

Palestine & The REAL Story of October 7 | Ali Abunimah

Ali Abunimah discusses live in Zürich in June 2026: The real story about Israel you won't hear on mainstream news. Ali discusses October 7 reporting, claims of sexual violence, media coverage of Palestine, and the US-Israel relationship. He also speaks about BDS, Gaza's death toll, Swiss neutrality, support for student activists, and the role of electoral politics and public pressure in changing policy. Links: The Electronic Intifada: <https://electronicintifada.net> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Merch: <https://neutralitystudies.com/shop> Donation: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Timestamps: 00:00 Introduction and October 7 13:00 Claims of sexual violence on October 7 23:09 Media propaganda and Israeli intelligence 36:43 Who holds power in US-Israel ties? 46:40 Amnesty reports and ZAKA claims 01:01:01 BDS and keeping Gaza in focus 01:11:05 Swiss neutrality and Palestinian voices 01:17:19 Mamdani, elections and public pressure

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. Today we have a special episode because it's going to be the recording of the speech that Ali Abunimah gave at the Watermelon University in Zurich in late June this year. This was a live event, so there were a lot of people around, there was some noise, and instead of giving you the original questions from the people who asked them, I will re-record the questions, and then you will hear Ali's answers to them. It was a kind of teach-in situation in which Ali answered dynamically during a very long Q&A what was on the minds of everybody there in the room. Please enjoy.

#Ali Abunimah

You know, today, thanks to Watermelon University, I had a very long day of interviews with journalists, which was great. And some of them asked tough questions. One of them asked me, well, do I condemn what happened on October 7th? And actually, it's the first time I've been asked that question since October 7th because nobody from the mainstream media ever talks to me. So I never had that opportunity to answer the question. And I said my answer was, which October 7th are you asking me to condemn? The October 7th of Israeli propaganda and the mainstream media narrative, or what actually happened? Because what happened on October 7th was that people—the lawyers are here too, you start waving if I start breaking any Swiss laws.

Of course. But what happened on October 7th was that people living under military occupation, in a ghetto under apartheid for decades—80% of them in Gaza refugees, ethnically cleansed from their homes and not allowed to return solely and exclusively because they're not Jewish. On October 7th,

those people carried out an operation of resistance against their military occupiers. And the primary targets of that operation were the Israeli military. And on October 7th, the Palestinian resistance practically destroyed the southern command of the Israeli military. And then what happened after that is that Israel, with the collapse of the southern command, there was an element of chaos, but the Israeli military responded in two ways.

The Hannibal Directive and also indiscriminate violence. The Hannibal Directive is an Israeli order that was developed in the 1980s and was first revealed publicly in 2014. It's a directive that says that if an Israeli soldier is at risk of being captured, the Israeli army can respond with overwhelming force to stop the capture, even if it means killing the Israeli soldier. This doctrine was applied on a wide scale in 2014 when Israel attacked Gaza. On one particular occasion, when three Israeli soldiers were being captured in Shuja'iyah in eastern Gaza, Israel applied the Hannibal Directive and killed dozens of Palestinians and the soldiers.

On October 7th, Israel applied the Hannibal Directive on a wide scale. And this is not Ali Abunimah of The Electronic Intifada telling you that. This is Yoav Gallant, the Israeli defense minister at the time, who is a fugitive from the International Criminal Court. He is indicted, who stated on Israeli television, on the record, that the Hannibal Directive was applied widely. He is the most senior Israeli official to say that publicly, but we had many other Israeli officers and officials who admitted it, and many Israeli witnesses who admitted it. So, one of the most important stories I think we did at The Electronic Intifada was on October 16th, 2023. So, we're talking about less than 10 days after the events of October 7th.

Actually, we didn't do something very complicated. It's something anybody could have done. The New York Times could have done it. SBS could have done it—that's the Swiss broadcaster. SRF could have done it. I'm thinking of the Australian one. You know, the BBC could have done it. Anyone could have done it much better than us with more resources. What we did was we translated verbatim the interview of Yasmin Parat, which she gave to Kan, the Israeli public broadcaster, so the Israeli equivalent of SRF. We're not talking about a marginal left-wing Israeli publication. We're talking about an interview she gave on the Morning National News program on October 15th, 2023, to the Israeli broadcaster.

Who is Yasmin Parat? She is an Israeli woman who was attending the Nova Party, which you all heard about. You all heard many stories about it. She was there with her partner. And when the violence started, when the attack started, they escaped in their car to Kibbutz Be'eri, which is an Israeli settlement built on the land of ethnically cleansed Palestinians, a few kilometers away from the boundary fence with Gaza. She said, "We went to the house of an Israeli couple called Hadass and Adi Dagan." And she said, "We went to their house, and then the Palestinian fighters came there, and they took us to another house where they were holding other Israelis, 12 people altogether, the house of an Israeli woman in the kibbutz called Pesikon."

And she said there were about 40 Palestinians there and 12 Israelis. And she said... you know, the Israeli radio interviewer was very confused by what she was saying. He said, did they mistreat you? She said, no. What do you mean they didn't mistreat you? She said, no, they treated us very well. They kept telling us, don't worry, be calm, we're not going to hurt you. He said, were they violent with anyone? No, they weren't violent with anyone. But somebody was killed in the house. She said, yes, there was a bullet through the door that hit someone. But it wasn't someone in the house who... you know, they didn't hit us. They didn't beat us. They didn't execute anyone. They told us, don't worry, we will let you go.

You will not be hurt. The only thing we want is for our Palestinian prisoners to be released. She said they let us eat, they gave us water, and we were calm. Then, after some hours—it took a long time—the Israeli army arrived, the Israeli paramilitary police, and they surrounded the house. And one of the Palestinian fighters there decided he wanted to give himself up. He used the phone of Yasmin Parat. They contacted the Israeli army outside, and Yasmin Parat spoke to them. They said, this guy, he wants to come out. They told him, okay, you come outside with Yasmin Parat. Take off all your clothes—the Palestinian fighter, not Yasmin Parat. They said, take off all your clothes and you come outside with her.

By the way, this was misreported. They said he used her as a human shield. She said that the army told her she should come out with him. She went outside, and so she was the witness to everything that happened after that. She said there was a standoff for several hours. They were negotiating with the Palestinians inside. There was no violence. Everything was, you know, there was discussion. And then eventually, as the evening came, the Israeli commander at the site, Brigadier General Barak Hiram—his name is—ordered tanks to fire at the house of Pesikoyen. And Yasmin Parat said, what do you mean?

There are people inside. They said, no, no, don't worry, it's just the shells that are going to be fired immediately toward the roof. It's just warning shots. I mean, she couldn't understand it—these are explosive shells. Anyway, I'm giving an overview; the details are in our reporting. They fired the shells at the house. They killed everyone inside, including two Israeli children, two twins, the Hadzroni family. Liel is one, and the name of the other I don't recall now. I'm blaming the heat for that. But she told Israeli radio, he kept saying, but the Palestinians killed the people. She said, no, ours did it.

Ours did it. They killed everyone. There was one survivor, Hadass Dagan, and she told the story too, and she confirmed everything. Some time later, it took a few weeks before she spoke to the media. This example, it's the one that I and my colleague David Sheen investigated the most closely. Because a few months later, the Israeli army did an investigation and a report about it, which was a total cover-up. And we analyzed it sentence by sentence, the Israeli army report. The things they wrote in the report were impossible, and they contradicted what Hadass Dagan and Yasmin Parat said.

#Ali Abunimah

The families of the Israelis who were killed at that house—there was one Palestinian from East Jerusalem who had been a driver at the Nova. He was also killed there in that house, along with all the Palestinians from Gaza. The families rejected that report. They said, this is a cover-up. We want to know what happened to our family members. You don't hear about them. They're not interviewed in the media. They're not invited to the White House for ceremonies to say, these brave Israelis, we have to stand with them. The incident in Kibbutz Be'eri we know about because two Israelis survived to tell the tale. But all of the Israeli military who were on the scene, the Israeli officials lied about that incident. To this day, they lie about it.

And Barak Hiram was promoted after that. And Barak Hiram was also responsible, along with Golan Vach and other Israeli officers, for many of the lies about beheaded babies and burned children. They told the story that they found in one house dozens of children tied together in Kibbutz Be'eri. None of this happened. None of this happened. You know that none of it happened from where? Mostly from the Israeli media. So this is what I'm saying. We didn't do anything special most of the time. We worked hard, for sure. But anybody could have done it, because all of that information is in the open, if they choose to report it. The other big story that I think we contributed after October 7th was dealing with the claims about mass rape.

That on October 7th, there was a systematic campaign of rape by Hamas, ordered by Hamas to rape Israelis, women and men. This story was promoted by Hillary Clinton, by Kamala Harris, Sheryl Sandberg, the billionaire who used to be a Facebook executive, made this big Hollywood movie. And to this day, to this day, there is not one single verified case of rape on October 7th. There is no victim of a rape, living or dead. Not one. There is no case in the Israeli courts of a prosecution of Palestinians for any sexual violence or rape on October 7th. Not one. About two months ago, there was a report published by a so-called civil commission in Israel. It's not really a civil commission.

That makes it sound like it's some kind of official investigation. It's just one woman who started this organization, started collecting donations from around the world, including from the German government and the Canadian government. And she issued a report of 300 pages, which was reported by the BBC, in the New York Times, on CNN, and I'm sure it was in the Swiss media, saying that this is the most comprehensive report about sexual violence on October 7th. The Daily Mail in the UK said, "This report now refutes all those people on the left who are denying this reality of rape." I went through the report, the 300 pages, analyzed it, and there is not one new thing in this report.

There is not one documented rape in this report, not one credible allegation. The report cites the same debunked and fabricated stories, including the infamous New York Times article from December 2023 called "Screams Without Words." This story in the New York Times was published by a journalist called Jeffrey Gettleman and two Israelis. One of them was later defamed by the New

York Times because they found on her social media that she kept liking and retweeting posts calling for the extermination of the Palestinian people. And even for the New York Times, that was a bit too much. She had never been a reporter before. And this story claimed there were rapes everywhere. Every single case in that story was debunked or refuted.

The main story, the main claim, was that they said an Israeli woman called Gal Abdush was raped before she was killed on October 7th. Immediately when the story was published, Gal Abdush's family — by the way, who are very right-wing, they're not leftists who love Palestinians, they're very right-wing, who support the war in Gaza, support the genocide — said, there's no way she was raped. Because the story in the New York Times said she was raped and tortured and then they killed her. They said, we spoke, we were on the phone with her a minute before she was killed. We have witnesses there when she was killed. There was no rape. It's impossible. And the New York Times lied to us.

They never told us that they are. We thought they were doing a story about victims of October 7th. We weren't told that it was going to have this claim that rape is involved. I'll say two more things about this, because it gives perspective. That story was used to really give credibility to this atrocity propaganda. That's what it is — to justify the genocide. But the New York Times, you know, is maybe the richest and most powerful and most influential news organization in the world. And, of course, they have the newspaper, the website, and they have a fantastic cooking website. If you pay an extra subscription, you get wonderful recipes and sports and investment advice. This is the world's biggest information empire.

And, of course, they have podcasts, including a podcast called The Daily, which is not just a podcast you find on Apple Podcasts or YouTube. This is broadcast every day on radio stations across the United States. I can drive in my car in Chicago and listen to The Daily on the radio at 5 o'clock or 6 o'clock in the afternoon. This is a major program. The Daily refused to report on the story "Screams Without Words." They were going to do it, but when the journalists at The Daily examined the story, they had no confidence in it, and they decided not to report it, which shows you that The New York Times could not even stand by its own reporting.

So all of this was recycled in the Civil Commission report — totally recycled. Now, two weeks after the Civil Commission report, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, published his annual report to the Security Council, mandated by the Security Council on sexual violence in armed conflicts. And it doesn't just cover Israel and Palestine. It covers Congo, it covers Ukraine, it covers the whole world. And that report verified 31 cases of the most horrific rapes and sexual attacks against Palestinians by Israeli military personnel. This included rapes and gang rapes against men, women, and children. And these were verified.

The UN has very specific status to call something verified. It means it was investigated by a competent UN agency, and they considered the evidence to be of a very high standard. And they said in the report, the Secretary-General said in the report, we have many more cases, many more

credible cases, but 31 is the number that was verified to that high standard. When it came to Israel, the UN report this year and last year doesn't mention one single verified case, not one. In this year's report, it says that there are six Israelis who returned from Gaza, who were held captive in Gaza, who made allegations that they suffered sexual assaults while they were held in captivity, not rapes.

There's a distinction between rape and sexual violence, sexual assaults, and the UN said that the UN could not verify any case because Israel does not cooperate with any investigations. So, I gave a much longer answer than I intended, but because this isn't a simple matter. If I stand here and say, oh, well, there was no rape on October 7th, you say, but everyone says there was. It's only when you enter into the detail to that level, when you get to the footnotes of the reports and you read down to that level of detail that you can, with confidence, talk about what's happened. So it's impossible to give a short answer to a question like that. But that's the work that we did.

I think it was important because I know that it was important, because we know that some of the Israeli propagandists who are giving lectures here and there talk about the Electronic Intifada and accuse us of rape denial. And actually, even Private Eye, the publication in the UK, just accused us of that in its recent issue. But the reason I can stand here in Switzerland, where probably if I was not telling the truth, I'd be breaking all sorts of laws, is that I stand here with confidence and say what I say because we've investigated it. And that's the work we try to do. But that's the work any honest journalist could do, including those who have much more resources than we do.

#Speaker 1

Actually, I think all Palestinians feel kind of, because of the media propaganda, kind of oppressed and feel like sometimes they need to hide their identity or not just come out and say it out loud because they don't want to be judged or, yeah, being structured into either a refugee or a certain kind of category. My question here is, do you have an understanding of why people, if the public have accepted that the media provides such low-quality, no-research information about Palestinians and what happens in Palestine, while on the other hand, for some other minorities, they would care and they would question their media and their politicians?

#Ali Abunimah

Thank you. That's a good question, and it would be very easy for me to give another long answer, but I'll try not to. You know, the way I see it, when I wrote *One Country* 20 years ago, I focused a lot on seeing what we can learn from the end of apartheid in South Africa. What were the obstacles to ending apartheid? What were the reasons it was possible to end it in the way that it ended, in a relatively peaceful and nonviolent way? It wasn't actually nonviolent completely. There was quite a lot of violence, but it was much less than many people feared. And I thought there were lessons there. And one of the things I studied at that time—we just talked about atrocity propaganda—and atrocity propaganda also played an important part in maintaining apartheid.

Because one of the ways that the apartheid regime and its newspapers, which were part of the system, tried to maintain the solidarity of the white population was through fear. And so the South African newspapers were filled with stories about how violent black people are, that they're rapists, that they're murderers, that if we don't have control of this country, we will be thrown into the sea, etc. And they said, look across Africa, in all the countries where blacks are in control, there is violence. So a completely decontextualized racist view of colonial violence and decolonization—how much violence the colonizers used to try to maintain their control. And so I see Israel and its portrayal of Palestinians in exactly the same way. It's not very different.

And I think that, you know, Israel is an extension of the West. It's an extension of Europe. It's an extension of the United States, the same way apartheid South Africa was an extension of Europe. Until the 1980s, for example—this shocked me when I learned it—the Dutch government gave, what's the word, money, there's a better word I'm looking for, subventions or contributions, to white Dutch citizens to emigrate to South Africa until the 1980s, into the apartheid regime. So the connection between apartheid and Europe was very strong. Throughout European history and colonial history, the portrayal of indigenous people, colonized people, as violent, as irrational, as dangerous, has been very critical to maintaining public support for the colonial status quo.

And at this point, you know, in what we call the West, I think it's the most sophisticated and successful propaganda system. Because people who live in a dictatorship or an authoritarian country, they know the media lies to them. And they know not to believe it. They're more sophisticated in reading the media. Whereas in the West, people are brainwashed that we're free and our media is free and our media tells the truth. And then it's not just that you read the newspaper and it's all lies. The newspaper also contains a lot of truth. And that's important because the significant amount of truth is what allows you to pass and legitimize the lies. Actually, I'll give a shout-out to Pascal Lottaz again with his channel Neutrality Studies, because he analyzes that a lot with his guests.

Actually, I learned a lot from your channel, listening to this analysis of the propaganda system. But I think the good news is that there is now an alternative media space opening up, which has been there for a long time but is getting bigger and bigger, so that people don't listen to the mainstream media. Yes, a lot of people do, OK, but particularly younger people—they don't read the mainstream newspapers, they don't watch the evening news. And this also explains why there is such a vast generational difference in perceptions on Palestine and other issues between younger and older people, probably across most countries. So I think it's... the short answer is, it's a necessary part of the propaganda system to try to maintain support for Israeli apartheid and genocide—you have to dehumanize those you're going to attack.

The same way the people of Iran have been dehumanized, the way the government of Iran has been demonized and dehumanized with lies—saying that they murdered tens of thousands of people, criminals—conveniently just days before the U.S. and Israel carried out their pre-planned surprise attack. I don't know what percentage of people still believe those lies. This was the first war in the United States, at least in the modern period, where the government launched a war that was

opposed by a majority of the population on the first day. Every other war—the Iraq War more than 20 years ago—the propaganda about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq was successful because at the beginning, the vast majority of Americans believed it and supported the war. This time with Iran, the majority of Americans opposed the war. So the propaganda is not working the same way.

#Speaker 1

I think everybody remembers, shortly after the 7th of October, that I think the boss, the chief of the Mossad, said that he told Netanyahu there would be an attack by Hamas. And that Netanyahu denied any kind of responsibility. He said he didn't take care of this report, let's say. And afterwards, things happened, you know? So, nobody talks about that. First point. And the second point is, what about the payments the Israeli government already made before Netanyahu, and Netanyahu, I suppose, made to Hamas in indirect ways? What about this? So first, I said that Netanyahu was sacrificing his people, actually, so that he could start the war and take attention away from his internal problems. And yeah, that's it. Thank you.

#Ali Abunimah

Yeah, there is a theory that Netanyahu, the Israeli government, somehow knew about October 7 or allowed it to happen or wanted it to happen. And I don't believe that at all. There are some credible reports that there were some lower-level intelligence people who had observed some preparations in Gaza, that they had sent it up. They reported it, and then the reports were ignored. That's very possible. But I don't think there was any conspiracy to allow this attack or to encourage it. I think that it was a racist underestimation of the capabilities of the Palestinian resistance. They never imagined that the Palestinian resistance would be capable of destroying the Israeli army's southern command and taking over several military bases, which they did, and capturing dozens of Israeli military officers, including some senior commanders, and killing many more of the Israeli military.

Destroying the communications network — the resistance systematically destroyed the communications network to the point where the Israeli military was relying on civilian mobile telephones and WhatsApp to communicate because their own networks were destroyed. And we see that with Iran, that there was a very, I think, complacent and racist underestimation of the ability of Iran not just to resist a massive attack by Israel and the United States, but also to hit back and cause tremendous damage, destroying, according to the New York Times, or putting out of service 13 US military bases in the region and certainly causing significant damage to Israeli military assets. But we don't know the full story because of the censorship. So I don't believe that Israel wanted it to happen.

I think it was complacency and incompetence, and Netanyahu has refused. There are calls in Israel for an independent commission to investigate what happened, and he hasn't allowed that to happen. He said only after the war. Well, how convenient for him that the war will never end if he has it, because then there'll never be an investigation. As regards the money, there was an arrangement

where Qatar was transferring money to Gaza to pay salaries, and Israel was allowing that. And basically, Netanyahu, in my estimation, believed that Hamas had been pacified — that as long as money was coming in to pay salaries and to maintain things in Gaza, Hamas was no longer going to cause a big problem, that they had Gaza under control. That's what they believed.

And they didn't expect or anticipate, other than those reports, but they did not, I think, understand the scale of the preparations or the capabilities that the resistance had. And the same, by the way, with Lebanon now, because their hubristic story after, you know, when there was the, after the pager attacks in September of 2024—was that 2024? September 24—and then the assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah. They said, oh, this brilliant operation, Hezbollah is destroyed, it's very weak. Now we see they went back to Lebanon thinking it's going to be easy. Now we see that Hezbollah is actually stronger than before, with more capability, using the FPV drones. That communication system now, the Israelis are capable of penetrating it. So again, they underestimated Hezbollah, the capabilities of those who are resisting them.

#Pascal

And I think that's what happened on October 7. Who has more leverage in the current U.S.-Israeli relationship? And does J.D. Vance's statement signal a real shift or just continued U.S. allegiance to Israel?

#Ali Abunimah

Thank you. That's a very good question, one that I know occupies many people. No pun intended. But you have to look at the material reality that the United States is the superpower. Israel, as J.D. Vance said, is a country of 9 million people that is isolated, and it is totally dependent on the United States. That doesn't mean that Israel and its lobby don't have influence, but I think their influence is a function of how much Israel serves U.S. interests. Once Israel stops serving U.S. interests, then you'll find that that influence starts to diminish. And we are seeing that now. And it's not the first time.

We've seen that the United States will discipline Israel on occasions when Israel contradicts what American elites view as their fundamental interests. There are a few examples of that in history, not to the point of breaking off the relationship or making a fundamental change. But in this situation, the United States and Israel launched a war of aggression against Iran—a completely unjustified, illegal, unprovoked war of aggression—because the United States and Israel believed that they could succeed and that it would benefit both of them. The United States has other reasons to attack Iran, other than Israel wanting it.

I believe that Iran is seen as a strategic asset too. You know, it has strategic significance for China and for Russia. It's part of the Belt and Road Initiative. It's, of course, a country, as we know now better than ever, that controls the Strait of Hormuz. It's basically, potentially, a southern outlet for

Russia to the oceans to the south. Russia has difficulty accessing the oceans, and they have basically their neighbors across the Caspian Sea. So I thought that—I do think the United States thought that knocking out Iran would be easy, like knocking out Venezuela. And they thought, why not do it? It's good for Israel, it's good for us.

What they discovered is that it wasn't possible, that Iran surprised them with its abilities, and we know what happened. Iran won the war; the United States and Israel lost. Now, the United States, as Trump said very honestly—you know, he has this habit of sometimes being much more honest than other American leaders—he said we had to do it because the alternative to this deal was worldwide depression. Those are the words he used. And he said the oil reserves were about four weeks away from being exhausted. And this is reality. You can't spin away that reality. You can't write a skillful press release that changes that reality.

When the oil runs out, the oil runs out. And they were reaching that point. They were trying everything between April 8th, when they had the ceasefire between the US and Iran, and now to avoid the reality or to find a way around it. And they couldn't. So they had to accept the deal. If the Israelis were smart, they would recognize that the United States is in a situation where they have no choice but to make this deal and try to make it work. But they are, again, overconfident. Yes, they have a lot of commentators, a lot of politicians who are loyal to them. But I don't doubt that any U. S. president, including Donald Trump, will put the U.S. necessities before Israel's desires when there's no choice. And I think this is a situation where that is happening.

And it doesn't mean that the United States is going to abandon Israel tomorrow, although I think that would be a very good thing. I think that process of disconnection is happening, and it takes time. But it's not going to happen smoothly or in one step. And I think that what J.D. Vance and Donald Trump said, there's a lot of support for that. There's a lot of support for that in the United States, on the right and on the left. And the phenomenon we've seen since October 7th in particular is the rise of right-wing criticism of Israel in the United States. This is something that existed before, but it was very marginal. And now it has really come into the mainstream. And there is a collapse in support for Israel in the United States. And that's not an exaggeration.

The public support for Israel has collapsed in the United States. And I've been looking at this for more than 30 years, at the opinion polls. Until after October 7th, there was never an opinion poll in the United States that showed a majority of Americans with a negative view of Israel. Never. Always the majority supported Israel, no matter what. When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, during the Sabra and Shatila massacres, in 2014, in 2008, when Israel massacred Palestinians, you name it. There was always a majority. Now the majority is against Israel in the United States. On the left—and when I say left, I'm using the term loosely—we're talking about the left part of the U.S. population. It's overwhelming. People who vote for the Democratic Party, by 80–90%, oppose Israel.

That's growing among Republicans, but among young Republicans, it's already close to 60% who have negative views of Israel. This is unprecedented. This is a historic shift. Does that translate into

an immediate change in how the United States functions, supports Israel? No, I don't think it will be overnight. But I do think we're starting to see that decoupling. And I think it's happening way faster than many of us expected because people say, OK, well, Netanyahu convinced Trump to go into the war. It's possible. Trump by himself can give the order in the U.S. system. He's the commander-in-chief. If he orders the United States military to attack Iran, he can do it and nobody can stop him. But it's not insignificant that many, and yes, okay, yes, crazy, really fanatical people like Pete Hegseth will go along with him.

But also, there was a lot of reporting—very credible reporting—it hasn't been contradicted, that there were a lot of people in the U.S. intelligence community, in the military, in the deep state or whatever, who said this is a bad idea and who warned against it. So Trump may have done it because he thought it's going to be an easy victory, but no one will do it again. And because the U. S. was... This was a historic strategic defeat for the United States. I think that's becoming undeniable. And for decades, Israel has been trying to convince American presidents to attack Iran. And the way they would appease the lobby is they wouldn't attack Iran, they wouldn't launch a war around, but they would put more and more sanctions, more and more sanctions. That solved the political problem.

But they never took the step of launching the military attack. So if Israel wanted, you know, if Israel is so powerful and in control, it would have convinced the United States to attack Iran many years ago. It took someone like Donald Trump to be stupid enough to listen to this. And it backfired in a spectacular way. So I think that even more than the Iraq War, you know, after the Iraq War, I mean, the U.S., it was a disaster in so many ways, but the U.S. prevailed militarily in Iraq. It was able to occupy and conquer Iraq. It wasn't able to achieve anything militarily against Iran. In fact, it ended up many steps back. So I think that the closeness of the U.S.-Israeli relationship depends on Israel, as long as Israel doesn't contradict fundamental U.S. interests. When it does, they will discard it.

#Pascal

What is Amnesty International doing with its report on alleged mass rape when the introduction and conclusion suggest evidence, but the body of the report appears weak or indirect?

#Ali Abunimah

So about the Amnesty report, I would say, okay, you can say the same about UN reports in general. The report of Pramila Patten, which was published in March 2024, the top part of the report and the bottom part of the report—which, by the way, is the only thing the media reads and the only thing they report—they say, we have indications, we have evidence. The UN didn't use the word “evidence.” They said “information.” They said, we have information, we have indications, we have,

you know, they use these kinds of tricky words. But when you read the middle of the report, you don't find any evidence, you don't find any specifics. And in fact, you find things that contradict what's at the top of the report and the bottom of the report.

So, for example, the UN report of Pramila Patten from March 2024 was reported all over the world as if it confirmed that there was sexual violence and rapes on October 7th. And Pramila Patten, in her press conference, said, yes, we received credible information or indications or, you know, this kind of tricky, imprecise language. But when you read the report, it actually says we reviewed thousands of photographs from October 7th provided by the Israelis or from open sources, and we found no tangible indications of rape in any of the photographs. No videos, no photos, nothing. They say that there's no forensic evidence. That's in the middle of the report. And it's similar with the Amnesty report. I read it when it came out. I went back to it recently for one thing. I mentioned the Civil Commission report, this fake Israeli Civil Commission.

In that report, there's one alleged case of rape. One. In 300 pages. And they say this is a testimony of an Israeli man who says he was gang-raped by members of Hamas at the Nova Festival. And you look at the footnote in the Civil Commission report—it says his testimony was supported by medical evidence and given to Amnesty International. Okay, so I thought, well, that's interesting. I better look back at the Amnesty International report. The Amnesty International report says we received this testimony from this man and we reviewed his medical records. And the medical records say that he visited the doctor twice—once in March of 2024, so this is now, what, six months after October 7th, and once in May of 2024. And on the second visit, he told the doctor that he had experienced a sexual assault on October 7th.

So the Amnesty report refutes that there was medical evidence. When you say medical evidence, you think, well, he was examined by doctors and they found physical evidence on his body of a sexual assault—forensic evidence, injuries. No, the medical evidence is that he went to the doctor in May of 2024 and said to the doctor, "On October 7th, I was raped." And the doctor wrote, "The patient says that on October 7th, he was raped." That's the medical evidence. The Amnesty report didn't give it any credibility; they just stated it like that. But when you look at the Civil Commission report, they said this report was backed up by medical evidence. So this is why you have to read these reports with a microscope.

Because Amnesty, you ask what game they're playing. Amnesty is a liberal organization. They want to maintain their credibility. So they don't want to be like the Electronic Intifada, accused of denying rape. Say Amnesty International is denying rape. So they're like, okay, we do a report. We say we received reports about this, we received reports about that, and there's no, you know, we can't make any conclusion. But we think there's enough to call for a full investigation. That's what they say. That's all they say. And then it's reported, Amnesty says that there's enough evidence to call for a full investigation of rape. That's the headline. But they want to avoid criticism while maintaining their credibility. So they hide behind this tricky language.

#Pascal

Why was the ZAKA organization reportedly involved or present around the investigation of the tragedy in Crans-Montana, Switzerland?

#Ali Abunimah

Yes. So, okay. So, there was the tragic fire in Crans-Montana, which is absolutely horrific. And this is the first time I'm hearing what you're telling me, and Dina says that you've heard this too—that the Israeli organization, Israeli-American organization, ZAKA, was involved in the investigation. Is that what you said? The Swiss group of ZAKA, because it seems that there is one group in England. There is money. There is money.

#Speaker 1

Apparently, they came. They were not, as far as I know, involved in the investigation. They were just waiting in Crans-Montana to have a job. But in the end, I think they didn't get one, so they left.

#Ali Abunimah

Okay. Well, in any case, whatever it is, I just want to mention who they are. And we can guess why they came, which is for publicity. And to say, oh, look at us, we're coming, we help everyone in the world, we're a credible rescue organization. ZAKA is actually not a rescue organization like, you know, a mountain rescue or fire rescue. ZAKA is a Jewish religious organization whose job is, when there is a disaster or an act of violence or a bombing, they go to the site to collect information—I mean, it's a little bit grim to talk about—but they collect the bodies and the body parts. If there's even a small piece of a body, they collect it to take it for ritual burial, according to the Jewish ritual. Of course, there's nothing wrong with that.

That's the right of every Jew—to bury the dead according to their tradition or their religion—something that Israel systematically denies to Palestinians, by the way, but that's another subject. On October 7th, ZAKA did that. They're not first responders, they're not paramedics, although now they market themselves that way. ZAKA was founded in the 19... Now, after October 7th, ZAKA appeared, you know, some of the ZAKA spokesmen with their yellow vests, like a rescue, like an ambulance uniform, in all the media to say, I went to Kibbutz Be'eri, I went to Kfar Azzah, I went to all of these different places, and I saw burned children everywhere, and I saw women who had been raped, and I saw children tied together and burned.

They were the ones who told all of these lies, this atrocity propaganda, and it was in the media. They spread it all over the world, including the fake stories about rapes in Kibbutz Be'eri. The

government or the council of Kibbutz Be'eri said there were no rapes in Kibbutz Be'eri, and the stories of rape in Kibbutz Be'eri had no basis in reality. Many stories like that. ZAKA spread the story that Palestinians had cut open a pregnant woman and pulled the baby out. That is all lies.

#Ali Abunimah

Baby in the microwave.

#Ali Abunimah

The baby in the oven and so on. But particularly, ZAKA was used by Sheryl Sandberg—I mentioned her in her Hollywood film—by Jeffrey Gettleman of The New York Times, and by others as witnesses for the rapes. One thing to know about ZAKA, which makes this particularly disgusting: ZAKA was founded by a rabbi—I wrote about this—in the 1980s, who became known a few years ago as the Haredi Jeffrey Epstein, because it was revealed about four or five years ago that over a period of more than three decades, he had been raping and sexually abusing Jewish men, women, and children in Israel. And then he committed suicide after all of this was revealed in 2021. Okay, you could say, well, what does that have to do with October 7th?

Well, the ZAKA spokesperson, one in particular called Haim Rotmazgin, who was spreading these atrocity stories about October 7th, was the biggest defender and denier of the crimes of the founder of ZAKA against Jewish men, women, and children. He accused them all of being liars, saying this man, this rabbi, was blameless, and all of these people accusing him were liars. This is the chief witness, or one of the main witnesses, supposedly for evidence of rape on October 7th. So this organization, ZAKA, and there are a couple of others like it, collected huge amounts of money after October 7th.

They went on speaking tours in the United States, the senior figures from ZAKA, like Otmazgin and others, and they collected enormous amounts of money—millions of dollars—and it was even reported in the Hebrew press that it's unclear where the money went, that it wasn't reported in the official accounts. Because in Israel, you know, non-profit organizations, like in any country, have to report. You know, there's a complete mismatch between the amount of money raised or sent from the United States and what supposedly arrived in Israel. So, I can speculate—I don't want to say without knowing—that for them, this horrible tragedy of Kfar Aza on October 7th was a Hasbara opportunity to say, you know, there's an earthquake, here we go; there's a fire in Switzerland, we go and we're there on the scene. But this is not a rescue organization.

#Speaker 1

Just maybe one thing: the astonishing thing was that no journalist in Switzerland asked who they were and what history they had. They just went by the nice Jewish guys who flew to Switzerland to help.

#Ali Abunimah

They are, you know, in the so-called Civil Commission Report, which I've talked about many times now, one of the main sources still, despite all their fabrications and lies. The BBC and CNN and the New York Times and everyone reported the Civil Commission Report as if it were the most credible and comprehensive report, still relying on ZAKA even though they know... Now, the BBC isn't reporting anymore that a pregnant woman was cut open, or a baby was put in an oven, or children were tied together. They're not saying that anymore.

They abandoned those stories, but they're still relying on ZAKA, even though they knew that ZAKA fabricated or spread those fake stories. So what I wrote about the Civil Commission is: the report relies extensively on claims from members of ZAKA, the Israeli quote-unquote rescue organization responsible for notorious October 7 lies, such as the false claims of dozens of beheaded babies and burned children. The group played a prominent role in lending first responder credibility to such atrocity propaganda headlines, helping to generate public consent for Israel's genocide in Gaza after October 7.

ZAKA was founded by Yehuda Meshi-Zahav, who died by suicide after being exposed in Israel as a serial sexual predator accused of violent sex crimes against Jewish men, women, and children over decades. After Meshi-Zahav's victims spoke out, ZAKA's Chaim Otmazgin, who I mentioned as one of the chief propagandists on October 7th, publicly defended him, claiming the extensive evidence against him had been acquired via extortion. ZAKA and Otmazgin are cited repeatedly as credible sources in the Civil Commission report. Otmazgin and ZAKA colleague Simcha Greinmuth also appeared in the Sheryl Sandberg film **Making Lurit**, which consistently claims to have seen nails and other objects in genital areas.

#Pascal

Is BDS, Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions, an effective way to bring down Israel's Zionist apartheid system, especially when Israeli products are still sold in Swiss supermarkets?

#Ali Abunimah

Absolutely, it's effective. If it wasn't effective, Israel wouldn't have spent so much money and effort to try to stop and discredit the movement. Is it a magic bullet that ends Israeli apartheid and genocide overnight? No. But it's a movement. And also, crucially, it's an opportunity for us, for people in Switzerland, across Europe, across the United States, to translate their opinions, their understanding into action. And it can be very small individual actions, such as refusing to buy goods from Israel, which is the right of everyone to decide what they buy or not buy, but also for collective action, because boycott is only one part. But you have divestment and sanctions. And we've seen the first part, boycott, was mostly what we talked about in the last 10 years.

Now we're seeing more momentum for divestment campaigns, including in the United States. There have been some very successful divestment initiatives recently. And the third part is sanctions. And just now, in the last few weeks, we're starting to see European countries, which are very complicit in genocide and in supporting Israel for decades, starting to talk about legally banning trade in settlement goods. Is that enough? No. And they should have done this decades ago, and they should probably ban much wider, if not all, trade with Israel, as they've done with Russia, by the way. So they don't consider boycotts or sanctions to be unethical. It's just that they support the boycotts Israel is doing, so they don't want to stop it.

But even the little that the European countries are doing now is only because of popular pressure, only because of public demands and campaigns. And so we should see this as a process. It's frustrating that it's not happening faster. I mean that the governments aren't responding faster, but that shouldn't discourage us, because even with South Africa, the international solidarity movement against apartheid started in the 1950s. The first calls from the ANC for international solidarity started in the 1950s. But it took until the 1980s before we saw widespread adoption of sanctions against South Africa. And, you know, now you might have seen the book by the Canadian-Egyptian author Omar al-Akkad called **One Day Everyone Will Have Been Against This**. Well, this is very much the phenomenon we see with South Africa.

Now, you remember, maybe you remember seeing the television pictures when Nelson Mandela died and his funeral, and Barack Obama went, and the Prime Minister of Denmark went, and they were taking selfies at the funeral, like it was a celebrity event—very tasteless and disgusting. And David Cameron, who was the British Prime Minister, went, and said, oh, Nelson Mandela was a great man. And one British journalist asked David Cameron—he was in university during the anti-apartheid movement—“Didn’t you oppose sanctions against South Africa? What are you doing at Nelson Mandela’s funeral? What are you doing saying he is a great man?” So that’s what it means. One day everybody will have been. In the future, they will have been against it. So... I forgot my point now. What was I saying? Once you started. BDS.

#Ali Abunimah

Sanctions.

#Ali Abunimah

Sanctions. So, the point I wanted to make before I went off on that tangent is that into the 1980s, the same countries that support genocide in Palestine today were opposing sanctions in South Africa. The main one was who? Does anyone know? The UK, of course—Margaret Thatcher opposed sanctions. West Germany. West Germany and Switzerland. Switzerland too. And others, because they had a lot of lucrative trade, a lot of natural resources that they imported from South Africa. They didn't want sanctions. Who remembers that in Germany now, today? So yes, we have to keep pushing. It is effective, but it takes time.

#Pascal

Why is the potentially much higher Palestinian death toll in Gaza, including unaccounted-for people, not being amplified more by the media, Hamas, or their organizations?

#Ali Abunimah

Regarding, I said, your comment about 700,000 dead as a discrepancy. Well, the number 73,000, which is now what the health ministry in Gaza says, we shouldn't misunderstand that number. That number is the number of documented deaths from violence. They're not saying that's the total number of killed. The total number of killed will include many thousands of people buried under rubble who can't be found. When they are found, they're added to the statistics. But what those statistics don't include is the terrible number of excess deaths from... imagine... the conditions of life imposed on people in Gaza, which is an element of genocide—imposing conditions of life calculated to destroy a population. This is one of the lines in the Genocide Convention.

And now we're seeing the reports about, uh, you know, rats everywhere in Gaza spreading diseases, biting people, the lack of sanitation, which causes constant illness—you know, low-grade illness, intestinal illness—the lack of treatment. Imagine that older people who live a perfectly healthy life, if they can have medications for high blood pressure or for diabetes, if they don't have that, it becomes life-threatening, and so their lives become shorter. And that number of excess deaths has to be hundreds of thousands. I don't know the exact number, but it would be impossible, I would consider, if it isn't some astronomical, horrifying number like that. And we have to understand this is the Israeli intention. They said it from the first day, from October 9th of 2023, when Yoav Galant said, "These are human animals. There'll be no water, no food, no medicine." He made clear the genocidal intention. And they're still making statements like that now.

#Pascal

With Gaza still under attack despite a fake ceasefire, what urgent actions can people take to regain momentum and do something quickly?

#Ali Abunimah

I think Israel did something very clever by agreeing to this fake ceasefire, because they managed to remove Gaza from the front pages and to remove it from people's conscience. But what our colleagues and those of you who watch the Electronic Intifada livestream know is that every time we speak with a guest from Gaza, we ask them, what should people be doing? They say, don't stop talking about Gaza. The only thing that gives us hope to continue is when we see people in the rest

of the world talking about Gaza. I don't want to be accused of inciting anything, but I follow many people in Zurich on Instagram, and I've seen some incredible mobilizations and demonstrations in the streets for Gaza during earlier phases in the genocide.

It would be wonderful to have such a big mobilization visible, focused on Gaza right now, and make it an example to all the other cities in Switzerland and all the other countries in Europe, and to say, Gaza, we haven't forgotten you. Gaza, we are with you. Gaza, we are demanding an end to the genocide. As you know, this has been widely reported, that more than 1,000 people, just a few days ago, that number passed 1,000 people killed during the so-called ceasefire. And the month of May was the most deadly month of 2024 in Gaza, just from Israeli shootings and bombing. Again, we're not talking about people's lives being shortened because of the horrific, inhumane conditions being imposed. So I think that all of us have to be doing more to put Gaza back in the center. And yes, it's very important to focus on what's happening in Lebanon, what's happening with Iran and the U.S., but not to let Gaza be forgotten. That's what we can do, and we have to do it.

#Pascal

How can people in Switzerland amplify Electronic Intifada and other Palestinian voices across the country, especially beyond English-speaking audiences and major cities?

#Ali Abunimah

Your question, your comment about Swiss neutrality and Swiss complicity—I think Swiss neutrality would be a very good thing. And I really do. I think it would, and Pascal, you would have a lot to say about that because your channel is called Neutrality Studies. But neutrality would raise the power of Switzerland, real neutrality. I mean, we all know that Switzerland is really a covert member of the Western Empire. I mean, that's the reality. But a really neutral Switzerland would be a powerful force in the world.

And I think that it didn't get enough attention and criticism—the shameful thing that Switzerland did in March of 2025—when, you know, the UN General Assembly mandated Switzerland, as the depository of the Fourth Geneva Convention, to hold a conference of the high contracting parties to discuss the situation in Palestine. And this was Switzerland's responsibility as the depository and as a neutral country. And under Israeli and American pressure, the Swiss government, the Swiss foreign ministry, shamefully, shamefully succumbed to that pressure and did a very cowardly thing by canceling that conference. And I think that that is something that shouldn't be easily forgotten.

So I think that if I were Swiss—I'm not Swiss, of course, I don't want to tell Swiss people what to do—but if I were, well, I kind of do want to tell. You're free to ignore me; I'm just one voice like anyone else. But I would actually be demanding neutrality. I would say we actually want real neutrality, not this fake or degraded kind of neutrality. And it was reported at the time in the Swiss media that one of the reasons why Switzerland succumbed to American pressure was because they

were afraid of Donald Trump imposing higher tariffs on Switzerland. So, I mean, you know, that's not a very principled position. How can we—how can you—how can we collectively empower voices of... The electronic is the father, but let's make it wider.

More Palestinian voices, more voices coming from Palestine. Well, I mean, thank you for hosting me here. This is one way to do it. And you're having Salman Abu Sitta, who is marvelous and incredible. He's a giant for all of us Palestinians. So please, please don't miss that. And yes, we write in English. We don't have the resources to do it in more languages. English is the so-called global language, so it does give a wide number of people access. But we realize that that's, of course, still limited. So over the years, different independent websites have translated our articles and shared them, and we encourage that. We don't have a problem with that.

And I think it can feel very, you know, it's easy for us to feel discouraged, to think, oh, it's so difficult. But when you step back and look at the big picture and the big change in public opinion that's happening all over the world, actually, we are succeeding, and we are the majority. It's not enough. There should be no support for a genocidal Israel, for an apartheid Israel. But we are the majority, and the student movement has played a crucial role in that. And this is why there is so much effort to repress student voices. We saw that in the United States, but we've seen it across Europe, across Germany in particular, where there's extreme repression. At Zurich, of course.

#Ali Abunimah

Yeah, I know less about it, but students are actually currently being criminally charged by the university for participating in...

#Ali Abunimah

You know about that, Gina? There's another lawyer. I can't do it. Okay, all right. Well, as long as they have a good lawyer. Yes, yeah. So, yeah, I believe it. And I know it's happened in Germany and Austria, of course, in the UK. So that is something, you know, I'm grateful for as a Palestinian, as a human being. I'm grateful to those students. And when I was in April, I visited Boston in the United States. I went to MIT, and then I went to Bowdoin College. And I met students who are also being criminally charged in the United States in similar circumstances for ridiculous charges, but because they were protesting about the genocide.

But, you know, I don't want to say, okay, it's nothing. It's quite traumatic to go through that kind of process. But history is on your side. Morality is on your side. You know, in the future, you'll look back and you'll say, I'm glad I fought that fight. I think that the task for everybody else is solidarity with the students, to support them, to make sure that they have funds for legal defense if needed, to protect them and to support them. That's, I think, a way that everybody can respond to the attack on students and really keep it up.

#Pascal

Given the apparent US-Israeli decoupling and changing public opinion, can US democratic forces still translate that shift into actual legislation? And what would it mean for Palestinian and media coverage? What should be made of Zohran Mamdani working with the Democratic Party and aligning with figures like Brad Lander? And is electoral politics inside such a system viable, or should new movements or parties be built outside of them?

#Ali Abunimah

Yeah, they are very related. So I'll just give my thoughts as they come to me. Yes, I met Zohran Mamdani. How did I meet him? In 2013, I got a message from him, a direct message on Twitter, and he said, I'm the head of Students for Justice in Palestine at Bowdoin College in Maine. Would you be willing to come and speak at our college? I'd never heard of the college. It's a small college up in the far northeast of the United States. But it happened that I was already planning to go to that area, to Connecticut and to Boston. And I said, okay, I can do this. And I went. And he hosted me there. And he was very impressive, I have to say. He was very committed, very impressive, very personable. And we've stayed in touch since then. I mean, now it's not like we talk or anything.

I don't want to give the wrong impression. But even after he was elected to the New York State Assembly, he remained very open. And actually, just yesterday, he made some excellent comments about AIPAC, or a couple of days ago. Then he was attacked, and he defended the comments, and he went even further. I was actually quite impressed with what he said. He's a very skillful politician. So what does he do? He angered the Zionists by being the first mayor in I don't know how many years to refuse to attend the Israel Day Parade in New York. But he allowed the New York City police chief to go. So he's quite good at playing both sides. But I think that he has a real commitment. And yes, I find the Democratic Party abhorrent because of its complicity and support for the genocide.

But American political parties are a little bit different from European parties in that there isn't really a party line. You know, there isn't, "This is the party platform and you have to stick with it." Pretty much every politician is freelance and can say what they want about anything. And so the question then is, does someone like Mamdani have the power or ability to push in a direction that others will follow, to break new ground? There's a big debate about that among activists. People say the Democratic Party is unreformable and there's no point running within the Democratic Party. And others say, well, the U.S. system is so closed that it's really impossible to start or to run as a third party. And there's merit to both of those arguments. I think the significant thing about Mamdani's victory is not, okay, is Mamdani good or bad?

Did Mamdani betray us or didn't he betray us? Although I think we should always be pushing politicians, no matter what. I mean, I actually personally have a soft spot for Zohran Mamdani. I like him, but I still criticize him publicly. You know, I understand he's a politician. He's not my personal friend. He's not my pen pal. He's a politician. So we have to hold them accountable. We have to

criticize them. There's nothing wrong with that. But I think the significant thing about his victory is not, like I said, is Mamdani good or bad. It's that a majority of voters in New York City voted for somebody who said, this is genocide. That's the significant thing to me. It's not about whether Mamdani is perfect. We should keep pushing him and criticizing him. Absolutely.

#Ali Abunimah

Can I ask something back?

#Ali Abunimah

Yeah. I will let you do that, but let me answer the second part. Then we'll come back and be done. Does this decoupling— is this democratic system functioning enough to translate this change in public opinion into policy? And the answer, I would say, I'm skeptical of that, because we see in every democracy that there is a real disconnect between public opinion and, you know, you can vote for whichever party you want, you get the same. Yeah. I think that's a crisis all over the West, and we're seeing it playing out in Europe as well. I don't know about Switzerland. Maybe Switzerland is working perfectly. But it's certainly true in France, in Germany, in Britain, and in other countries. But it's not a total disconnect between public opinion.

#Ali Abunimah

In Switzerland, it's always about whether the decision is to put the sewage on the right or the left side of the road.

#Ali Abunimah

Yeah. So that's, well, okay, so it's very local. But... all politics is local, as they say. But there's not a complete disconnect. I think that you cannot defy political gravity forever. Right now we see AIPAC and the Israel lobby panicking because of people like Mamdani. And they spent \$39 million to defeat Thomas Massie, a Republican congressman who is a critic of Israel, in Kentucky, one of the few Republicans... But how, you know, it took \$39 million, the most expensive primary election in history, to try to get Massie out. They're going to win some, definitely through political brute force and just through spending huge amounts of money. But they're going to lose more and more. And we've seen one response in the West is that when the people vote or think wrong... you have to, you know, suppress them. But there is also an alternative, which is that democracy and popular will will prevail. We shouldn't rule that out. So we don't give up. The future is not predetermined. We are the ones who have to create it.

#Pascal

Is liberal Zionism co-opting the current anti-Zionist revolutionary moment through alliances with politicians like Mamdani, and are activists lowering their standards by not holding those allies accountable enough?

#Ali Abunimah

I don't disagree with any of that. Of course, Mamdani, the Democratic Party doesn't stand for anything, and generally people hate it. Right now they maybe hate it a bit less than they hate the Republicans. That's what the polls say. But they don't like it. They don't vote for it because they think it has a great program. So Mamdani is, you know, Barack Obama, who is not just a liberal Zionist but a brutal war criminal who should be brought to justice, has tried to co-opt Mamdani and to neutralize him, but also to harness his popularity and his energy to give the Democratic Party some new energy. And one of the things I criticized Mamdani for was his willingness to appear with Barack Obama. And I think that's really disgusting.

You know, he appeared recently in an elementary school with Barack Obama. Totally unnecessary. Barack Obama needs him; he doesn't need Barack Obama. So you're right, we should be very critical, and we should hold them accountable. But I think we should not... we should see it in terms of what people are expecting, not what politicians are giving us. So the good news in Mamdani's victory is what the people are demanding and to keep pushing those demands. And I'm okay with saying when he doesn't say something good, like he said that AIPAC are monsters, and he was attacked for that, and he defended what he said, and he went further, and he brought the attention back to Gaza and what they're doing in Gaza. That was just the last day or two.

I am okay. I'm happy to say that, you know, Zohran Mamdani said something very good here. He should say that more. Other politicians should say it more. They should follow what he says. But at the same time, I'm very happy to criticize him when he betrays people's expectations. I think that's the way we have to push. And you're not going to get—I don't want to sound like an apologetic liberal here, this is the danger—but you're not going to get the perfect candidate in, well, ever, but certainly not in one step. You're not going to go from zero to perfect in one step. I mean, Mamdani is better than AOC for sure, but we want better than Mamdani. And that comes from popular pressure and holding them accountable. Don't give up on them.