the the ceasefire.

And the ceasefire that we saw earlier in 2025 when I was still inside of Gaza is, of course, the drive and the desire for people to have a normal life as quickly as they can and get back to the things that they want to do, which are just entirely the same things that we all want to do, those of us with elderly relatives, those of us with young children. And nowhere does this come into sharper focus than in the realm of education, where within weeks of the ceasefire coming into effect, at UNRWA schools we had over 50,000 boys and girls back in those classrooms. Children whose families have been displaced five, 10, 15 times over the course of the war, but they'd kept their uniforms intact, they wanted to get back as quickly as possible to an education. But our ability to deliver that in any meaningful way is massively constrained. Schools are filled with displaced people. 85 UNRWA schools are still housing about 80,000 people, and we can't bring the educational materials in because educational supplies are not deemed to be strictly life-saving.

So just as food has been described as a weapon of war, other elements of the access and movement restrictions that are in place in Gaza, all contribute to making life less and less livable for the people there. And the situation isn't static. The bombings continue, the targeted assassinations continue, but so does Israel's gradual takeover of more and more of the territory of Gaza. When the ceasefire came into effect, Israel was controlling about 53%, I believe, of the

Gaza Strip. It's now up to two-thirds. And Prime Minister Netanyahu called a couple of days ago for Israel to take control of 70% of the territory.

Whether or not they do that remains to be seen. My guess is that they will continue taking land for as long as they're pressured not to do so and this is part of the broader tactics of negotiations which Israel typically uses. And it's also part of the whole process and the whole endeavor of making life in Gaza more and more unlivable and unbearable for the people.

It also massively restricts our ability to respond because we have installations, facilities, healthcare facilities, schools, garbage sites, etc, in the eastern and the southern and the northern parts of Gaza that are no longer accessible. It also increases overall reliance of Gaza on humanitarian assistance.

The eastern parts of Gaza were typically pre-war where the bulk of the agricultural land was, providing fruit and vegetable for the people of Gaza, but also serving an export economy that was largely geared towards Israel's needs in terms of what the crops and that were grown. And of course, Gaza's only other access to sustainability when it comes to food is the sea, and there've been no relaxations of access to the sea in the six months since the the ceasefire came into effect, which just on its own would appear to be completely unfathomable.

In closing, Gaza continues to defy all metrics for a humanitarian crisis. Israel continues to dispute the integrity of organizations such as my own and such of MAP, Médecins Sans Frontières and others who've been blocked from entering Gaza, I think in large part because of our speaking out on the situation on the ground.

At the same time, Israel does not allow international journalists into Gaza, arguing that it's not safe for them. And yet the humanitarian organizations and the humanitarian community on the ground continues to operate with at least one hand tied behind its back. UNRWA, as I said, has been banned from bringing in supplies now for over a year. 37 international NGOs, many of whom have been providing services inside of Gaza for decades, remain in limbo as a result of new Israeli legislation, which has not proceeded with their registration. And it's an operation in the midst of the collapse in the humanitarian sector, an operation that's massively expensive and massively financially inefficient.

Rather than repairing water lines, because we're not able to bring supplies in that would allow us to repair those water lines, we have to resort to water trucking, which is costing anywhere in the region of \$1 million a day. When it comes to scabies, vermin control, infectious diseases, what we need to do is

bring in the supplies and restore the garbage collection system, but we're not being allowed to do that. And meanwhile, impunity reigns for the atrocities that continue each day, and the geopolitical distraction created by the US-Israel war on Iran has taken this off the front pages of the newspapers. And let's not forget that we're approaching an Israeli election season as well, where Netanyahu will be under immense amounts of pressure not to make any concessions to the the Palestinian population.

And in closing, we should not forget the situation across Palestine. It's not a humanitarian crisis per se, but it's a political project to make life for the people there unlivable, to destroy the few parts of Gaza that remain. I think our mistake partly as the international community has been to reduce Palestine to a humanitarian issue and not treating it as an issue of sovereignty, of decolonization and self-determination as it should be. There's no reason why we shouldn't call it what it is. Israel, of course, is increasingly explicit about what it wants to achieve inside the territory, and the brazenness that comes from the lack of accountability is sometimes quite chilling.

But equally important that the international community, the UN system, the INGOs, civil society point increasingly and continually to the frameworks of international law, the frameworks of the United Nations systems which guarantee and protect the rights of the Palestinian population there so that we avoid being in a situation this time next year when the situation has only got worse. And we've seen it spread to other conflicts around the world because what started in Gaza, or what happens in Gaza will not end in Gaza. We'll see other regimes use the same tactics of pressure against humanitarian organizations in other places as we've seen them do in Gaza.

13 Recognition is the Beginning Conference: Daniel Levy - The political and geopolitical context

In talking about what's going on the political diplomatic front, how I want to frame that is that everything you've heard about the appalling conditions on the ground, are the consequence of what I'm going to try and fill in terms of gaps on the political diplomatic side.

That is what enables the appalling reality that we see every day and that we've had shared with us in greater granularity and detail just now. And so I thought that if there was something that I could shed some light on, and we're in the kind of descriptive rather than prescriptive phase, and I have a chance to be up here later and maybe talk about some of the things can be done about it.

But the thing I thought I could try and shed some light on now is how this setup of the Trump 20-point plan, how the framing of the ceasefire itself, the Board of Peace, the UN Security Council resolution which enshrined that 20-point plan, how that I would argue, was created in order to maintain what we've just been told about.

And I would suggest to you that you cannot say, "We need the full implementation of the ceasefire plan, and the full implementation of the International Court of Justice rulings and accountability." Those things don't go together. It's either/or. Either you can have a 20-point plan - which is designed to maintain this system of dehumanization, control and worse, or you can have those other things. And I don't want to be naive. I want to acknowledge that why we got this intentionally and incredibly dangerous and flawed ceasefire framework was because we were in a situation where you had Palestinians being killed on a daily basis in the triple digits. You had the height of a starvation campaign. You had the accumulating evidence of genocidal intent and actions, and there was a desperation to bring that to an end, and this was what was on offer from the United States

And I thought I would start by reading you what is Article 1, the first sentence in the 20-point plan. First sentence, point one: Gaza will be a de-radicalized terror-free zone that does not pose a threat to its neighbors. That is the text. That is what people are now saying, "We have to get this implemented." And that tone guides the entire document.

So let me run through a few points that I think are pertinent to understanding this. Number one: It's bad enough that this was what the ceasefire produced.

What was so much worse was to translate that into a UN Security Council resolution, into Resolution 2803. With the support of the regional states, the Arab states, and the PLO Palestinian Authority, which meant that when the only two states, both permanent five members of the UN, did not vote in favor, the only two states who did not vote in favor did not wield their veto because this had the support of those recognized as the Palestinian address and of the region. You already had the ceasefire. Why did you translate this into a UN Security Council resolution? And that was Russia and China, the only two who didn't vote in favor, but they did not wield their veto. And what that resolution does is it hands over the powers of the United Nations and international legality to a board of peace, which at that stage had not even been constituted

Article 2 of the UN Security Council says, "We welcome the establishment of the Board of Peace," which hadn't been established yet. With international legal personality to set the framework; it goes on to outline that the UN has handed over its authority on this issue to a board of peace. The board of peace can enter into such arrangements as may be necessary, establish operational entities and transactional authorities. And it's the board of peace now that is mandated to report back to the UN Security Council every six months.

So the Board of Peace then gets established by Trump. Everyone enthusiastically endorses it in the beginning. But when Trump introduces this to the world and doesn't limit it to Gaza, suddenly all those Western democratic allies who voted with the Board of Peace proposal at the UN and endorsed it and supported it said, "Oh, we're not joining that because you might apply it to Ukraine or Greenland, heaven forbid."

So when it was something to be imposed on the Palestinians, it was okay. The person now charged with running Gaza is a former UN diplomat who is still on the payroll, and since he left the UN has been working for the UAE Diplomatic Academy, Nikolai Mladenov. He issued his first report to the UN Security Council under that mandate on May 14th. The way the report was given to the UN Security Council in writing was by the US mission to the UN. The Board of Peace handed it to the US mission. The US mission handed it over, and Mladenov writes the following in his conclusion, because he's a fork-tongued chap, so sometimes he seems to be saying other things. He writes in his conclusion, "The critical variable, the single factor that unlocks every other element of the plan," every other element of the plan being Israel not occupying two-thirds, being getting the actual humanitarian needs in, being allowing reconstruction, rubble clearing. "Every other element of the plan is the full decommissioning of Hamas and all armed groups". And when we have had proposals that in a similar context under any other circumstances that aren't

Palestine-Israel put forward by Hamas, they have been dismissed out of court while simultaneously Israel is arming its own militias in Gaza.

Secondly, one of the things this does is it distorts the whole aid, humanitarian service delivery, and reconstruction mechanisms in place in Gaza, including how one collects donor funds. So people probably saw that report in the FT a few days ago, right? Which said that the coffers are empty. The more important headline was buried further down in that report. What coffers were empty? The coffers of the one mechanism for funding and resource disbursement under the Board of Peace that has some kind of a verifiable oversight mechanism, which was the fund under the World Bank. So the fund under the World Bank means there's a degree of transparency. Those coffers are empty. A totally non-transparent account at JP Morgan. And it's in the piece, and this is what's going on, that donors can pay into, and that we don't know where that money goes, but don't worry, I'm sure there's no profiteering going on by friends and family of Donald, Jared, and others. So we should cast aside any possible suspicions.

No, to not be flippant. That's what's going on. And look, it's not like donors are queuing up to say, "Oh, with all the other demands on our money, where can we put our money for this?" It helps defer the sense of donor responsibility as well when you put these mechanisms in place.

The third thing I want to point out is what Security Council Resolution 2803 says about conditioning basic Palestinian rights. Everything that was in the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of July 18th 2024 is undermined. It's not overridden, but is contradicted by Security Council Resolution 2803:

In resolution 2803 we have a reference to the letter that Palestinian leader Abbas issued to the French and Saudis on the occasion of recognition. This is what recognition cost. Think about what you gain from recognition, and now listen to what it cost and see whether this was a wise move. The Board of Peace, the arrangements in Gaza would remain in place until the PA has satisfactorily (who decides?) completed its reform program as outlined in various proposals, including Trump's peace plan of 2020 and the Saudi-French proposal, which was the adoption of what President Abbas put forward in his letter to them because he accepted their apparent condition that is what would unlock French and later on British recognition.

I don't believe the Palestinians needed to hold out for that. After the PA reform program, this is the language of a UN Security Council resolution. After the PA reform program is faithfully carried out and Gaza redevelopment has advanced,

the conditions may finally be in place for a credible pathway for Palestinian self-determination and statehood.

That is what this locks us into. And I just want to point that out to people because that's directly taken from the twenty-point plan. Because I think it is insufficiently understood that when people say we need to see it implemented, no, we need to see it shredded and confined to the dustbin of history.

Next, what is going on with this attack on UNRWA? And I don't need to spend too much time on this. It's self-evident and partly been covered. Israel, in what it is trying to do legislatively and as the test lab in Gaza, is to totally redefine how refugees, how refugeehood, as an issue is dealt with. And I do just want to put a spotlight on one, I think, particularly pernicious thing that we've seen. I don't know if people remember the PowerPoint presentations when the Board of Peace was launched in Jared Kushner's memorable speech where he shows gleaming towers in Gaza. This is the future of Gaza. That, for me, was one of the most pernicious things done there. What was that designed to do? Number one, it's a distraction. Look at the gleaming towers rather than the fact that you can't even get poles for tents into Gaza, that you have no shelter. Secondly, it sets the Palestinians up for failure. Look, just like when Israel left Gaza in 2005 and imposed the blockade and didn't let stuff get in, and didn't de-occupy the West Bank. Didn't fully de-occupy Gaza either. Just like in 2005, why don't the Palestinians just build these? Why can't Gaza be like Singapore? Thank you, Shimon Peres. Why can't Gaza be like the UAE? So it's designed to fail and to have everyone go "what can you do with these Palestinians?" And of course, it is designed to dislocate, to disconnect people from their land.

Next, future Palestinian governance. So what the Board of Peace established is something called NCAG. That's the abbreviation. The National Committee for the Administration of Gaza. I think it's not coincidental that there's no P in NCAG. Because what we are seeing is the Israeli attempt to make sure that there can be no collective Palestinian national anything. So next you will have the National Committee for the Administration of the West Bank. And then you might have the National Committee for the Administration of the Triangle Area in Israel. The attempt here, which may or may not proceed, is to further shine perfect shape as Israel sees it, the Bantustan. Those who remain behind will not, much as I've been critical of the PLO and the PA, that still has some kind of thread of connectivity to a Palestinian national collective and aspiration and a history.

The idea is to definitively disconnect those things. The other thing that's in there is the ISF, the International Stabilization Force. Again, that's in a Security

Council resolution. The ISF will be under the Board of Peace. This isn't a UN force. Now, even though the mandate, as referenced in the document, does not talk about protecting Palestinians. This is still considered a threat by Israel for a couple of reasons. Number one, if you have an ISF, then the IDF is supposed to withdraw. By the way, the problem isn't 70%. The problem is the 64% today, and the 53% in the 20-point plan. The delta between 64 and 70 is not significant. It's the delta between zero and 53 that was accepted in that ceasefire, or zero and 64, which is the reality today in terms of how much of Gaza Israel occupies. Israel does not want an ISF which removes an Israeli excuse for not de-occupying, and it doesn't want to establish the precedent of any international force that could bear witness, that could one day in the future be in the West Bank, etc.

In summary: While this highly imperfect arrangement could perhaps be understood in order to achieve more limitations on Israeli killing and starvation. It is not something we should seek to have implemented. It is today a factor that rather than constraining, legitimizes what Israel is doing in Gaza. It exacerbates an absence of accountability that Israel is responsible for compensation. The whole arrangement is trying to say to Palestinians, "You thought things might get better in a ceasefire. They're not really gonna get better. You want better? There are 190-plus countries around the world. We're working on it. Maybe some of them will take you."

We managed to get a flight out to South Africa until the South Africans realized what was being done there. So that's the attempt. I think it's overreach. I don't think it will succeed. The headline for me is still also, alongside everything we've heard, Palestinian resilience against all odds. But it says to me that the focus has to be on how to ameliorate and mitigate and undermine that diplomatic effort, but it also has to be elsewhere, because we can't play on that terrain. Thank you. Thanks a lot.

Thank you so much to the Britain Palestine project for their invitation and hosting this great event, which also strengthened my hope that things will change. And it's a great pleasure to be part of this panelists and distinguished other panelists. It's not easy to speak after what we heard since the morning until now. To speak as a Palestinian, as one who does believe of equal rights for everyone all over the world, and does believe in dignity and human rights and rule of law, I would like to say a few words before I start my presentation.

Palestinians, they have no problem with the Jews. They have a problem with the political and racist body: the Zionist movement. It's the state of Israel, which is a colonial apartheid regime. That's the problem. Netanyahu is pushing to speak on behalf of all Jews over the world because he tried to put labels on their faces that they are responsible for everything that he is committing and his regime is committing. But we are not naive. We see Jewish Voice for Peace in the frontline everywhere. We see all of our great Jews, they are fighting for justice everywhere, calling for accountability. That's not a problem for Palestinians.

If the words of Dr. Nick, if it doesn't move the human conscience of the leaders in UK and elsewhere, do you think that my words will move them forward? I don't think so, because they know everything that's required from their side, and they can do, but they don't want to because they have no political will to do so.

Everyone has to conserve when death and life become equal in Palestine or elsewhere in any society, and this is the case now in Palestine. Everyone has to conserve. And let me now go back to my presentation. But in the same time, I will say that we will keep the strategic optimism. And human rights defenders, they are dreamers, and we keep this strong faith that tomorrow is ours. No doubt of that.

I have been asked to address a question: what are the legal duties of the UK to start with the recognition of Palestine matters? It matters politically, diplomatically, and legally. But if recognition matters and is the beginning, then the question becomes: the beginning of what? Is it the beginning of yet another diplomatic process designed to further entrench Israel's genocidal settler colonial apartheid regime in Palestine while avoiding addressing the root causes, or is it the beginning of serious reckoning with the historical and ongoing denial of Palestinian self-determination?

For the United Kingdom, this equation carries a special weight. Palestine was neither an empty land nor a political vacuum. Britain was the colonial administrating power in mandatory Palestine. It played a direct role in creating the legal, political, and demographic conditions that produced the dispossession of Palestinian people. This historical responsibility cannot be reduced only to the Balfour Declaration, as if the issue were merely one unfortunate statement from 1917. Under the League of Nation mandate system, Palestine was a territory whose statehood was supposed to be provisionally recognized. Yet Palestine was the only mandate with this legal entitlement prevented from achieving statehood. That illegality is the original wound, and it is why recognition today cannot be treated as an act of generosity. Recognition is not a favour to Palestinians. It is a belated and partial acknowledgement of legal rights that the UK itself has systematically and continuously denied, and which the UK has a historical duty to repair.

The UK has special fundamental non-derogable obligations to respect and to promote the Palestinian people's fundamental legal rights to self-determination. Self-determination cannot be bartered away by political negotiations or made conditional on Israeli consent. It is an already existing legal right. At the same time, the UK recognition of Palestine statehood makes no difference to and so does not relieve the UK of responsibility for its wrongful acts in international law.

Israel's construction of settlements, its annexation, settler colonial apartheid regime, and permanent occupation are breaches of fundamental non-derogable norms of international law, which because of this fundamental nature, the UK and all other states have fundamental legal obligation to suppress. The UK is legally required not to render aid or assistance to Israelis to maintain the illegal situation, and to take positive action to bring the illegality to an end. These duties require the UK to stop all military, economic, diplomatic, and technological support to Israel that maintain the illegal occupation, annexation, and apartheid.

If the UK can impose sanctions to preserve the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of Ukraine, then it has the tools to do so for Palestine. What is missing is political will. All states, including the UK, are legally required to prevent all those third parties, including companies, financial institutions, arms manufacturers, technology firms, universities, charities, and investors who are based in the UK from acting abroad, including in Palestine, on both sides of the green line if this involves contributing to or profiting from serious and fundamental violations of international law.

Despite being listed on the UN database, British companies, Green Court and GCB continue to exploit the settlements enterprise. The Don't Buy into Occupation coalition reveals that UK-based banks and financial institutions including Barclays, HSBC, Standard Ch-Chartered, NatWest, and Lloyds are among the top ten banks underwriting loans and investing in the settlements and the enterprise. The law requires the full disengagement of these companies and financial institutions from this activity. The UK has an obligation to hold Israeli perpetrators of international crimes in Palestine to account. As a state party to the Rome Statute, the Genocide Convention, and the Geneva Convention, the UK has obligation to prevent and punish genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, persecution, and apartheid.

It must support proceedings before the International Criminal Court and cooperate with the arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Gallant. In October '23, Israeli officials made an array of statements. Yet two years later on twelve November '25, after thousands of Palestinians had been killed. The UK Court of Appeal declined the role of UK government assessment of genocide in an ARMS case taken by Al-Haq. The court found that parts of the legal challenge are not for the courts to decide, but rather the responsibility of executive, a decision which effectively shields the UK government from legal scrutiny.

Today, seven months later, seventy-two thousand Palestinians were killed, including nine hundred and twenty-nine Palestinians killed since the ceasefire in October.

In the July 24 advisory opinion by the International Court, the UK must choose to act. Palestinians are not asking for exceptional treatment. They are asking for the rule of law. Suspending a limited number of arms licenses while maintaining broader military, diplomatic, economic, and political support with Israel does not meet the scale of the obligation. Expressions of concern do not discharge legal duties. Humanitarian aid cannot compensate for complicity in the structures that produce a humanitarian catastrophe And that is why the role of people of conscience in the UK is so important because governments rarely fulfill their obligations simply because the law is clear. They do so when people make the political cost of non-compliance impossible to ignore. It is people of conscience, lawyers, students, trade unionists, parliamentarians, faith communities, artists, academic journalists, civil servants, campaigners, and ordinary citizens who must continue to insist that the UK government comply with its international law obligations to the Palestinian people.

If genocide, apartheid, occupation, and forced displacement can be debated endlessly while people are destroyed in real time on our screens, then the promise of never again becomes a tool of politics, not justice. Recognition means that the UK must treat the State of Palestine as a sovereign equal and preserve the principles of non-interference and the territorial integrity of the state.

The UK must submit all evidence collected by RAF surveillance via flights over Gaza to the International Criminal Court. The UK must prosecute dual British Israeli nationals in UK courts for their commission of international crimes against the Palestinian people, including genocide. The UK must immediately suspend all trade with Israel, including the tariff-free access that ninety-nine percent of UK goods exports currently enjoy under the existing UK-Israeli trade partnership agreement.

The UK must address its historic wrongs and acknowledge that its role in Palestine was foundational to the denial of Palestinian self-determination and provide full reparations. Recognition must be the beginning of choosing the full liberation of Palestine. Thank you

It's a very real privilege to be here at this gathering on an issue so close to my heart. And the question that we were being posed was: what are the legal obligations and responsibilities and duties? And it was being specifically directed to the United Kingdom. But, our duties are not very different from what the duties are that apply to nations around the world who are committed to the United Nations, to international law, to international humanitarian law, which is the laws of war, and to human rights.

And one of the shocking things is that we are currently seeing an unraveling of that thing that's called the rules-based order, the set of laws that are supposed to be increasingly taking us on a journey towards greater humanity and greater compassion and kindness and all the good things that we hoped our world might represent. But sadly, no. I wanted basically to start with talking about the duty that falls upon the shoulders of the UK, but I don't want it limited to that. We've got to uphold humanitarian law, and I want you to understand what that means. There have been Geneva Conventions in the past at the end of the 19th century into the 20th century, the time of the First World War. But it was after the Second World War that a fourth Geneva Convention, drawing on the experiences of the Second World War, very comprehensively dealt with the business of collective punishment of civilian populations. What should be required in any war is that you do not take away the staples of life, water, and in our time, electricity, so that people can cook and can see in the dark.

All those things, the infrastructures of nations, should be protected in times of war too. That's all there in the fourth Geneva Convention. And yet we saw wholesale the absolute ignoring of that law and of what the Geneva Conventions meant. And indeed, I heard politicians claiming confidently, "We did it to Dresden, so what's the problem? That's collateral damage. It's the nature of war." I heard people standing up in Parliament and saying that. And unfortunately, most people have no idea that in fact it was as a result of Dresden and the huge deaths that were caused, we, Britain, on the bombing of Dresden the deaths that took place. And then, of course, also what was dealt with to Coventry and to the Clydeside and to places here in the United Kingdom, and that many people's homes were destroyed and suffered the consequences. So that business of the fourth Geneva Convention was being roundly ignored and has been in this recent conflict in Gaza.

But I was asked very specifically to draw on my own experiences in relation to this. Many of you will know that for a very long time I've been very actively involved and committed to the Palestinian people. I was the president of Medical Aid for Palestinians for a number of years. I've represented people in courts in this country who are Palestinians. And more recently, I was part of a panel where the International Criminal Court's head prosecutor came to and invited individual senior lawyers myself included, to provide a second opinion on the evidence that was going to be used in relation to applications for warrants against Hamas in relation to the leadership of Hamas in relation to the 7th of October, but also against a number of Israelis.

And the warrants were being sought in relation to Gallant and Netanyahu and we were asked if we would review that evidence. I've spent my life looking at evidence and seeing whether it passes the thresholds for different stages in a criminal trial. And with me, there were people like a retired Lord Justice of Appeal from the British courts, Sir Adrian Fulford. An incredible man, Theodore Meron, an Israeli by his first passport. But before that a Holocaust survivor who basically spent his childhood dealing with what happened to Jews in Europe and who saw what happened to his own mother and grandparents who were shot dead because of collective punishment by the Nazis, whose brother, who was six years older than him and who was in one of the concentration camps where there was a rebellion was shot dead by the Nazis. So here was a man who had direct experience of the Holocaust. He was sent to family at the age of thirteen in Israel, and then had his education there, and then went to Harvard and went to Cambridge and was brilliantly clever, went back to Israel, was the chief lawyer in the foreign office there, and ended up being the president of the Yugoslav War Crimes Tribunal. He was on our panel too. He's now a man of 93, and he's a fellow of All Souls at Oxford. But he joined the panel reviewing this evidence. We also had a number of other practitioners like me who basically had spent their life doing this business of examining evidence and seeing whether it passes thresholds. And we were absolutely unanimous in our view that an application for warrants was certainly justified on the evidence that there was on the breaches of humanitarian obligations in relation to humanitarian aid getting into Gaza, in relation to the starvation of particularly children, but of the population, and the malnutrition that was rampant at that time. The concerns that there were about the absence of not just food and the staples of life, but also medical equipment. Many doctors gave testimony to the fact that they had to end up operating on children without anesthesia, having to ask colleagues to hold a child down while a leg was removed or another limb was removed. And the full horror of watching mothers unable to feed babies because they were so lacking in nutrition that they weren't producing milk, and yet there was not clean enough water to use any of the very scant formula milk that got through to feed their babies. The evidence was very clear.

But you'll ask the question, why was it only in relation to humanitarian aid that the warrants were issued? The absence of humanitarian aid, the blocking of it. the satellite evidence there was of how that was done systematically. And you'll ask the question, why not on the absolute bombardment of Gaza? And one of the things is that it's usually only after a war that you can actually have access to the intelligence that is being claimed by the bombarder. That they actually were, which is claimed by Israel, they only bombed places where there was some sort of military hub, where there were people who were creating weapons etc.

Punishment follows crimes, and it's about going after the people who individually have endorsed and basically written the authority for the way in which a war is conducted. The International Court of Justice is a civil court, and what it traditionally does is it often deals with territorial issues. It deals with, for example the land stealing that takes place in different parts of the world, and certainly in this part of the world. It deals with, for example, the issue of genocide, but it cannot send to prison anybody who may be found to have had a hand in a genocide. So it's very important that you all know that there is a real difference in this, and that therefore we need both courts.

And while it may be that some nations are quite happy to keep the International Court of Justice, the World Court, the civil court, the court that can fine countries or seek recompense and seek compensation, but punishment and real confrontation and accountability of those who conduct and commit hellish crimes, war crimes they have to come before the International Criminal Court, which has only existed for a little over 20 years. It came into being in the year 2000, many of us having campaigned for it for a long time before that. And it was a victory for the period because countries came together and said there should be a court that can punish war crimes.

Now, you want to ask the question which is about collateral damage and so on. The language should never be used because there is no satisfactory definition of what that means. 100,000 civilian deaths, probably many more, took place in the period of the war just now in Gaza. And the question that you have all, you've all got to ask is why is there so little known about some of the details of this? And it's because the press were excluded. And in addition to that, no journalist who was there was safe. 200, in fact, over 200 journalists in Gaza, Gazan people who are either trained journalists or who became journalists because of events and were providing information and film and so on to press outlets across the world, they basically have been murdered. 274 deaths of journalists - and there needs to be accountability for all of that. And that's about preventing true information getting to the public.

The use of drones: I sit on a select committee in the House of Lords, and we were doing an investigation into artificial intelligence, and I asked some questions in relation to the use of intelligence and its incorporation into drones, for example. And facial identification technology is included in the Israeli drones that they use. And so don't tell me that they didn't know that children were being targeted, that they didn't tell us that more women were being killed than in fact they're prepared to admit. And it was very obvious from the technology that was available. Also we are receiving serious evidence of sexual violence against prisoners kept in Israeli jails. Palestinian prisoners being viciously and horrifically violated and suffering the consequences in very real trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.

I want to talk about Danny Levy to just mention something to you about this business of the UN Security Council's resolution and coming in behind that ridiculous peace board. The sadness about that is that the UN took a long time before Guterres, the Secretary General, started really condemning what was going on. He was slow to do that, and the reason why is because with Trump in power, they are full of anxiety about the dismantling of the United Nations.

That is what the leadership inside the UN are fearful of, that you're going to see it being taken apart. So they become pusillanimous. They become pathetically passive in the face of horrors that are taking place. Now, Guterres, I'm glad to say, became much more opinionated as it got towards the end of his period in office. He, this period in office is about to end, and I want to tell you now that any credible contender is being knocked out of the frame. Anybody who is going to be somebody who will take a strong position in the leadership of the United Nations is not going to be a contender at the end of the day. And that will suit Russia fine, it will suit China fine, but unfortunately it will suit Trump absolutely fine too. And so we're not going to have the institutional framework that can keep all of this stuff alive. And so when Danny is describing the full horrors of what is agreed in that 20-point plan, it's not going to be challenged by the UN if we end up with a patsy in that role.

And so one of the things that we have to do and be demanding of our government is that they actually identify who will be the strongest candidate and who will basically challenge some of this stuff. And we have to be doing that very soon because time is running out, and the appointment is going to be made any time soon.

The other thing that I wanted to say to you in relation to the question of what can we do: All of us have MPs. It was quite interesting to see in the disclosures today about about Mandelson that Wes Streeting was dismissed by Mandelson

as being hysterically immature because he was so upset about what was happening in Gaza. And perhaps reassuring when we heard that he was as upset as he was about what was happening in Gaza. But I want to see more upset, and I do not want to hear Tony Blair coming out and saying things. If ever anybody has forfeited his right to talk about he and his great friendship with Jared Kushner and his membership of this board. But the other thing I wanted to tell you about is that we talk about the whole business of trying to get people before courts. Netanyahu is not going to make a visit to Britain while there's a Labor government because it's been made clear while Richard Herrman is the attorney general he'll be arrested if he comes. And that's true of Europe. He's not traveling. He flies straight into the United States, but he hasn't been going to Europe. And those decisions are being made. We are making life uncomfortable for certain people. I want to see an expansion of the sanctioning of those people in leadership. We've already sanctioned Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, but I would like to see warrants being issued for them, and we should be calling for warrants of them for inciting violence.

Recognition matters, but it's not a substitute for action. It must have real legal consequences. It must affect trade, it must affect arms licensing, and it must affect the UK's relationship with the Israeli settlement enterprise.

I've worked for many years as a human rights lawyer on Palestine, including five years in the West Bank with the Norwegian Refugee Council. We were trying to prevent the forced displacement of Palestinians through litigation in the Israeli justice system. That work mattered, but it taught me a hard lesson. The domestic Israeli justice system is part of the machinery of the occupation. It gives legal form to dispossession, to settlements, demolition, land seizure, the wall, torture, and other violations, all the while providing the illusion of a functioning justice system. But an illusion it is. So I looked at international law, and I believe, for all its flaws, that is where the answer lies. I remember a moment in 2011, sitting in an NRC meeting room in East Jerusalem with some of Palestine and Israel's finest legal minds when UNESCO admitted Palestine to membership.

At first, I thought it was wonderful but symbolic. But the lawyers in that room explained to me the real point, that UNESCO admits states and states can accede to treaties, and that helped open the door to Palestine joining the major international treaties, including the Genocide Convention and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

And here we are today seeing the consequences of that now, ICC arrest warrants, South Africa's genocide case before the ICJ, and the ICJ's 2024 advisory opinion on Israel's occupation. The point is not simply that Palestine can now use international law, it is that the UK has an even greater duty than before to respond to what international law requires.

The ICJ said many things, but amongst them that Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory is unlawful in and of itself and must be brought to an end. It tied this directly to the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and their entitlement to an independent and sovereign state, now recognised by the UK.

The court also addressed the obligations of third states, including the UK. It said states must not recognise that unlawful situation. They must distinguish in their dealings between Israel and the territories it's occupied since 1967. They must

not enter into trade or economic relations that entrench Israel's unlawful presence, and they must take steps to prevent trade and investment that help maintain that illegal situation. Now the UK has recognised Palestine, those duties carry even greater political force. The UK can no longer speak of a sovereign Palestinian state in the future while maintaining policies that keep in place the very structures that make that future impossible.

I want to focus on settlements, which could be described as the single most enduring and systematic violation of Palestinian rights, and how the UK contributes to their economic viability. Settlements are not neutral housing estates, and settlement farms are not ordinary farms. There is a reason that transferring the occupied civilian population into occupied territory is a war crime. Settlements are linked to a host of human rights violations, including forced displacement, land seizure, apartheid policies, exploitation of natural resources, and they create facts on the ground towards annexation.

The ICJ confirms these practices are not temporary or incidental, but structural, deliberate, and cumulative. They deny the Palestinian people their right to self-determination. The UK has long said that settlements are illegal under international law and a serious obstacle to peace. At the same time, the UK has preserved close relations with Israel, including in trade.

The UK, like the EU, has tried to manage that tension through a process called differentiation. In simple terms, that means distinguishing between Israel within its sovereign borders and the territory it occupies. So for example, an avocado grown in a settlement should not be treated as if it was an avocado grown in Israel, including it should not receive preferential tariff treatment under the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement.

But differentiation has not solved the problem. Settlement goods grown in settlements that are illegal under international law still arrive in the UK. Sometimes they're correctly identified, sometimes they're disguised, purporting to originate from Israel itself, and so benefit from preferential tariff treatment.

And there is a deeper question. If the UK has a duty to prevent genocide where there is a serious risk, should it not be using the leverage of its trade relationship with Israel to do just that? If the UK has a duty to distinguish in their dealings between Israel and occupied territory, and must not enter into trade or economic relations that entrench Israel's unlawful presence, should it not take measures to prevent the free entry of settlement goods into the UK market?

A number of European states, including Ireland, Slovenia, Spain, and the Netherlands appear to think the answer is yes. The UK should be asking the same questions of itself. How can the UK accept settlement dates, avocados, and citrus while Palestinian farmers in the same territory have had their agricultural economy decimated by settlements and occupation? There is a human cost to settlement agriculture, and it is paid by Palestinians. In areas here of the West Bank, some of Palestine's most fertile and resource-rich land, water sources are diverted away from Palestinian villages towards settlements. Water-irrigated settlement farms flourish alongside Palestinian communities that are denied enough water, sometimes even to drink.

Settlement agriculture is also a highly effective tool for taking over land. It covers far more surface area than its residential counterpart. For this reason, Smotrich has described farm outposts as a mega strategic tool. He has also said that Israel is erasing the Green Line by strengthening agriculture in Judea and Samaria. He also commented that he did not invent the wheel, his thirty-seventh government did not invent the wheel, but the earliest architects of the settlement enterprise used agriculture to take over large swathes of land. So the UK importing settlement agricultural goods not only finances settlements, it has a huge impact on the ground in Palestine.

And let's not forget also the indigenous population of the occupied Syrian Golan. There is another aspect of the occupation that I would like to mention, and that is sexual violence. We heard from Nick the extreme barbaric nature of sexual violence in the context of detention, but I will talk about another kind of sexual and gender-based violence that contributes directly to forced displacement. A recent West Bank Protection Consortium report discussed in the media documented incidents of sexual violence in the occupied West Bank. It reported that in many cases, Israeli forces were present and either failed to intervene or actively participated. The report said that two-thirds of displaced households interviewed reported that threats to women and children, particularly sexual violence, were their main reason for leaving. And that is what a coercive environment looks like. It is fear, humiliation, and the message that not even your own home is safe. And that should have consequences for UK policy, particularly as the UK holds itself out as a world leader in preventing sexual violence in conflict, including sanctions, diplomatic pressure and arms licensing.

So what should we ask of the UK? First, the UK government should explain what recognition means in practice, not in speeches, in policy, on trade, arms licensing, sanctions, and penalties for businesses. Second, the UK should review its agreements with Israel, including the UK Trade and Partnership Agreement,

in light of their obligations under the Genocide Convention. And under the ICJ 2024 advisory opinion. Third, the UK should apply a genuine zero tolerance policy to conflict related sexual violence. It should support investigations, impose targeted sanctions, and re- suspend or refuse arms licenses where the legal risk threshold is met. And fourth, for civil society, recognition gives us a stronger basis to act.

Particularly as a human rights lawyer, I request your support for our litigation efforts for Shalwan's arms trade case, for upcoming litigation on trade with settlements. Your voices matter. The public voice matters. As a final point: If recognition is real, it must affect trade, it must affect arms licensing, and it must affect the UK's relationship with the settlement enterprise. Because if international law is only applied when it's politically convenient, then it is not a rules-based order at all, and that is a concern for all of us. Thank you.

17 Recognition is the Beginning Conference: The UK political situation: what can the UK do?

Chris Doyle, Shawan Jabarin, Dame Emily Thornberry MP, Debbie Abrahams MP, Paul Gerrard

Sir Vincent Fean: My name is Vincent Fean. I'm a trustee of the Britain Palestine Project, and I'm here to introduce our speakers for the penultimate session. I'm very honoured to have good thinkers with me: Chris Doyle, director of CAABU. Emily Thornberry, MP chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Debbie Abrahams MP, Chair of the Select Committee on Work and Pensions, and Co-Chair of the Britain-Palestine All-Party Parliamentary Group. And Paul Gerrard of the Co-op, Director of Campaigns and Advocacy and Government Relations.

Chris Doyle: Thank you very much, Vincent, and thank you to the BPP for having arranged this and this really stellar lineup of speakers that we've all been listening to today. As I was in a reception in the Commons last night that we hosted to, I hark back to actually when I was in parliament back in January 2024, and I saw the British minister for the Middle East, Hamish Falconer, and I sidle up to him and I said, "Happy New Year, Hamish. How are you?" And he said it would be a happy new year if you weren't accusing me of complicity in genocide." And I said the government, but not you. You are a junior minister, but that's the case." And that's really where I start from. We have to end that complicity. Just as we were complicit in the Nakba, Britain continues today to be complicit in what is going on. We are still selling arms to Israel. That's got to end. End all military and security cooperation with Israel like the overflights. End trade and all dealings with Israeli settlements, period, in the occupied state of Palestine. We can impose a raft of sanctions and suspend the free trade agreement with Israel. All of this is the sort of activities you would expect given this is a country that is in daily violation of international law. We can state unequivocally that the ICC arrest warrants must be adhered to, but we seem to move away from that. But aside from the complicity, our approach is all over the place. Boris Johnson wrote on the Balfour Declaration and described it as an exquisite masterpiece of Foreign Office fudgerama. Now, all due respect to Vincent and other former Foreign Office colleagues here, the Foreign Office hasn't lost the skill set for fudging the issue of Palestine. It refers to ceasefires that aren't being adhered to, peace processes that didn't exist, a Middle East peace process department when there wasn't one. It purports to support a two-state solution but does nothing to unravel the one-state reality and system of apartheid that Israel has imposed.

We've sanctioned two Israeli ministers. Great, in a personal capacity as if what they had perpetrated as ministers was done in a personal capacity. But why only these two? Nearly all Israeli ministers have made genocidal comments, and nearly all are guilty of what has gone on. What does Netanyahu have to do for Britain to sanction him? Other features of government policy, I'm afraid, and I would say all these comments apply to previous governments not necessarily in equal measure, but certainly do. Blatant cowardice. We back away from taking effective action. We've mastered the art form of vacuous press releases that express concern, deep concern, and drum roll, grave concern. And then there are the passive posts referencing *X* number of Palestinians dying in Gaza or Lebanon. The identity of the perpetrator is unknown. Israeli security always comes before Palestinian rights. Have you ever heard or read a British minister of any party refer to the need for Palestinian security? Have you ever heard a British minister saying Palestinians or Lebanese have a right to self-defense? Never. And I've been on this for 35 years. So we need a change in attitude. And on international law, this government supports it except if it involves Israel and indeed the United States.

So we cannot yet state that this government has not stated that Israel has violated international law in Gaza except for one occasion, the bombing of the World Central Kitchen in 2024 when seven internationals were killed, not one Palestinian. That's extraordinary. A clear statement that they violated international law. The policy position is much better on the West Bank, where we do say Israel has violated international law. There's the list of crimes that we don't talk about: the torture, the sexual abuse that has been mentioned, rape, use of white phosphorus in Gaza and Lebanon. The only time, as Kit Malthouse pointed out, that UK has properly condemned torture and abuse was with the flotilla activists recently when it was caught on camera. So there have been some moves forward.

The UK recognised Palestine, albeit late and in a conditional fashion, rather than a fulsome validation of a national right and a right to self-determination. But UK foreign policy since last September has proceeded as if recognition is the endpoint, not the starting point of a way forward. David Lammy told an event at the Labour Party conference last year that this decision would not have happened without you, pointing at the audience of activists, Labour Party members, etc. He was right, but that is part of the problem. It shouldn't have needed us to lobby the government to do this. The government should've done it because it was the right thing to do, and years ago. And imagine, if there'd been no marches, no vigils, no protests, no lobbying of MPs, no backbenchers creating a fuss, what would UK government policy have looked like? Just think about that. Why do we now, having recognised, not refer to what I said earlier to the State of Palestine being occupied? We recognised it. When Kuwait was

occupied, it was an occupied state of Kuwait. We don't do that. Why have we not provided that response to the ICJ opinion, or at least, and I emphasise this, stated that the occupation is unlawful, the central finding? We said we did not disagree with the central findings, but we will not spell out what those central findings are. So we can do that, and the government says that it's reviewing that opinion with rigor. More rigor mortis. But the government ignores public opinion at its peril. And we have potentially a future leadership election, and they should take very careful note of the opinion polls that show that Labour Party voters in 2024, members believe that Israel's committing genocide, they're against what they're doing, and they want to see a change of policy.

And there's also the division and distraction, I should say this as well, all about the hate marches and Palestine Action, the BBC, and Glastonbury, and so forth. In large part, because ministers of this government and previous government do not want to focus on what is actually happening on the ground. That's why we need to keep the focus on what is happening on the ground in Palestine. Because they know if the coverage is on that, if the debate is about that, they're gonna have to do things they don't want to do and take action. So going forward, we have a chance for a course correction. The Labour leadership, we really have to push for it. I'll leave it there.

Sir Vincent Fean: Thank you, Chris. May I now turn to Emily and Debbie. I would like just to say that Emily has conducted a very forensic review with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Israel-Palestine conflict and produced recommendations. And Debbie is a very powerful voice in the corridors of Parliament as well as in public.

Emily Thornberry MP: Thank you. I try to measure everything that I do when it comes to this region as is what I'm doing furthering the cause of two states. Is it furthering the cause of peace? And is everything else a distraction? And, whenever I meet an Israeli politician, the first thing I say is, "How do you see Israel in 10 years' time?" Because people seem to be really good at tactics, but they're never any good at strategy. And the question is, if you want to have a largely democratic Jewish state, how are you gonna do that if you have one state? And if you carry on as you are, you will have one state. If you want to be a democracy, it means that Palestinians must have equal rights to you. So how does that work? And you never get an answer. And I think this is part of the issue, is that people get hyper-focused on the outrages now and it's right to, and your heart goes out at the moment to what is happening with newborn babies faces being bitten by rats in Gaza who are living in rubble. And the fact that nobody seems to be doing anything about it now. But we have to also think, how do we get justice in the end? And how do we further the cause of the

Palestinian State? And that seems to me to be the important thing. And the recognition of Palestine was great. I worked very hard for it. Our report came out just a couple of weeks before the government finally changed their minds. I hope that we played a part in changing their minds. But this is not performative.

That's just the first step. There are many steps. There may be miles. But we have to keep going forward, and what seemed to happen was that it set up a sense of momentum to such an extent that then we got, Trump coming in and so on, and various initiatives being taken, and pieces of paper being produced with 20 points on, and a ceasefire which is obviously much to be welcomed. And then what? And then nothing really. The Board of Peace seems to have meant nothing. There has been no progress. And the lives of Gazans remain absolutely miserable, and they continue to be killed, and there is no progress. And in the meantime, there is a deliberate policy of assassinating Palestinians, of grabbing their land, and of doing their utmost to try to snuff out any chance of two states. This is what we should be focused on.

Comment: Two states is finished. There's only one.

Emily Thornberry MP: I hear you. But if it's one state, then it has to be one state which is democratic. We are so far from either a one state, a democratic state where everyone has equal rights, or two states where people have some dignity and security. We have neither at the moment. These are the things that we need to be focused on, and we need to be focused on continuing the progress. But at the moment, the issue of Palestine has gone out of the headlines completely, and because it goes out of the headlines, nobody focuses on it.

And so my job as a politician is to try to keep pushing this and to keep pushing this forward. And in the end, what can we do that will be effective? And it seems to me that what we do need to do is to retain focus, but also with those countries with whom we recognise Palestine, we need to be challenging them and saying let's together do the next step, which has to be the sort of sanctions that have been discussed, the kind of starving of the economy.

You can't get insurance on the West Bank, you can't get finance on the West Bank, you can't trade if you're on the settlements. Or all of these things we need to be doing properly and in a comprehensive way, which we're not at the moment, but not just Britain, but other countries too. And we need to use the power that we have to pull together the friends and allies that we have in the region, along with those in the West, to say, "Look, this has gone into the sand. But we can't just stop. We have to keep moving forward, and we need to be able to do that and not to walk away with our heads down and say it's all very hard.

Debbie Abrahams MP: Our group is an all-party group. We are ably supported by CAABU and also increasingly by the BPP. But we are a small group, and we have to be very focused. But I think I can speak on behalf of other colleagues, particularly from the executives, that our focus has been about the recognition that in human rights, that we recognize the common human rights of everybody across the region. So one focus over the last six months prior following on from recognition, which was our first goal about getting Palestine recognised as a state. What next? How do we make that viable? I understand and have heard from many people the concerns that this is not possible, but we are going to try. So for us, that has meant what does- what can we do to make sure that the unlawful settlements don't expand?

What can we do following the announcement at the end of December about the E1 settlement area, which if that goes ahead, the tenders were opened yesterday, will close at the end of this month, then there will be no viable Palestinian state. So what could we do? Our focus has been about developing international alliances, for example with the Irish government. They now have a bill where they are implementing sanctions on goods. We already have that facility. We have SAMLA, the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act, which we could use. And for the life of me, I do not know why we're using it. So park it to one side in terms of what the government can do. We are then working as a group to make sure that businesses we've identified. Thank you very much BPP for all your help with this. 43 businesses who have been previously, and UK businesses who've been previously involved in the expansion of other settlements. We have contacted them. We have a plan around that. They have now been notified that it would be unlawful for them to engage in any activity, funding, providing materials, and so forth. And we're replicating that with our new international allies in Europe, in Ireland, and recently in Australia, and we hope to extend that they will do the same things. They will contact companies that have been involved in that engagement. So while the government decides what they're gonna do apart from just their statements, we're taking action. And as things move on, this month is absolutely key. We hope that you can join us. Thank you.

Sir Vincent Fean: One quick comment on E1: The tenders for E1 are meant to have issued yesterday the technical book which would split the West Bank in half, north-south, and would split East Jerusalem from its Palestinian hinterland. We have to try and stop that. The only way to stop it now is to warn that any Israeli entity that bids for those tenders will face economic consequences here and economic consequences with our partners. The French foreign minister said something about that a few days ago about international sanctions against any bidder.

The bids are meant to be open on the 6th of July. So we've got a month. As you said, Debbie, June is a serious month for action. So I would like you to take away the idea that our government needs to say publicly that it would penalize any Israeli bidder. This would be a first. Any Israeli bidder for the tenders for E1.

Paul Gerrard: Thank you. I'm Paul Gerrard from the Co-op, and thank you to the BPP for inviting me to speak today. The Co-op's the world's oldest cooperative. We trace our roots back to Rochdale, Todmorden 1844. We're also one of the world's biggest cooperatives. We have 7.5 million members and revenues of £12 billion. We are a big business. We're the fifth biggest food retailer in the UK. For decades, we have taken a human rights centered approach to how we trade.

So there's been a lot of talk about goods from the illegal settlements. We haven't stocked goods from illegal settlements explicitly since 2007. I think we are the only UK retailer to say that publicly. Since last year, almost a year now, we've had an approach to our trading, which means that we do not trade with 17 countries who are of concern to the international community. That does include the State of Israel, so we no longer stock products from the State of Israel.

The first point I'll make is that big businesses can take action should they choose to, and should they choose not to, then that is a choice. The second point I would make is that we did both those things because our members asked us to. We're member-owned. We're owned by 7.5 million members now. Our members also asked us to do all we can to help build up the Palestinian economy. Five months before recognition, there was an MOU signed, a key part of which was the trading relationship between Palestine and the UK.

The Co-op is the single biggest retailer of Palestinian goods in the UK, and that's predominantly because of the relationship we have with Zaytoun. We've done some work with Zaytoun and we'll be publishing a report in the coming weeks. I cannot tell you how difficult it is for Zaytoun to operate. Let me just give you three examples:

1)Water: The Palestinian farmers do not have access to the Jordan Basin. They only have access to one of the aquifers, the Mountain Aquifer. They have to buy water from Israel to supplement it. Overall, the average settler has/ uses 370 liters of water a day. A Palestinian uses 75. That has real consequences. The consequence is this: In Jericho they can no longer grow citrus or bananas like they used to. It's too water intensive. They can only grow Medjool dates and almonds.

2)Travel. You will all know how difficult it is to travel around the West Bank in

particular. Imagine this. Medjool dates are unbelievably resource intensive. It is hand work. Picking, pruning, cleaning, measuring standards. It's predominantly women who do that work in the factories. Can you imagine not being sure of your journey to work even on a normal day, let alone where there are ad hoc blocks? Childcare, etc. Imagine trying to run a business like that.

3) And my last point on this is that it costs Zaytoun 10 times more to get their product from the West Bank to Haifa than it does from Haifa to Hamburg. 10 times more. It is unbelievably difficult. And I think the main point I would make here is that the UK government can do things to help the Palestinian economy.

The last toolkit to help businesses operate in Palestine was published in 2022. Things have changed since then. UK export finance doesn't apply to businesses looking to trade with Palestine. The last point I would make is this. It's nothing to do with being a co-op. Before I joined the co-op I was 20 years a senior civil servant. The majority of that in Her Majesty's Customs and Excise. I do hear talk from officials that it's really difficult to identify settlement goods coming into the UK. For about 1,500 years, that has been the job of the customs or the border force now at the border. I assure you that if there was the political will, it is not very difficult to identify a product and where it came from and can be done immediately if you choose to.

Sir Vincent Fean: We should ask the government why we cannot transpose the provisions of the Sanctions and Money Laundering Act, which are used on Russia for the invasion of Ukraine to Israel for the unlawful occupation of Palestine. That's a question. It's not a yes or no answer, and what Paul has just said about the complexity or simplicity of knowing where stuff comes from is very reassuring. So that leads to the conclusion that like the delay in responding to the 2024 advisory opinion, it isn't just a technical question, it's a political issue. Therefore, ministers need to be held accountable, and I know that the people on this platform will do that.

One more thing. I'd like just to say a word on behalf of Save the Children, who are running a campaign against the detention of Palestinian children in Israeli military prisons. Two things: One, release all children under 18 from Israeli military prisons, whether they're there on a charge or more often, on what's called administrative detention without charge. Secondly, because of all the breaches of the UN Convention on the Child, the safety, the protection of the child 39, I think, breaches of that convention which Israel has signed and ratified, there should be a call by our government for Israel to stop any arrests of children in the West Bank.

Questioner 1: My question is just a small one. Israel was recognized in 1947, but it never had a borders exactly. And of course, we know that they expanded and expanded, and they are still expanding. I would like to know how do you feel about their claim of biblical Israel, especially at this time? Because they already declared they're taking 70-75% in Gaza, as well as another seventy percent from Lebanon, and of course, another part of Syria. How we can stop Israel from its wild dreams? Thank you.

Questioner 2: In view of the clear evidence of complicity by present government ministers in the crimes that are being committed in Palestine at the present time, what does the panel think about the likelihood of this being an issue in the upcoming leadership election in the Labour Party? And what are the prospects of getting a prime minister that will actually change direction here?

Questioner 3: Hi, I'm Donna from PSC. I'd like to ask Emily and Debbie why they didn't sign the Imran Hussain and Richard Burgon's letter about sanctions against Israel?

Sir Vincent Fean: I wonder, Shawan, do you want to say a word about the biblical point on Israel, the first question? The claim to the land, God-given land.

Shawan Jabarin: Maybe this question has to go to Avi Shlaim or others to respond to. If God gave this, they recognize God when it comes to the land, but they don't recognize God when it comes to saving the lives of the people and not killing them. They don't even recognize God when they kill people and commit genocide in Gaza, and they are not even recognizing God when stealing the land of the Palestinian people, their sheeps, their goats. They cut their trees - some of the trees are more than one thousand years old.

Another thing is even such as the Professor Rumi Labib, when he said that the Zionist, they recognize God when it comes to the Palestine and land, but when they eat, they don't eat according to the Bible or something like this. They even don't act according to all of these values. I think this is a myth. And why do I say myth? One is, archeologically speaking, no one sign. No one sign. The British missions, archeological missions, they were in Palestine in the eighteenth century and after. The French also, and the Israelis then when they arrived, they didn't keep stones next to the others. They did everything possible, and there's no one sign on that. I think it's used politically, that's the case. But I am not the one who can speak deeply on these things.

I think Palestine is the most documented genocide case in history from international evidence, the international reports, the human rights, the regional, the international human rights. The UN reports are clear about everything. There is no lack of information.

Another thing is, even here, many people, they have a pension, a pension where it's invested. Is part of that in settlements or other businesses related to settlements and constructions in settlements? Even individuals, everyone can make difference. Everyone can challenge what's going on, even if they ask the pension funds, "Where do you invest our money? In which companies? Where does this lead to?"

Debbie Abrahams MP: We are in unprecedented times in terms of the world order. So we have the age, unfortunately of power politics, hard power. And we've got the President of the United States saying he's going to take over Greenland. He's invaded Venezuela. This is an extension of that. It is wrong, and that's why I started my comments before about the rule of law and human rights. We are all equal in dignity and rights, and we need to really protect that and do what we can to show that we live by that.

And that includes holding our own government to account where we are shown to be wanting. We're using Sandler against Russia. Why aren't we using it? Because we lose credibility when we don't do that. I don't know why we are being so weak really in terms of what we're not doing. Why aren't we holding Israel to account more? I know there's now been the cooling off from the US, and I think that's a good thing to, to be honest with the current administration. The amount of EDMs, letters, and so on. We had a joint letter with Ireland about Sandler and about sanctions we would impose. We're all doing our best in different ways and different groups.

Chris Doyle: I just wanted to add to that in terms of criticizing those who are supportive; Emily and Debbie both signed a letter that we organized that called for sanctions, credit to them, and there were 119 people who did that. Secondly, there's a lot of people within the Palestine movement generally who would've been very critical of Wes Streeting. A lot of people have said to me after the release of his WhatsApp messages with Peter Mandelson, "Ah, this is very convenient for Wes because he talked about war crimes." But the revelations yesterday demonstrate very conclusively with Pat McFadden saying he's been raising it in cabinet, he's been raising it in the WhatsApp messages, that it wasn't just for show.

So to think a little bit before, tucking in to people who may not have signed early-day motions. There are a lot of members of parliament who do not sign early-day motions, and many people think they're devalued. On the issue of complicity, just to be very clear, I, in combination with a lot of others, are saying the British government is complicit if you continue to sell arms in a situation where these crimes are being committed. I wasn't going for one particular minister. But we do need to target the criticisms where they're deserved.

Sir Vincent Fean: We've been talking about settlements. It would be possible for our government to criminalize the purchase by British citizens of settlement houses, settlement land. To make it a criminal offense to buy land in stolen land. It would be possible. It's physically, politically possible. It requires political will. So I put that on the table as something that we should advocate because it's doable. And we do need to tackle not just the buildings of settlements, but the illegality of the settlement enterprise as a whole. Last round of questions.

Questioner 1: What can be done to curtail the malign influence of the Zionist lobby?

Questioner 2: Thank you. My question is for Emily Thornberry. I saw your comments last night about the ICJ ruling and the UK's failure to respond or implement it, and I just wondered if you had any comments about how civil society can help to change that?

Questioner 3: As the descendant of a number of early British chief rabbis, I have been writing to my constituency MP about Israel and Palestine and asking for a meeting since twenty seventeen. I have failed to get said meeting, including a group meeting of British Jews with said MP. My MP is Keir Starmer. In all seriousness, what else can I possibly do to see that my perceived best interests are carried out by my political representative?

Chris Doyle: First of all, there's now a debate as to whether one should even say the word Zionist lobby or talk about an existence. There is. There's a pro-Israel lobby, call it what you will. There are other groups, including my own, that lobby for a different point of view. The existence of such groups in itself is not illegitimate. They are entitled to go to Congress or here and push forward a policy that might support settlements. But the question is, are any of those dealings contrary to international law or decency, etc? Is there disproportionate attention given to the viewpoints that are aired by such groups? I think it's the \$750 million budget this year for Israeli hasbara. They called it public diplomacy, but I think it was referred to as propaganda. How is that being

spent? Is there enough transparency on it? I would say there should be more transparency in all of these things. But the challenge for us, we've got to do it better ourselves. Let's look at ourselves. How do we get the narrative over? How do we win the argument? We have a lot of things in our favor. Public opinion, overwhelmingly supportive. How do we translate that into change? That's where the Labor leadership election comes into this because quite frankly, any candidate for the Labor leadership could certainly win a lot of support by speaking out for rights and justice on Palestine.

So I think we should be pushing to up our own game always in this. If there is something that is done untoward, as in terms of, as we've seen maybe with Russia donations and interference or Chinese, etc then that needs to be outed, properly evidenced and investigated. But for the moment, I think our job is to focus on getting the story across, pushing it, and that's the best way to, to deal with it.

Dame Emily Thornberry MP: There is a date coming up, which is the two-year anniversary of the ICJ's advisory judgment. And since then the government has been saying that they're considering it, and that they are focusing on it, and that they're going to come back with something soon, and, they're just messing about. So we have to hold them to account on that, and I think we have to be clear. And I think that calling, just saying, "We really must have it before it's two years old. We need to have a response to that." Because I do think that there are responsibilities that come from a recognition of that of the sense and truthfulness of that advisory opinion. And that's what, all the other obligations can be seen to flow from that. The illegality of the settlements, which therefore gives an obligation on the government to do, the various things that I've said. Can I say something about Zionism? Because I believe in Israel, in my quest to make myself the most unpopular person in this room, I just wanna say that I think I'm probably a Zionist. If I believe in Israel and I believe in Palestine, and I don't like the way in which it's used as a term of abuse, because I really don't. And I think actually the majority of British people also want there to be an Israeli state that behaves itself in a way which is responsible, stops undermining its neighbors, and stops subjugating the Palestinians. And that is able to live in peace with its neighbors, and that there should be a Palestinian state where Palestinians can live in peace and security and dignity. That is what the British public want, too. Which kind of makes them all Zionists as well.

Debbie Abrahams MP: So I believe in Palestinian people and Israeli people, because not all Israeli people are Jews. But I believe we should be able to live in peace and harmony side by side, and I've said that. Peace, harmony and safety

and security. And I will do all I can to achieve that goal. But I do take the point that there is a lobby that goes beyond that and it's about the primacy of Israel as a Jewish state and I understand the concerns around that as well.

I agree with Emily here about the ICG advisory opinion and the fact that it is two years we need to be doing more on that. But I think it's important that we do have events like these. We really do have to be making our case. The principles that we've talked about in terms of all of us here I think agree and support human rights, the rule of law, that we are all equal. And that's really important and we should try our best to uphold that.

Dame Emily Thornberry MP: It's really difficult when you your MP is the prime minister as well because, how often are they able to go to surgeries? How often are they knocking on doors? But, as you say, it's been many years that you've, so to wait a couple of years is one thing, but to wait seven is another issue.

Shawan Jabarin: Because of talking about Zionism, I think Zionism and Zionist movement is a racist movement, and mainly, it promises the superiority of one group over the other one. I said that Palestinians, they have no problem with the Jews ever. And the Jewish, they used to live in Palestine in the golden time, shoulder by shoulder with all Palestinians, with all Arabs. They are part of Palestinians. Those, they were, in Palestine before what happened and before Balfour and the immigrations and all of these things.

And the main difficulty for peace is not the Palestinians. Palestinians, they are thirsty and they are killed by this regime. It's a colonial regime. That's the case in my point of view. Okay. Thank you. And another thing is, Did your government ask to go to Gaza, for instance? Why don't they allow you to get in Gaza? Did you ask for your media to go to Gaza to see what's happened in Gaza? Why they reject it? Why also the settlers, the illegal settlers coming here forth and back on a free visa? There is no one action. That's the reality. And without the actions, things will continue, or this is an encouragement to Israel to continue. That's the case. This is the complicity.

Sir Vincent Fean: We should say a word from Jess just in conclusion if you have anything new to add.

Jess Stober: To answer the question, who was a lawyer about the UK's response to the 2024 advisory opinion. Not only must they release Richard Hermer's advice, his legal opinion that's been languishing for two years. But I think there is an urgent need for the UK to examine its economic relationship

with the occ- that entrenches the occupation through its financial support to the settlement enterprise by the importation of goods and services from settlements.

And I think there is a need to reframe how we look at products and services that come from settlements. And I think as a lawyer you might be interested that there is a very coherent legal argument that such goods and services are in fact the proceeds of crime and can be framed in, as criminal property emanating from the underlying crime of pillage, forcible transfer of Palestinians and transfer of the occupier's population into occupied territory.

18 Recognition is the Beginning Conference: The global political situation: what can be done?

Daniel Levy, Dr Julie Norman, Nomi Bar-Yaacov, Shawan Jabarin, followed by Q&A.

Sir Vincent Fean: The theme now is: what do we do? If I may begin by asking Julie to say a few words on the subject, of what do we do.

Dr Julie Norman: It's a real pleasure to be here on the panel and with all of you today. I think so many of us working on this topic feel a lot of helplessness, a lot of hopelessness because of just how awful things have been in Gaza and the West Bank.

But I think panels & events like this do remind us that not doing anything is not an option. There are always excuses. We have to wait until the Israeli elections. The UK can't do anything against the US. I push back on all of those and say we've heard today from people from the legal sector, health sector, practitioners, NGOs: there is always something to do, and it's very refreshing to be in a room like this where so many people believe that.

I will just touch on a few actual policy ideas. I think many of us feel stuck with this twenty-point plan. I don't think that is the right approach. There are alternatives. I would give a shout-out to the Portland Trust and Baron Frankel - They are coming out with a new report that's outlining dozens of different reconstruction plans for Gaza that's a little bit different than what the Board of Peace is doing. But just to say that there are many alternatives out there. Some of those will resonate with some people more than others, but there is not just one game in town, and it's very important to be aware of that. I would say whatever direction that goes I do hope that we find a way to thread the needle between private investment on the one hand and the charity and aid model on the other because I do think whatever happens in Gaza in the future will be pulled between those two poles and trying to find a path that really centers Palestinian autonomy and resilience is going to be very key for Gaza.

I would also just say too for Gaza, whatever plan does come into being, ensuring that there is that maintaining a link between Gaza and the West Bank, ensuring a continuity of Palestinian nationalism is going to be very key. This is not new in the last two years to try and divide Gaza and the West Bank, and I think this has been said rightly throughout today that many of the terms of the Board of Peace are enacted to keep that separation rather than encourage more unity.

The last point I'll just say on Gaza is - the level of trauma cannot be overstated, and the level of intergenerational trauma that we will see there for years. ensuring that there are mental health considerations into any kind of plan and services that go forward there on the West Bank, which is where I do most of my work.

For the UK to recognize the state of Palestine, it's a very obvious and relatively uncontroversial policy to ban settlement goods. And I think that is something that if you were recognizing a state, purchasing goods from illegal settlements within that state is just a non-starter. I would also point out the EU is building a momentum in this area as well. If you're interested in this, the EU Middle East project are doing really good work around this at the moment. I would also couple that though, with investing in Palestinian goods and Palestinian businesses. I don't think we have a lot of business and private sector people here, but in Palestine, you have a whole population of very highly educated, very keen young people who want to work and are very skilled and want to engage with the global economy. And that is an opportunity right now for Britain and for the world.

And finally, on the West Bank, we haven't really talked about PA reforms. That's an area where often the UK and Europe likes to lean in. I would say when those reforms are approached, I hope that they are done in a way that is to increase the legitimacy for Palestinians of the PA rather than reforms that make the PA more legitimate for Israel or for international interests which is often where we see those reforms centered.

And I think that's one of the paradoxes of the PA is when the US or Israel thinks it's doing very well, that's usually when it is losing the most legitimacy among the population, especially in terms of security coordination and control.

I did just wanna briefly speak to the BPP principles: it kinda came out in the last panel with some of the comments and back and forth that there is disagreement in this room, and not all of us are on the same page. quite frankly, that's okay, and I think the principles are broad enough to capture some of the values, but also there are some tensions there, and I think it's healthy for this kind of convening. But as we do look forward to operationalizing those or actually making specific policy prescriptions, some of this may need to be unpacked.

And I'll just highlight the self-determination and sovereignty language. For many in this room, that is still a two-state model Palestinian state alongside an Israeli state. For others, that's a very different, more of a liberation model or something very different. I think, again, we can hold that difference in tension in

a space like this, but it is something that will require further engagement and I think further conversations led, of course, by Palestinians and not myself certainly.

But this is a space where for me, someone who tries to do policy advising to trying to figure out what are we actually talking about when we use those words, and what conversations do we need to have to find a way that is both a just peace but also one that is pragmatic and a way forward that we can move towards.

The second piece that I would emphasize is the engagement without complicity. And I think that also just looks different for different people in this room, and different people are gonna have different parameters on what that means. For me personally, that's okay. I think there are some in this room who will take more of an activist and mobilization approach, others that take more of a persuasion approach and trying to change minds, whether in Britain or in Israel. And I think the principles capture that. But I do think it means there's tough conversations ahead when we think about how we actually operationalize these things. And I guess I would just say on a final note, part of my work in trying to go back and forth between those worlds, just as it is wrong when Palestinians are dehumanized or trauma is dismissed I would say recognizing the trauma on the Israeli side on October 7th does not undermine one's commitment to Palestinian rights. Recognizing sexual violence on October 7th does not mean discounting sexual violence in Palestine. This is an issue that's personally very important to me as a survivor. And I think that calling out that's holding equal rights and esteem.

And again, I don't think it does anything to take away from our political aspirations or for what we see as a more just world to recognize the human suffering to civilians across this conflict. Thank you.

Sir Vincent Fean: I just want say one word on Baron Frankel and Palestine Emerging. Baron is a trustee of the BBP and a force for good, and has come up with many colleagues, both Palestinian and Israeli, with plans for the future of Gaza and the West Bank that entail economic development and reconstruction. The political issue of political will. But on the practicality side, on the good ideas, on the concepts that can work I commend to you Palestine Emerging.

Shawan Jabarin: The first day even before voting on the Security Council resolution Al-Haq and other Palestinian human rights organizations, they issued a letter to all of the Security Council members, including Britain as a permanent member. And we said to them, the text of this resolution breached the principles

of international law, and it doesn't help. It means a step back even from what the Security Council used to address and say about the Palestinian occupied territories. Nothing mentioned about self-determination. Nothing mentioned about Palestinians' rights. Nothing like that. And also the twenty points by Trump, they want to make a business from the suffering of the people and the blood of the people. They don't recognize the suffering and the catastrophe that Palestinians are still facing.

And we dealt with it legally, purely legally, and analyzed it as if this is like an international new occupation. That's the case. And in connection with Israel to serve Israel and to help the Israeli deepening of the occupation also in Gaza. That's the case. And to remove also the theater scene of what's happened in Gaza. They have a plan behind what they are doing. They want to remove that, all the rubbles and all signs relating to the crimes that they committed. This is what they want, and they allowed them, Trump and the others, they voted in favor. If I blame my leadership we also draw their attention to the seriousness, and this is the danger, things of this resolution. But they felt that they have nothing in their hands, and they paralyzed 100%. They spoke for two days in discussions and negotiation with the Americans. But I told them you can issue a statement standing behind our unalienable rights. This is the main thing. And the other countries, they voted then, and here we, even the Russians and the Chinese, they abstain. They said because Palestinians, they want this. And this is one thing. Because of what they are planning on paper, they're planning not how to build and to reconstruct Gaza for the Palestinians and for the people that suffer a lot, and for the Palestinian welfare and for the Palestinian interest and for nothing like that. They are thinking how to control the life of the Palestinians, how to destruct any building and maintaining the identity of Palestinians, even the social life. This is what they do. And they consult in everything that they write with the Israelis. They consult with the army. Some of them, they go to Tel Aviv in Ramat Gan and they take their approval even for anything they want to say. The Palestinians were excluded 100% including the technical body that they formed. Five out of this committee, the Palestinians, they want to resign. People, they are pushing them, "No, don't resign now." Boom, they have nothing. They are paralyzed completely one hundred percent. Because of that, I have big doubts that any reconstruction will come. But even if something comes, it's the Israeli plans for Gaza, that's the big business for Kushner and the directors of the companies; they are Israeli Americans. And they go to consult with the Israeli army and the Israeli intelligence for everything, including which kind of gates they want to build here and surveillance on anyone; to control the life and breath of the people.

This is not the rights of the people, for instance. This is the situation in reality. I'm with the idea, even if it was the kind of reconstruction that Palestinians

want, I think it was like a plan set by the Palestinian groups and others. But maybe in coordination with the Palestinians, to have also other groups that are specialized in different areas, different means, different ways, how to reconstruct Gaza, the alternative one. Here in Britain, for instance, and other places, jointly to say, "This is the the plan and we feel that it helps the people" And the Israelis, they don't hide their plans. Their plan is to push Palestinians outside. That's the case. Outside, to kill, to eliminate, to clean Gaza from the Palestinians. That's the main long-term plan, and they feel this is the time to do what they are doing. Because of that, I have a big doubt. But another thing is the Security Council gave a mandate for two years. In '27, they will again go to the Security Council, and I think we have to stand behind them. If we are standing behind justice and do believe in international law, we have to push all the member states of the Security Council, to vote against and not give the mandate to this council and to this resolution. And this is what we have to push from your government, even if they don't want to use a veto and say no, they can abstain, but not to vote in favor of, but to show that it's not supported. That's the case. Don't look at the other members. They are not acting according to the principles of international law.

Sir Vincent Fean: Thank you. I'm gonna turn now to Daniel: the question is, what do we do on 2803, but on anything we've discussed today. And I've got one pebble to throw into the lake, which is that we know that the UK does not like to act alone. It doesn't like to act, but it doesn't like to act alone. So my question, supplementary, is who with?

Daniel Levy: I want to make a political argument, not an international law argument because the case there has been set. It's established, it's stand dunk, and it doesn't implement itself. So that's where we're stuck. And if it's a political argument, it's an argument about how. How does one accumulate power? How does one build alliances that give you more reach into power?

How does then one try to deploy that power in meaningful ways that can actually change an equation? So what have we heard today? And this partly addresses what you just asked, Vincent, in terms of UK not acting alone, acting with others. We are witnessing tectonic plates shifting geopolitically in general, not just on this issue.

But certainly and I think this Israeli-American war on Iran is accelerating a shift of power away from the US. China is not going to assume the role of a global imperial power and repeat America's mistakes and take on itself all kinds of self-defeating roles in West Asia Middle East region.

We see what has been called here global Palestine. We've talked about public opinion. We've talked about the mobilization around Palestine, and that is happening in multiple spaces. It's premature to know how that is going to shift the dial in the US. It's happening inside Jewish spaces which I'll touch on more in a moment.

We see it happening in Europe. We are close to the prospect of being able to achieve certain things which I think fall into the definition of meaningful via qualified majority voting, and there's a lot you can do within the EU. I'm a board member of EU MEP glad to join that shout-out through QMV.

We see the Global South. We see what are called middle powers or regional powers stepping up on some of those issues because they see, even if our governments in the West continue to try and deny this reality, that if you can't hold a line on something as visible and egregious and obviously the continuation of a colonial reality as what we've seen in Palestine, then this whole idea that there's an international global legal architecture is meaningless.

So you see something like the Hague. So we see all of that stuff. How do we translate that into meaningful wins, and how do we do that in the context of a reality which we are living with, which we have to name, which is a vacuum, which makes this so much more difficult? And the vacuum that, that we are operating under, that I'm talking about, is we do not have a Palestinian political freedom movement.

We simply don't. We can't swing in. We can't rally behind that movement Civil society can and does do brilliant and amazing things. It cannot define strategic priorities and then impose the political discipline of a national political freedom movement and chart the trajectory forward. And we- Palestinians don't have that.

We can't swing in behind it, unfortunately. What are we trying to achieve? And this is really important. Crucially, we're trying to impact what Israel can and cannot do, what Israel can get away with, and what Israel eventually, hopefully, will be prevented from getting away with because it sees that it is not cost-free.

We've seen where impunity leads us, and now we are-- have to be laser-focused on how do you create a different incentive structure, which by the way, also impacts the internal Israeli domestic calculation. We haven't talked much about the Israeli election because there's no point talking about the Israeli election.

Right now, the Zionist opposition in the Israeli parliament are falling over themselves over who could be more bellicose because Netanyahu isn't bombing Beirut. Okay? The way you impact that is if Israelis see that there is a cost

We mustn't get taken down various cul-de-sac nonsense places like settler violence. There's no such thing as settler violence. There's no such thing as settlers without the state of Israel. Criminalizing this or that settler entity misses the point. The key here is

That Israel is in a position where it is neither normal, nor does it work for Israel in terms of the things it wants to achieve, to be able to do these things. And I'll mention in a moment what the UK can do as an example of what others can do. There's another whole set of issues which impact this equation, which I'm not gonna talk about, and that which is Israel deterrable and containable militarily?

Is anything changing in that regional military equation? And I think there are things going on there which have perhaps been accelerated as a consequence of the war against Iran And we also have to deepen the understanding Of the issue we are talking about and tear open much more the parameters of the debate, because we just saw an example of that here in this room in the last session.

And, actually, what we heard from Emily Thornberry is our failure. Seriously, I genuinely think it's our failure. Probably not primarily those of us in the room, but those of us outside of the room For someone to still in 2026 think that you can say that means we have to work, means we have to work much, much harder.

There's no saying why would anyone not want to call themselves a Zionist? Isn't that what all the Jews want?" Hello. Isn't that just motherhood and apple pie? No, there is an actual existing Zionism which has demonstrated itself to be incompatible with peace, dignity for Palestinians, but it's also demonstrated itself to be incompatible with Jewish safety and wellbeing.

So I'm sorry the poll conducted in this country by the major mainstream Jewish research organization show that Jews under 30, we've still got some work to do with my generation. The Jews under 30 split basically 50/50 Zionist on, in one camp, non or anti-Zionist in another camp This fabulous book is number four on the New York Times bestseller list.

It is a history of the Jewish Bund. Really obscure stuff. Why are people reading a book on the history of the Jewish Bund, *Where We Live Is Our Country*? And

it's most Jews who have put it to number four on the New York Times bestsellers, by the way. Make no mistake. Because other history, other ways of understanding where we come from as Jews, and Avi Shlaim has done a great service to our, us all in his work, have been written out of history by Zionism.

And it's number four in the bestseller list because so many of us are saying, "Wait, this doesn't work for me. I want to find something else. I want to dig deeper." And I say this because it has a terribly distorting debate, of course in Palestine, of course here. Sorry, of course in Israel, of course among Jews, but also here.

It is not good enough the some mainstream and many unfortunately Jewish communal establishment organizations are volunteering to be the stepping stone for greater intolerance, prejudice, and hatred in this country by saying if Reform UK or Restore or whoever, or Tommy Robinson Are the ones who are gonna most take on the Muslims, then they're gonna best protect Jews, then we're gonna align with them.

And we're gonna invite Richard Tice, but not the head of the Green Party, to speak at a Jewish communal rally

So that reductionism also keeps us trapped in a part- partition, which I would call Pakistan paradigm of solutions. Final word. What are the kinds of things we can do? Because I would say we keep our eyes on the prize, and we impact the reality in Gaza and with the Board of Peace and with everything we've talking been talking about by keeping our eyes on the prize of pressure and of shifting policy.

We-- You can't sit with Mladenov, the pro-consul of Gaza, and convince Mladenov. He's beholden to a group of people. You need to change the set of pressures on the group of people that he is beholden to. So look, the UK

The ICJ ruling, Emily got this absolutely right, and this should be part of any Labour leadership campaign if there is one. Adhere to what the ICJ ruled. Why isn't it in the public domain yet? That means revisiting our trade, certainly our arms trade. But it's not just our existing arms trade. It's also as Britain and the UK think about rearmament.

Are we going to embed the Israeli military industrial complex in our own rearmament? Not that I'm particularly fond of anyway, by the way. But if that's where we're going, are we going to embed that in our own rearmament as Germany is doing? Is Europe gonna do that?

Sir Vincent Fean: Thank you

Before, before playing in, Nomi, just to say that the the issue of looking at Eurovision, looking at football, looking at the fact that there are settlement teams in the Israeli leagues who shouldn't be there, coming back to settlements that we talked about a lot today. And I know that our chair has a strong interest in the issue of finding ways to show the Israeli electorate that Netanyahu, with their consent, is taking them down the wrong road.

On that point, and not necessarily to cover that point, Nomi, but over to you

Nomi Bari-Yaacov: Thank you very much. I wouldn't mind addressing that point as well as a number of other points because I think we are in an election year and there is a-- this is a good time for the UK government to also think about including all the things that have already been said, which I don't feel I, I need to repeat.

But the very obvious one is the ICJ, of course, coming up to the coming up to the anni-- second year anniversary. It's not just about publishing the Richard Hermer's opinion, it's about implementing the actual a- advisory opinion itself. There should be a working group or working groups to work out how because that calls unequivocally to end the occupation.

Occupation is illegal, and the occupation must end,

Not only the UK government. It's the whole international community has allowed the settlement expansion to to expand, to occur. It was-- it's not-- it's known that settlements are illegal in international law. I don't want to repeat ancient Palestinian rhetoric.

I think that the occupation is the root of all evil, but it is. It's the occupation corrupts. The occupation has become more and more brutal. It was never nice, but it's gotten much, much worse in and Israel has lost its moral compass completely. So the question is, what can the UK government do?

There's a huge amount that they can do. I'll give you just a teeny, small example. The Belgian government, for example, that recognized Palestine, unlike the UK government, unconditionally alongside other governments. I don't know how much. Doesn't really delve into the conditionality in great detail, but I think it's a very important issue here to to mention.

They a, alongside a long list of provisions that they are taking, they have legislated that they will not extend consular services to dual nationals, that is Belgian-Israeli, that own land or settle in. Not just own. They can live. That live in the occupied territories. Yeah, the occupied territories.

No, but I'm giving a small example of because it's these small examples that add up. It's whereas actually this Israeli government doesn't understand or doesn't take any notice of statements you know- And if Security Council issues some statement or General Assembly doesn't, the-- it's, it, the, it's, it actually, as Daniel said correctly it's like a prize for the MO, so-- and they look at it as-- the arrogance of this government is, I think, unprecedented. It's really quite shocking. So they're well a-above the room. Helen Kennedy spoke about the group that she was a part of, and it was looked upon by the Israeli as so normal, these sort of fringe lawyers.

It's the top lawyers in the country. But they're not-- So they, okay, so they advised to indict Netanyahu and Gallant on some very serious charges. But it's an advisory, it's an advisory sort of role, and they only-- this government only responds to action. And I think that is really important to note, like through and through.

And the action plan has to be, Concrete and not just a wishy-washy statement, "Oh, we don't like this. This is illegal." Because this particular government is a messianic government and doesn't consider itself bound by Israeli law, let alone international law. So it's really important to to as I said to take con-concrete action.

But there were things that were mentioned about the UK government, I think Dr Jabareen mentioned here. I think Shawar said that about the Palestinian children who are held in Israeli prisons. The conditions under which they're held, it's become-- under which they're held, it's become standard for them to be in solitary confinement for no reason whatsoever.

And s- so for very long periods of time. It's become standard not to feed them. These are growing children, so they're starving them. And again, that's an action that the UK government can call for alongside a long list of measures. But I'm just picking on a few issues that were mentioned here because they are really stark and it was, export licenses were mentioned, any labeling of settlement goods.

But I do think there needs to be some hope for the Israeli electorate voting. They-- The Israeli electorate needs to appreciate that there i-- that the UK

government and other governments, and it has to work with other governments. And the question of which governments, I think principally the European governments because it's very clear that the UK is not going to take on the Trump administration in the US.

And not only the UK, and it's only really a group of countries in the same way that they reacted to the Trump threat to invade Greenland or in the same way that eventually they reacted to Ukraine. But it's the immediate allies are very clearly the neighbors in the continent. And especially now that there's been a shift post-Orban, then it's easier to have unity in the European Union with the UK on on policy.

But elections are coming up. Today they voted to dissolve the Knesset in the first reading and there isn't that much time to persuade-- to call for the UK government and other governments, the Israeli government that the two-state-- the two states are an Israeli national interest that a Palestinian contiguous, viable, sovereign state based on equality and justice, and of course we need accountability.

And I don't-- And we all know that they're not going s- n- they're not going to be two states along the 1967 line. But there are many, it's mainly human not human rights, but do-gooder groups like Shaul Arieli and others that have drawn the maps of the one-to-one exchange of territory and what that would look like.

And those are being presented on a regular basis, and I think there has to be more collaboration between the Israeli civil society ex-generals that are looking this particular man I mentioned. They're looking for political solutions that would work because there isn't enough collaboration between the Israeli human rights groups that are calling out the shots and are brave enough to sit with the Palestinians in the West Bank that are being massacred by settlers.

Israeli human rights leaders have been beaten up too, and they need to be brought into the plan because they know the situation like-- in Israel better than anyone here, and they know how to influence them better, and they may have traction in the next in the upcoming election.

So I do think that it is important because if the ru- if it's only sidelining Israel, then Israel will vote for another Netanyahu, or even for Netanyahu himself. So I do think that's important to note. I know some people wouldn't agree with me, but I think that it's, as Julie mentioned, I think it's really important to recognize that there is, There was rape on the seventh of October.

There is rape in prisons. One doesn't negate the other, as you said. There is trauma of a different nature and scope and scale. Completely different, but just the recognition of it because the peace and the work will eventually come together bottoms up and top down and from civil society. So I do think that the civil so- so for example, the book which I would highly recommend, *The Future is Peace* by Aziz Abu Sarah and Ma'oz Inon, is really a must-read in terms of, you know-- Yes, they're not politicians and-- although Aziz ran for mayor of Jerusalem in two thousand and eighteen.

But they there, there is a vision there. There is hope there. There is a willingness to forgive, but we need accountability. And as a human rights lawyer, I think there will never be peace without accountability. Absolutely not. So as I said, everything that I'm saying is based on accountability, justice.

We have courts. There are courts in, RAF has to send all the surveillance to not only the ICC, also the ICJ. The ICJ court is still in process. So we know what the legal procedures are, and we need to hold not the government accountable, but we also need to be proactive in making sure that the-- that there is a move towards peace through accountability rather than just chaos.

Sir Vincent Fean: Thank you. Thank you, Naomi

What's clear from today is that the occupation needs to end. One of my colleagues in the front was talking about that earlier. The occupation needs to end. How to end it peacefully is the mission, with justice and accountability. We have time for a few questions before the windup. Randa wants to say a word?

Nomi Bari-Yaacov: Yes. Thank you Daniel, for bringing up, yesterday over dinner, we were discussing exactly these changes geopolitical changes that are taking place worldwide, and we are all hearing of yeah, countries coming together, middle-income countries coming together to try to rescue the international rules-based order.

And I just cited the Brazilian ambassador here in London Antonio, and he said, "After all, we are the majority of countries." So if we are the majority, we can make a difference. Of course, someone else will say, "Yes what about the guns? What about the power, the bellic- power of the big powers the US and Israel?"

But then, I don't know. There is a new dynamic is, that is coming that is emerging. God knows where it's going to go but it's going to change, and hopefully it will change for the best. Of course, we are all paying the price. The sacrifice done in the past three years was absolutely immense.

Psychologically, I have no idea how we're going to deal w-w-with it. And I would like to ask because I'm an Arab, I would like to ask about the Israeli society. Long a-ago, and I just, still I was thinking about that fateful day in late January twenty-one when you almost negotiated the settlement for peace, and then we were all-- we were there watching you all.

This morning I-- we cited William Dalrymple reminded me that my grandfather owned the, ow- the whole Ashdod, Isdud area, and it was all-- he was dispossessed from all that. On that day, we were ready to negotiate, to find a settlement. Of-- Everyone was going to lose, but we were going to find finally peace.

My question is about what's going on. We're all radicalized. The Israeli society clearly has become traumatized, radicalized. We're all traumatized. What i-- what happened? Wh-wh-- this conflict has been going on for so long. Is it the AI? Is it algorithm? Why can't we go back to a place where peace can-- some people can wish for the end of the violence?

Sir Vincent Fean: Thank you. Halfway up on the left, my left

Speaker 8: Thank you. I'm Tricia Rogers. I'm chair of United Nations Association for London and South East Region. We've been reminded of the effectiveness of sanctions in South Africa, sports sanctions, trade sanctions, so many. The other big thing that seemed to work in- against apartheid was a, an agreed leader that the world could respect and that obviously above all the Africans respected, Nelson Mandela.

Now, my understanding is that the Palestinians would probably choose Marwan Barghouti. I don't know for sure. But I would love to know what you think we can do to have more fairness for Palestinian leaders that are in prison, some of them clearly totally illegally in prison, others with questionable legality in their imprisonment.

What could we do to help to get some sort of leaders? 'Cause whenever a leader emerges, Israel tends to kill them, and I'm just wondering how we can help the Palestinians have a leader they can respect.

Sir Vincent Fean: Thank you One more. Let me see what I'm missing. Yes the lady with the flowery top.

Nomi Bari-Yaacov: Difficult subject, Hamas.

Sir Vincent Fean: Yeah, to hold mic a bit closer.

Nomi Bari-Yaacov: Okay. The Palestinian sovereignty, I can't see how it can happen without the inclusion of Hamas. How can we persuade governments that see it as such a fearful thing that there is a political side as well as the armed wing? I'm also- I'm a South African, and we-- Nelson Mandela managed to do that with the ANC.

There was the military wing, but the ANC got in. Practically all my friends in Palestine are pro-Hamas. Y- you cannot have Palestinian sovereignty without the inclusion of them

Sir Vincent Fean: Just one, one more. Where-

Hans- the hand moving? Yep

Yes. Okay

Questioner: Thanks. I'll try keep this brief. Directed m-mostly towards Daniel, but obviously everyone can, I'd like everyone to answer. Pre-previously we had economist from Haaretz talking about how in general, like the youth population in Israel is trending right becoming more extreme. However, in the diaspora, we're seeing the youth population of which I'm a part of, I'm a non-Zionist Jew trend-trending left and becoming more critical of Israel.

So my question is, and also I've read that book by the way, which I rarely love, and I went to a talk the other day. Brilliant. But what do you see? So I don't believe that there was ever a Zionist consensus as they claim. There was always dissent. It was suppressed. However, now it's not as easily as suppressed.

But in general, with the idea of the shattering of the Zionist consensus, what do you think changes when Israel can no longer rely on the diaspora? What happens with APAC and in general, can Israel survive if it becomes a pariah from people in which it claims to represent?

Sir Vincent Fean: Thank you. Shawan, do you want to say a word about Marwan and Palestinian leadership?

Shawan Jabarin: Look Israel, they are interfering with the Palestinian society with all means. Even when Hamas won the election, Israel, they arrested all of the legislative council members from, let me say, the group that they run the election. They said to them, Hamas and things. Another thing is when they want

anyone to become speaking out clearly and supported by the people, they put him or her under administrative detention.

They use the administrative detention as a tool to punish the society, not one person here or there. Third, Israel, they have no due process when it comes to judiciary relating to Palestinians. There is no fair trial. This is a clear one hundred percent. There is torture. What's going on now in prisons, I think...

I didn't think that it will happen ever, to be honest with you. I thought that I am naive because I thought that Israel, they have limits, but I discovered that they have no limits. No limits And now when it comes to Marwan Barghouti, I have a doubt that they will free him. If they free him, Palestinians, they have election.

They have to have election. This is important for our society. But the Israelis, they want to distract even that part. We are so eager. In two thousand and six, Palestinians, they run the election in very transparent and fair way. It was great. Ninety years old people, they go to vote. But I think Europe, including Britain, they killed the value of democracy in people's minds when they refused to recognize the results, to deal with the results.

Why Israelis when they have Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, it's pure democracy, democratic things. Even yesterday, I read that some of the Zionist group in New York, they defend the rights of Smotrich to march in the march in New York, and they said, "He is elected person. You have to allow him to go in."

He is elected. But Palestinians, when they elected, they go to prison. That's the case. Now, Marwan, I wish that they free him. I'm sure one day he will be free. One day, he will run the election and Palestinians run the election. One day, he will be a leader, and he is a leader in the, in, inside the prison, in minds of the people there outside other just points about Hamas.

Hamas, they are part of the Palestinian people. If you want to isolate Hamas, let the Palestinians have their democracy and see Hamas, they will act, and not voting for them, for instance. That's the case. They are part of the Palestinian people. Don't look at Hamas that they are a terrorist, because this narrative I think it doesn't help in a way or another.

When the Israelis attack and kill all of these numbers and genociding, the Palestinians, no one say that you have to exclude the Israeli figures and the Israeli one. But when it comes to Palestinians, I would like to put it in the context, and this important, the context is important when you analyze the situation and when you speak about here or there.

It's a settler colonial apartheid occupation regime, illegal occupation regime in Palestine. With this system, this way of dealing with the Palestinians, no way to have stable peace, real peace, without dissolving the racist, the colonial regime itself. I'm not speaking about, Jews.

That's the main thing. We have to put it in that. We are not taking a position as an organization from one state, two state, three state, ten states. We are speaking about self-determination of the Palestinians, right of return to the Palestinians. That's what we are speaking about, and this is a-- in this, the, in that case, here we can build which called long-term stable peace, dignity, justice.

That's the way. That's, I think, the way. We have not to take and to swallow and to follow what the Israelis narratives. Because all of us as Palestinians, we are a terrorist organization. We are an organization, for instance, that documenting human rights violations in... And I challenge the Israelis if they can challenge our information since '79 when this organization established.

But because they want to silence us, they designated us as a terrorist organization. I am a terrorist in their eyes, for instance, and this is the case. Anyone speak out, he's a terrorist. Here outside, anyone speak in Britain, he is or she is antisemitic. Antisemitic is an issue. Antisemitism is an issue. But I think they use it for political reasons That's the case.

And they are interfering also in your democracy. When any professor come here or there, they go after him, and with a smear campaign to silence people, to silence real and strong voices. Those they speak out for justice. This is the case. Interfering not just here in this country, everywhere over the world.

And I think part of what the-- your leader's doing, they have fear from one side, and they have no political will in the right side of the history. That's the main issue. And we see, how's the campaigns against. And if you are a Jew and speaking out, they have, I think, a term. They have a label to give a label to the people say, "Self-hater.

Self-hater." This is the labels. We have not to listen to all of these labels. We have to see what's exactly the case and how we can act according our legal value, human values, and also the rule of law and international law and justice. That's the case. This is what we have, I think to say. The last point I have, the world is changing.

Today you are strong. Tomorrow you are not. And we feel that even the power balance is changing. But the main change is the awakening up of the human

conscience of the people and the nature of this regime in Palestine became clear to the public. And we see now where the people are standing and marching, and this is a strategic shift.

This is a strategic shift. And I think I as a Palestinian who is under oppressive regime, I can say if there is one has to concern from a legal from a long-term future, it's not the Palestinians. And we keep hope that tomorrow is ours. Thank you

Nomi Bari-Yaacov: No, I ju- I just want to add. Sorry, just wanted to add to Shawan just on the practical recommendations, 'cause this is m- meant to be a practical recommendation panel. On the Palestinian prisoners, one thing that the Britain-Palestine projects do is to request ICRC visits to Israeli prisons.

That's all I wanted to say I know they don't allow them, but this, but the idea is w- the, there can be a real serious push, and you can have conditionality. If you don't allow IC- if you don't allow ICRC

Shawan Jabarin: Why? Because they are teaching the international humanitarian law mainly for Geneva Convention regarding the treating of Palestinian prisoners, and this is... They are committing grave breaches which also equal to war crimes. That's the case inside the prisons. That's what I said to them, "Go. Go.

Leave. Leave, but tell the people that you are leaving because Israel, they don't allow you, for instance, to function, to go to the prisons, to treat Palestinians to visit." That's what they said. And they have no answer. They said to me, and they said that to the people in Geneva, not just... And I will repeat it here.

Let them leave, but not to cover the Israelis that the ICRC is there, and they are doing nothing. This the case. I-

Nomi Bari-Yaacov: it's because they're doing nothing that I think it's a UK obligation to ensure that... the conditions in Pa- the conditions of Palestinian prisoners have deteriorated to the extent that I have no words to describe how they are from the time that I used to defend Palestinians.

It's not what it used to be. And with a minister like Ben Greer in charge of the prisons, he takes pride in violating humanity. So it is vital that the Britain Palestine project also take this on board, and we can discuss further exactly what they can do. It's not just ICRC visits, but it is just an issue to add to the urgent list.

And I will include, not just Barghouti, but Barghouti's just moved from one prison to another and beaten up and put in solitary confinement. And he's not a young man anymore, and it's really urgent to get him the care that he needs, and also to get him out. But not just him. There are also many others

Sir Vincent Fean: Daniel and then Julie and then we stop

Daniel Levy: So I just wanna very quickly relate to the Maram Barghouti Hamas questions. They weren't asked as the same question, but I actually think they you cannot exclude Hamas politically, but you also can't imagine that, that if the countries that are enabling what Israel is doing to the Palestinians hug the PA or hug Fatah harder, then that's gonna make them more popular.

As Shawan says, just stay out. It's not your business. It's for the Palestinians to decide. And I'm sure as our South African friend will acknowledge, this isn't about an individual. Read Nelson Mandela. He'd be the first person to say, this is about having a movement behind you, and that's what's missing.

And so we just need to st- stay out of trying to manage those politics. So on that geopolitical point we're at a moment, it may be an extended moment, where the question on the table is this exclusively about power or are there any rules? It's not like the rules have been wonderfully, standardly, meticulously adhered to, but there's been some sense that there was a yardstick against which things were measured, and there's the question, is there any such thing anymore?

Israel is not the only country trying to dismantle that architecture. Israel is trying to do it in that region by asserting its hard power hegemony and domination in that region. I think that is a project of significant overreach, which may well blow back in its face in, in, in ways that Israel will regret what it tried to do in terms of that overreach.

But as long as Israel can get away with it, then the combination of that and impunity and indulgence explains how Israeli society has gotten to a place where consent, broad consent for genocide has been manufactured and for crimes. And we heard the polling this morning as you reminded us from Dahlia Scheindlin who was joining from Israel.

And things that were on the table a quarter of a century ago in Tabarin at the very beginning of two thousand and one, I don't think are on the table today. By the way, two-states is not on the ballot from any Zionist party in the Israel. In fact, for those who think two-states is a good idea it's not on the ballot.

And it-- What I'm trying to tell you is, whether you like that or whether you want anything that in any way accords Palestinian rights, it won't be on the ballot until the Israeli incentive and c- citizen center structure looks different. But the point I want to make, which goes to your question about if Israel becomes a pariah and about how Jewish people are relating to this- The point I want to make is that, that for me, this isn't about preserving what I think has been a failed experiment, which is the ethno-supremacist state of actual existing Zionism.

I think it hasn't even done what's written on the tin, which is Jewish safety and wellbeing, even if you don't give a damn about anyone else. But that doesn't mean that Jewish Israelis don't deserve rights and safety. This isn't about swapping one zero-sum approach with another zero-sum approach. And that's the distinction I want people to understand.

I want the Emily Thornberrys of this world to understand that you're doing no favors to them by saying, "Carry on marching down your Zionist path. We're gonna support. We may sanction you, but the problem isn't Zionism." The problem is precisely Zionism. The- you cannot have... There, there's simply no kissing point of running a regime of ethno-supremacy and having safety and security and wellbeing.

That doesn't exist But what we absolutely have to stand firm on and there's an excellent recent interview with Rashid Khalidi the former Columbia professor, historian, prolific author, If it begins as a settler colony and three, four generations later, this isn't an Algeria outcome. There's also no French homeland And so if it becomes a pariah, and we've got a lot of work to do in our community to get to that place, but we're on a path at least, we still have to answer the hard question of what's the soft landing that's a better alternative.

It will take them a long time to accept that it's a better alternative, and I'm not saying Palestinians wait until the, all of them accept that it is. But that's a better alternative. Yeah, they won't have their apartheid privileges

But you undermine Zionism by offering something else. You undermined apartheid by offering a freedom charter that offered something else to the Afrikaner and white population of South Africa. And so that, and that's where, again, you need a political movement that can articulate that. Let me just leave it at that

Sir Vincent Fean: But we give the last word to Julie .

Dr Julie Norman: Thank you. I think the question was just like where is the will to still have any kind of discussions, negotiations, like attempts to, to have some kind of resolution, if you will. And it is it obviously an extremely bleak and dark moment, and I think all of us who are all-- at all realistic know that it's not coming soon at the macro level.

And yet, you-- even in the weeks and months after October 7th, even throughout the horrific atrocities in, in Gaza there still have been track two dialogues. There still have been back-channel discussions. There still have been all kinds of activists and groups doing things across the region, across the world.

So I guess to me like that is-- And I think a lot of people in this room are kind of part of some of those efforts, and I think that is where to lean into the-- that is where the hope is in this moment, is not with the politicians and not with the macro but with what individual people and small groups and-- are still trying to do.

And I guess my sense of why this kind of gathering is important is keeping those channels open, even when it is narrow, even when it is bleak, is essential, and that is what people here in this room have been doing, and I'm grateful to all of you who have been here today.

I'm not gonna attempt to really summarize everything. We will capture a lot of the specific and general recommendations that have come out of today. But just very briefly I wanted to pick up on the notion of the imposition of sufficient cost on Israel for it to change its policy and the extent to which the UK can be part of that process.

And in that equation, we are in an extraordinarily interesting time. There's going to be an election in Israel in October. There could be an election in the UK by the end of the year if there is a new prime minister, and a new prime minister seeks a new mandate. In each of the steps up to that point, there is a huge opportunity to influence the internal British political debate and the policy of this government up to a certain point.

And I think what we've done today is identify what we might call relatively low-hanging fruit in terms of banning settler trade in goods and services, in pushing and working with the EU on responding to the E1 settlement-- the E1 plans for building the settlement, on pushing for the ICJ advisory to be made published.

But anyway, pushing the government to act on the elements of the advisory that it should act on, and the elements of the non-binding ICJ provisional measures on genocide that it should act on in terms of banning additional arms that are being sold. So there are a series of things that, in the context of a Labour leadership election, are very appealing to those who are running and those MPs who may face an-- a general election before the end of the year under a new PM.

The question we face is whether any of that done by the UK is sufficient to change the calculus in Israel in terms of Israeli actions. And there, I think as Vincent is often saying, it's where Britain needs to work with others and other partners to increase its influence, and particularly its influence as we run up to the UN the end of the two-year period of the UN, and the need for the new renewal of the Board of Peace mandate from the United Nations and possibly a new resolution or the reversal of two oh three as a resolution.

And in that space, that's gonna need greater political will by the UK. So I think for BPP, we have a detailed agenda of specific asks that we will push for and

advocate based on our statement of principles. And I think, Julie, you're right. All of these have a context for debate and a- an argument which will go on.

But in the broader context, I think we all, as individuals in this country, in the next six to nine months, have a tremendous political opportunity to make a difference. Because for once our politicians are listening, and they have to listen in five-way electoral divisions in a volatile political situation in the run-up to a possible general election.

So I'd urge you all to do what many of you do regularly, which is write to your MPs. Keep writing. To organize in constituencies hustings- - meetings which focus on just peace and a return to international law. And we at BPP will try and do as much as we can to help in that debate with others as we see what happens between now and the end of the year.

But firstly, I'd like to thank everyone for coming, but also our team Deanna, who's been up in the control panel all day, ujala and all the volunteers who've been looking after everyone. I hope you had an enjoyable day. I know we've worked you quite hard for the day.

But thank you very much indeed