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Webinar- Escalating Violations Against Palestinian Prisoners: The Role of Incitement and Global Inaction

On Wednesday, 11 December 2024, the Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) organised a webinar titled "[Escalating Violations Against Palestinian Prisoners: The Role of Incitement and Global Inaction](#)". The webinar brought together a distinguished panel of speakers who shared insights into the worsening conditions faced by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention, the impact of political incitement, and the consequences of international inaction on these violations. The speakers highlighted the urgency of addressing the systemic abuses and ensuring accountability for the perpetrators.

The panel featured prominent figures from various fields, including Jeremy Corbyn, Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom, whose presence underscored the critical political dimension of the discussion. Other esteemed speakers included Dr. William A. Booth, a Latin American History Lecturer at UCL; Dr. David Monyae, Co-Director of the UJCI and an expert in International Relations and Foreign Policy; Alicia Koutsoulis, Communications Director at Partners for Palestine; Max Geller, Spokesperson of Palestine Action; Adam Horowitz, Managing Editor of Mondoweiss; and Naomi Barasa, a Kenyan social justice activist. Together, they brought diverse perspectives and expertise to shed light on the plight of Palestinian prisoners and the global response to these violations.

Adam Horowitz began his remarks by providing updates on the ongoing genocide in Gaza, emphasising that the situation has reached its 70th day of direct siege in northern Gaza. He highlighted the wide-scale ethnic cleansing operation aimed at expelling Palestinians from northern Gaza City and its surrounding areas. This operation, he explained, has included attacks on hospitals, mass detentions, and the



destruction of civilian infrastructure, along with the prevention of medical, food, and humanitarian aid. Citing recent confirmations from Amnesty International and the International Court of Justice, Horowitz stressed that these acts constitute genocide, with over 200,000 Palestinians estimated to have been killed so far.

Horowitz further elaborated on the mass detentions of Palestinians, noting that the exact numbers remain unknown but are believed to be substantial. He drew attention to the horror stories emerging from Israeli detention centers, which he described as "concentration camps," where detainees have been subjected to torture and sexual violence. He also detailed the use of facial recognition software and AI by Israeli forces to create a database of Palestinians in Gaza, raising concerns about the long-term implications of this technology.

Concluding his contribution, Horowitz contextualized the genocide within Israel's broader agenda to colonize and control all of historic Palestine. He argued that the erasure of Palestinian society and life is part of a systematic plan that extends beyond Gaza to the West Bank and other areas. Horowitz called for continued discussions on the broader implications of these actions, underscoring the urgent need for accountability and justice.

Dr. David Monyae built upon Horowitz's analysis, questioning why the international community has allowed these atrocities to persist. He highlighted the failures of the United Nations, noting that its foundational principles and legitimacy are at stake if these violations continue unchecked. Monyae criticised the double standards of many developed nations, contrasting their responses to conflicts in Israel, Ukraine, and Syria with their silence on Gaza. He warned that this selective morality risks undermining the credibility of the international system, drawing parallels to the collapse of the League of Nations before World War II.

Monyae emphasised the importance of documenting crimes and preserving evidence to hold perpetrators accountable. He pointed to historical examples, such as the Holocaust and the genocide in Rwanda, to illustrate the necessity of record-keeping in seeking justice. He also highlighted the role of international solidarity during struggles like apartheid in South Africa, calling for similar efforts to support Palestinian prisoners and their families today.



Concluding his remarks, Monyae urged the international community to mobilize resources transparently and resist Israel's attempts to weaponize solidarity. He called for vigilance in documenting atrocities and using technology to share hard evidence of the crimes committed in Gaza and beyond.

Max Geller introduced the work of Palestine Action, explaining that the organisation has been engaged in direct action against Elbit Systems' weapons facilities in the UK for the past four years. He highlighted their successes, including the permanent closure of three facilities, and described how their campaign has intensified in response to the genocide in Gaza. Geller praised the bravery of activists who have taken drastic measures to enact a "people's weapons embargo," despite facing severe state repression and incarceration.

Geller condemned the UK government's continued issuance of arms licenses to Israel, despite overwhelming public support for an arms embargo. He cited the recent use of F-35 jets, which are equipped with UK-manufactured parts, in massacres in northern Gaza as a stark example of this complicity. Geller also highlighted the growing use of terrorism laws to detain activists indefinitely, describing these measures as an attempt to suppress the movement after legal challenges failed to convict activists in court.

In closing, Geller shared an anecdote about a novel written by Palestinian prisoners, which has been smuggled out of Israeli jails and is now being read by British activists imprisoned for their actions against Elbit. He emphasised the organic links between Palestinian and international resistance movements, calling for sustained focus on the plight of prisoners as a central pillar of the struggle for justice.

Jeremy Corbyn began his contribution by reflecting on the longstanding oppression faced by the Palestinian people, tracing its origins back to the 1948 Nakba and the subsequent occupation. He noted that the situation in Gaza has reached unprecedented levels of brutality, with 45,000 people confirmed dead and possibly 100,000 more under the rubble. Corbyn condemned the carnage as one of the most disgraceful acts of violence in modern history, emphasising the urgency of global solidarity to support the Palestinian people.

When asked about the role of the international community and the UK Parliament, Corbyn highlighted the slow but noticeable shifts in political attitudes. He pointed to grassroots activism, including protests and marches across the UK, as catalysts for



change. Corbyn recounted how the Labour Party's vote share declined in the last general election due to its failure to take a firm stand on a ceasefire. He also shared that an independent alliance of MPs, formed to advocate for Palestinian rights, has been instrumental in pushing for changes in Parliament, including the suspension of some arms licenses to Israel, though he stressed this was insufficient.

Corbyn also addressed the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrants issued against Israeli leaders, including Benjamin Netanyahu. He explained the legal obligations of the UK under the Rome Statute to enforce these warrants, regardless of political considerations. While expressing doubt that Netanyahu would enter the UK, Corbyn underscored the importance of pressuring the government to adhere to international law and hold war criminals accountable.

In response to a question about the potential inclusion of figures like Smotrich and Ben Gvir in ICC warrants, Corbyn emphasised the critical role of documenting incitement and complicity in acts of genocide. He argued that international law must extend its reach to all individuals who participate in such crimes, including those inciting violence through political campaigns and media platforms. Corbyn concluded by reaffirming the need for relentless advocacy, solidarity, and resistance against the continued supply of weapons to Israel, which he called complicity in genocide.

Corbyn concluded his remarks by highlighting the cultural and historical resilience of the Palestinian people, referencing Mahmoud Darwish's poetry as a source of inspiration and solidarity. He called for continued global efforts to empower Palestinians, preserve their culture, and dismantle the systems of oppression they face.

Alicia Koutsoulieris opened her remarks by emphasising that the events of October 7 were not the beginning of the crisis but a reaction to decades of oppression and systemic genocide against Palestinians. She highlighted the dire living conditions in Gaza, where 2.2 million civilians live in one of the most densely populated areas in the world under an Israeli blockade. This blockade, she explained, dictates every aspect of life in Gaza, from access to food and water to medical and construction supplies, severely restricting the population's ability to rebuild after repeated conflicts.

Koutsoulieris drew attention to a 2022 Amnesty International report that revealed Israel's use of mathematical calculations to determine the minimal calorie intake for



survival, effectively weaponizing food aid to enforce starvation. She described this as part of Israel's broader strategy to control and oppress Palestinians, which extends beyond Gaza to the occupied West Bank. There, military orders dictate nearly every aspect of Palestinian life, including what crops can be grown, under the guise of security concerns.

She criticised the United States for its decades-long financial and military support of Israel, noting the \$3.8 billion in annual aid, much of which is used to fund military operations. Koutsoulieris argued that this unwavering support has enabled Israel to act with impunity, perpetuating cycles of violence and oppression. She expressed disappointment with American leadership, particularly Vice President Harris, for failing to hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law, despite clear evidence of genocide and apartheid.

When asked about the potential for international legal mechanisms to hold Israel accountable, Koutsoulieris expressed skepticism, citing the United States' reluctance to support International Criminal Court (ICC) decisions and enforce international humanitarian law. She argued that global accountability requires the United States to take a stand, as its influence could catalyze change. Without this leadership, she warned, efforts to address Israel's actions would likely stall, leaving Palestinians to face ongoing atrocities.

Dr. William A. Booth addressed the stark inequalities in how human rights are recognised and enforced globally, highlighting the double standards applied by the international community. He drew on his expertise as a Latin American historian, drawing parallels between the current situation in Palestine and historical examples of U.S.-backed repression in Latin America. Booth noted Israel's involvement in supporting oppressive regimes during the 1970s, despite the anti-Semitic nature of some of those regimes, illustrating how global power dynamics often prioritize political alliances over human rights.

Booth emphasised the role of technology in enabling Israel's repressive tactics, such as surveillance and imprisonment. He highlighted the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement at UCL, where over 850 employees have pledged support for divestment from Israeli companies like Cisco Systems. These companies, Booth explained, supply technologies used to identify and incarcerate Palestinians, making them as culpable as arms manufacturers in perpetuating human rights abuses.



Booth concluded by underscoring the importance of international solidarity. He drew comparisons to past movements supporting Latin America and South Africa in their struggles against oppression, urging continued advocacy at the grassroots level. Booth emphasised that collective action, particularly through workplace organising and divestment campaigns, is vital for challenging systems that sustain oppression and amplifying the voices of those resisting injustice.

Naomi Barasa focused on the widespread use of torture and inhumane treatment of Palestinian prisoners by the Israeli government, which she argued violates international human rights law. She detailed practices such as administrative detentions, denial of legal and family access, overcrowded cells, and collective punishments, all of which amount to cruel and degrading treatment. Barasa linked these tactics to a broader strategy of genocide and colonization, warning that they undermine the credibility of international human rights mechanisms.

Barasa also criticised the role of mainstream media in normalizing these violations, arguing that biased narratives contribute to global inaction. She emphasised the need for bold, coordinated efforts to hold not only Israel but also its enablers, such as the United States and the UK, accountable for financing and supporting these atrocities. She argued that Gaza itself functions as an open-air prison, with tactics used against prisoners replicated on a larger scale against its entire population.

Concluding her remarks, Barasa called for urgent global pressure to enforce accountability and prevent the erosion of international human rights frameworks. She warned that allowing these violations to continue sets a dangerous precedent, threatening the integrity of global institutions like the United Nations and the International Criminal Court. Barasa urged the international community to act decisively, emphasising that failure to do so would mark the death of international human rights mechanisms.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK