



Date: 05/10/2024

Webinar- Israel's Assault on Lebanon: All-Out War on the Horizon if the International Community Stays Silent

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) hosted a webinar on the evening of Thursday, 3 October 2024, titled ["After Attacking Lebanon, All-Out War on the Horizon if the International Community Doesn't Stop Israel."](#)

The event focused on the expansion of Israel's military actions from Gaza into Lebanon, raising concerns about an impending regional conflict. The webinar provided a platform for experts to discuss Israel's violations of international law, the role of Western alliances, and the broader implications for regional and global stability.

The panel featured distinguished speakers from diverse backgrounds, including Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh, Chairman of the Malaysian Parliament Caucus for Palestine; Claudia Webbe, British Former MP; Chris Gunness, Former Chief Spokesperson for UNRWA; Ambassador Massoud Maalouf, former Lebanese diplomat; Jeff Halper, American/Israeli anthropologist and political activist; Prof. S. Michael Lynk, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories; and Aidan White, Founder of the Ethical Journalism Network. Each speaker offered unique insights into the crisis, emphasizing the urgent need for accountability and collective action.

Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh, speaking as the Chairman of the Malaysian Parliament Caucus for Palestine, emphasised the urgent need for de-escalation in the Middle East, particularly urging Israel and its allies to disengage from escalating tensions. He highlighted that Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim condemned Israel's recent attacks on Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, describing them as diversions from Israel's ongoing atrocities against Palestinians. Syed Ibrahim argued that these actions not only serve political ambitions but also sacrifice innocent lives, stressing that immediate action is essential to prevent a broader regional conflict.

He underscored the catastrophic situation unfolding in Gaza, now extending to Lebanon, as a result of the genocide and war crimes perpetrated by Israel. Referring



to the Geneva Conventions, he outlined Israel's violations, including airstrikes, blockades, and civilian infrastructure targeting, with the reported death toll in Gaza surpassing 41,000 and hundreds more casualties in Lebanon. According to him, Israel's expansion into Lebanon reflects a blatant disregard for international humanitarian law, evidenced by the widespread destruction and the targeting of civilians.

Syed Ibrahim criticised the international community's inaction, particularly from bodies like the UN and the ICC, which he claimed have allowed Israel to act with impunity. He accused Western powers, notably the US and the UK, of complicit support through military aid and arms sales that enable Israel's continued aggression. He called for an immediate halt to these activities, arguing that unconditional support from the West exacerbates the crisis, and urged a united global front to demand accountability and justice.

Claudia Webbe's speech focused on the war crimes committed by Israel, as highlighted by the ICC Chief Prosecutor's application for arrest warrants for Israeli leaders. She described Israel's actions as starvation, persecution, and deliberate acts of violence against civilians in both Gaza and Lebanon. Webbe criticised the US and UK for protecting Israel, accusing them of enabling war crimes through arms sales and political support. She stated that the US has even pressured the ICC to drop its case against Israel, reflecting a mockery of international law.

Webbe condemned the UK government's stance, pointing out the hypocrisy in its treatment of Israel compared to other nations. She cited public opinion in the UK, which largely supports ending arms sales to Israel and holds Israeli leaders accountable for the war crimes. According to Webbe, the collusion of Western powers in Israel's actions prolongs the suffering of civilians, as they turn a blind eye to genocide and suppress peaceful protests against these atrocities.

In closing, Webbe highlighted the role of civil society in the UK and globally, stressing the importance of protest and solidarity. She advocated for an end to arms sales to Israel and emphasized the need for a cohesive civil society movement to pressure governments to act against Israel's actions. She called for international solidarity and urged governments to cease their support for Israel's illegal and inhumane activities.

Chris Gunness offered a unique perspective, informed by his work with UNRWA, on the challenges facing Palestinians. He discussed the fragmentation of the Palestinian



community across regions like Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria, painting the current crisis as an interconnected tragedy. Guinness highlighted the devastating impact on Gaza's infrastructure, with a significant portion of housing and hospitals out of service, and warned of an impending humanitarian crisis with severe shortages in shelter, healthcare, and food, describing it as a situation bordering on mass starvation.

Guinness also linked Israel's military actions in Lebanon to its impunity in Gaza, suggesting that Israel is transferring its tactics of forced displacement and civilian targeting across borders. He referenced recent bombings in Beirut and Israel's justification of such attacks, warning of a potential escalation into other regions if unchecked. He pointed out that Israel's actions undermine international justice, highlighting that the ICJ has declared Israel's occupation illegal and stressed that no UN member state should support this illegality.

He further critiqued the international community's response, expressing scepticism about the efficacy of international law without genuine enforcement. He encouraged civil society to push governments to adopt the BDS movement as endorsed by the ICJ. Guinness called for an end to Israel's impunity and urged for stronger advocacy to ensure justice for Palestinians and uphold international law.

Ambassador Massoud Maalouf presented a strong condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza, which he described as genocide. He illustrated the widespread destruction in Gaza, with critical infrastructure obliterated and thousands of civilian lives lost. Maalouf argued that Israel's campaign has now extended to Lebanon, where similar atrocities are being committed under the guise of self-defence, citing targeted bombings and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Lebanese civilians as evidence of Israel's aggressive expansion.

Maalouf criticised the double standards of the international community, particularly the US, which he claimed has continuously supported Israel's actions despite their destructive impact. He highlighted the failure of the UN to enforce resolutions due to American veto power and accused Western countries of providing only mild statements without concrete actions against Israel. According to Maalouf, the Global South supports the Palestinian cause, but lacks the influence to pressure Israel, contrasting this with Western nations that have the power but choose not to act.

In closing, Maalouf called for a stronger response from the international community to hold Israel accountable. He argued that only the US has the capability to stop Israel's



aggression, urging American leaders to reconsider their support. He concluded by calling for an end to the genocide and emphasized that global efforts are needed to bring about justice and peace in the region.

Jeff Halper provided a critical perspective on the role of international law and the transactional nature of global politics. He argued that Israel's actions are not merely a result of US support but reflect a broader complicity among global powers, including the BRICS nations. According to Halper, Israel's ongoing settler-colonial project is sustained by international acceptance, pointing to normalisation agreements with countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE as examples of this complicity.

Halper questioned the relevance of a rules-based international order, asserting that global politics operate on a transactional basis devoid of genuine alliances or commitment to human rights. He contended that Israel has thrived in this system, benefiting from an impunity that transcends mere American backing. He suggested that Israel's creation was, in part, sanctioned by the UN, and has since manipulated international institutions to its advantage.

Concluding his remarks, Halper focused on the role of civil society in countering these dynamics. He advocated for targeted campaigns that disrupt Israel's supply lines as a form of practical resistance. He stressed the importance of strategic activism in an era where traditional frameworks like international law seem ineffective, urging civil society to explore new avenues for challenging Israel's impunity.

Prof. S. Michael Lynk addressed the potential and limitations of international law in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He emphasized that while international law offers a framework for justice, it requires international resolve to be effective. He argued that the recent ICJ ruling, which declared Israel's occupation unlawful, represents a paradigm shift towards a rights-based approach and provides a legal basis for demanding an end to Israel's occupation and settlement activities.

Lynk highlighted the obligations set forth by the ICJ for Israel to withdraw to pre-1967 borders and make reparations to Palestinians. He expressed hope that this ruling, supported by an overwhelming UN General Assembly vote, could mark the beginning of a new chapter. However, he acknowledged that achieving compliance will require more than just legal rulings—it will demand collective action and sustained pressure from the international community.



He concluded with a call to action, quoting Martin Luther King Jr. and Jesse Jackson on the arc of justice. Lynk urged civil society and governments alike to leverage the ICJ decision as a foundation for political and diplomatic efforts, emphasizing that law alone is insufficient without the political will to enforce it.

Aidan White discussed the challenges faced by journalists in conflict zones, particularly in Gaza, where he stated that Israel has consistently targeted media workers with impunity. He highlighted the failure of international law to protect journalists and expressed frustration over the lack of accountability for their deaths. According to White, Israel's restrictions on media access and its disinformation campaigns undermine the public's right to information, exacerbating the crisis.

White expressed scepticism about the efficacy of international law, agreeing with Halper that global politics are primarily transactional. He stressed that while international law provides important frameworks, its enforcement is often selective, and democratic countries frequently neglect their responsibilities. He called on journalists to leverage international networks to advocate for accountability and emphasized the role of civil society in resisting the normalisation of such impunity.

In conclusion, White urged journalists and other professionals to harness the power of international networks to drive change. He argued that while individual actions may seem limited, collective efforts across borders can pressure governments to act, ultimately restoring some faith in the possibility of enforcing international norms.

Each speaker provided a distinct perspective on the crisis, collectively calling for accountability, justice, and an end to the atrocities committed by Israel in Gaza and Lebanon. They stressed the role of the international community, particularly Western powers, in either perpetuating or challenging the status quo, with a unified call for civil society to continue advocating for change.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK