



Date: 22/03/2025

## **Webinar Report: Resumption of Genocide in Gaza Amid International Complicity**

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) organised a webinar on the evening of Friday, 21 March 2025, titled [“Resumption of Genocide in Gaza Amid International Complicity”](#). The webinar aimed to address the renewed genocide in Gaza following Israel’s unilateral violation of the ceasefire, which was met with silence and complicity from global powers. The discussion also examined the glaring double standards in international responses to global conflicts—most notably the contradictory position of U.S. President Donald Trump, who portrays himself as a “man of peace” in the Russia–Ukraine war while openly supporting further bloodshed in Palestine.

The webinar featured a panel of distinguished speakers: Shokat Adam, Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom; Richard Boyd Barrett, Member of the Irish Parliament; Astrid Wagner, Austrian lawyer ; Arthur Neslen, British Journalist and Author; Chris Sidoti, Member of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Palestine; Professor Stephen Zunes, Professor of International Security and Foreign Policy at the University of San Francisco; and Dr. Lex Takkenberg, Senior Advisor at the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD). Each speaker



offered key insights into the legal, political, and media dimensions of the ongoing genocide and the global complicity that sustains it.

Richard Boyd Barrett began his contribution by situating the current genocide in Gaza within a broader historical context. He stated that the Zionist project, since before 1948, has been predicated on a genocidal logic aimed at eliminating the Palestinian people from their land. He asserted that this is not a controversial claim, pointing to the writings of the founding figures of Zionism who, according to him, openly recognised the necessity of ethnic cleansing to establish the Israeli state. This logic, he argued, continues to shape Israel's actions today.

He added that for many around the world, the reality of this genocidal intent was masked for decades by false narratives—such as the myth of "a land without people," the claim of establishing democracy, or more recently, Israel's assertion that it is defending itself from terrorism. However, Boyd Barrett stressed that the events of the past 17 or 18 months, particularly the atrocities in Gaza, have exposed these justifications as hollow. He stated that Israel's actions are driven by a "barbaric, horrific, genocidal logic," as evidenced not only by the destruction in Gaza but also by the accelerating ethnic cleansing in the West Bank.

Boyd Barrett emphasised that the brief ceasefire was only achieved due to immense pressure from global outrage and the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people. However, with Donald Trump's return to power, all pretences have been dropped. He accused the Trump administration of openly enabling mass



atrocities, abandoning any moral cover, and supporting Israel's goal of ethnically cleansing Gaza in line with both Zionist ambitions and U.S. imperial interests. He noted the irony of European powers expressing concern over Trump's actions, while at the same time they are using the war in Gaza and Trump's stance as an excuse to increase military spending in Europe.

He went on to describe the broader implications of this moment, arguing that empire and colonialism have now fully unmasked themselves. The logic of imperialism—rooted in brutality and self-interest—is being laid bare, with Palestinians paying the heaviest price. However, he ended on a cautiously optimistic note, saying that these double standards are now visible to hundreds of millions, possibly billions, of people around the world. The global mobilisations in solidarity with Palestine, he suggested, are a powerful response to this horror.

In response to a question on the need for serious governmental action beyond condemnation, Boyd Barrett strongly agreed. He shared that UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese had recently visited Dublin, but the Irish government refused to meet her. He criticised this as a clear sign of political cowardice and deference to Trump. He highlighted various legislative efforts in Ireland—including calls for sanctions, ending military support to Israel via Irish airspace, and halting the sale of Israeli war bonds—that have majority support but remain unimplemented. He concluded by stating that defending Palestinian rights is not only a moral duty, but a matter of self-interest for ordinary people in



the West, as the cost of complicity is ultimately borne by them in the form of militarisation and social neglect.

Dr. Lex Takkenberg began his remarks by representing the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) explaining that he leads the organisation's program on the question of Palestine and emphasised ARDD's commitment to social justice across Jordan and the Arab world. He condemned, in the strongest terms, the renewal of the genocidal war on Gaza, which he noted had claimed between 600 and 800 Palestinian lives in recent days, most of them children.

He stated that the latest escalation is yet another example of Israel's repeated refusal to respect ceasefire agreements, underscoring its commitment to the systematic destruction of Palestine and its people. Since the ceasefire took effect on January 19, Israel has violated its terms by killing more than 100 Palestinians, and by restricting humanitarian aid and entry of essential materials into Gaza. For the past 20 days, Israel has completely cut off the flow of food, fuel, and medicine, leading to rising food prices, the collapse of community kitchens, and the spread of disease and starvation. He described the current Israeli actions—air bombardments and resumed ground operations—as occurring on top of over 17 months of genocidal violence.

Dr. Takkenberg also stressed that the violence is not limited to Gaza. He pointed to Operation Iron Wall, Israel's ongoing campaign against the West Bank, particularly targeting northern areas like Jenin, Tulkarem, and Nablus. These



regions have experienced aerial bombardment, tank invasions, the destruction of infrastructure, and mass displacement orders. He highlighted the alarming fact that hundreds of Palestinians have been abducted, exceeding the number of prisoners released in previous agreements. He described these events as part of an ongoing war on the Palestinian people, one that has only shifted in form—not ended.

He further asserted that this war is rooted in over a century of settler-colonialism, centred on the erasure of the Palestinian people and their right of return. He reminded the audience of the over 10 million Palestinian refugees with the inalienable right to return to their 611 villages and towns in historic Palestine. This right, he argued, is a direct threat to Israel's colonial structure and explains the extreme violence and repression Palestinians face when asserting their identity and rights.

In conclusion, Dr. Takkenberg called on the international community to reject Israel's expansionist ambitions and take concrete steps to address historic injustice. He demanded an immediate two-way arms embargo—both halting arms to Israel and stopping purchases from Israel, which sells weapons and surveillance technology to over 100 countries. These sales, he noted, are a key enabler of Israel's military and economic power. He stressed the need to move from empty condemnations to meaningful action, arguing that colonisation is not diplomacy, and genocide is not security. He ended by urging for the strengthening of grassroots solidarity movements and for the isolation of Israel economically,



politically, and diplomatically, in support of the Palestinian struggle for liberation and justice.

Professor Stephen Zunes began his contribution by stating that Israel's renewed assault on Gaza represents a clear violation of the ceasefire agreement, which has been widely condemned internationally—with the notable exception of the United States. He criticised the Trump administration's defence of Israel's decision to abandon the agreement and resume bombings, describing it as part of a longstanding pattern in U.S. foreign policy. According to Zunes, the United States has repeatedly shielded Israel when it violates agreements, often shifting blame onto Arab parties who simply insist on upholding the original terms.

He explained that this pattern is not new and extends beyond the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, citing U.S. actions in Central America, Vietnam, and elsewhere. He emphasised that the U.S. consistently absolves its allies of wrongdoing, regardless of the facts, and this has undermined the credibility of the United States as a guarantor of peace agreements. In the case of Gaza, Zunes said he was initially hopeful about the first phase of the ceasefire, but doubted that subsequent phases—especially the requirement for Israeli troop withdrawal—would be honoured, as history has shown repeated violations by Israel without consequence.

Zunes also pointed to broader U.S. policies that enable occupation and colonisation, referencing the recognition of Israel's illegal annexation of the



Golan Heights. He explained that such actions contradict U.S. rhetoric on defending international law, especially in cases like Ukraine. He argued that U.S. peace proposals for Palestine routinely assume Israel will retain illegal settlements and fragment the West Bank, and that when Palestinians reject these terms, they are blamed for the lack of peace. He contrasted this with past U.S. leadership, noting that President Eisenhower once forced Israel to withdraw from Gaza in 1957, a stance starkly different from modern administrations.

He strongly criticised the Democratic Party's leadership for continuing to support unconditional military aid to Israel, despite widespread opposition among U.S. citizens. Citing polling data, Zunes noted that 86% of registered Democrats support conditioning aid on Israel ending war crimes and occupation, yet the party's leadership ignores this public sentiment. He warned that this bipartisan complicity contributes to the ongoing genocide and risks the wholesale ethnic cleansing of over two million Palestinians. While acknowledging the influence of pro-Israel lobbying, he placed greater blame on the deep-rooted imperial logic in U.S. foreign policy, citing historical support for genocides and occupations in East Timor, Guatemala, Bangladesh, and Namibia.

Professor Zunes concluded on a note of cautious optimism, pointing to a dramatic shift in American public opinion, especially among younger generations. He observed that students today overwhelmingly support the Palestinian cause, a stark contrast to when he began teaching in the 1980s. He attributed this shift to movements like Black Lives Matter and a broader awareness of colonial and





racial injustice, which has reframed how people view Israel-Palestine. However, he expressed concern that this generational change will take time to affect policy, especially as Americans currently face domestic battles against authoritarianism and racism. Despite these challenges, he remained hopeful that the growing awareness and activism would eventually reshape U.S. policy toward justice for the Palestinian people.

Shokat Adam began his contribution by reflecting on his experience as a recently elected Member of Parliament, elected on a strong platform of peace, humanity, and solidarity with Gaza. While he described himself as an optimist by nature, he noted that eight months in parliament have forced him to adopt a more realist perspective, albeit with a remaining “sprinkling of optimism.” He structured his remarks around three key areas: the moral, the political, and the judicial dimensions of the crisis.

On the moral front, Adam delivered a scathing critique of the UK political class, stating that it has completely lost its moral compass. He spoke with disbelief at how mass killings of children and civilians in Gaza are met with indifference in parliament, even following the massacre of 400 people—mostly children—in tent shelters. He described a debate he secured on Britain’s military complicity with Israel, during which the most severe concern expressed by a senior pro-Israel politician was that the situation was “a little bit concerning.” Adam questioned whether a true ceasefire ever existed, given the scale and continuity of violence, and concluded that the moral failure at the political level is undeniable.





Despite this bleak reality, he pointed to signs of hope—particularly in popular mobilisation. He echoed Professor Stephen Zunes’s remarks about the power of student movements, sharing how students in Leicester helped bring Palestinian students to the city through persistent activism and encampments. Adam stressed that hundreds of thousands of people have consistently taken to the streets over the past 18 months, and that public awareness remains strong, despite biased media coverage. He underlined the resilience and determination of the people, especially the youth, who continue to support the Palestinian cause.

Politically, Adam highlighted how the Gaza crisis has reshaped electoral outcomes in the UK. He cited his own victory as an independent candidate, overturning a 22,500-vote majority without prior political experience, as proof that voters are using democracy to voice their outrage. He noted that other MPs lost their seats due to their stance on Gaza, and that even traditional conservative voters have begun to reconsider their views, particularly after a parliamentary visit to Israel revealed the extremism of West Bank settlers. He described these developments as glimmers of hope in an otherwise dark political landscape.

On the judicial level, Adam struck a sombre tone. He criticised the UK government for refusing to acknowledge that genocide or war crimes are being committed in Gaza, despite overwhelming evidence from humanitarian organisations, eyewitnesses, and international legal bodies such as the ICC and ICJ. He recalled a personal exchange with UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy,



in which the minister refused to accept the reality of the crimes being committed. Adam warned that the UK, as an architect of the current international order, may also be enabling its collapse by failing to uphold justice. He concluded by expressing deep concern that the very global system built to prevent such atrocities is now crumbling—partly through Britain’s silence and complicity.

Arthur Neslen began his contribution by addressing the issue of media bias from the perspective of his personal experience as a journalist, including his time working for BBC Radio during the Second Intifada. He revealed how editorial decisions were often steered by political influence, with BBC editors holding weekly meetings with the UK Home Office to receive guidance on acceptable language. Terms like “assassination” were replaced with “targeted killings,” and even the word “occupation” was discouraged. He described this environment as one where journalists were confined within a narrow Overton window of acceptable opinion dictated by state and institutional interests.

He explained that following the events of October 7, Israel was able to successfully frame its narrative in Western media by portraying the attack as unprecedented, savage, and subhuman, likening Hamas to ISIS. Neslen pointed out that this strategy, rooted in colonial thinking, was particularly effective in countries like the UK and US, with colonial legacies that condition audiences to see “the other” as less than human. As a result, Palestinian deaths were reported with far less weight and value than Israeli deaths, continuing a long-established trend of narrative imbalance.



Neslen recounted examples from his time at the BBC to demonstrate how the media minimises or omits Palestinian perspectives. He shared an incident where an editor censored a script he wrote for questioning what drives a person to carry out a suicide bombing. He also discussed how a statement from the PFLP following the Israeli assassination of Abu Ali Mustafa was removed under pressure from the Israeli embassy. This decision led to the removal of context when the PFLP later assassinated Israeli Minister Rehavam Ze'evi, and the public was left without an explanation of the motive. These experiences, he said, reflect the broader failure of Western media to afford equivalent treatment to the occupier and the occupied.

He then moved to the use of language as a tool of justification, explaining how news outlets exhibit double standards in reporting casualties. Citing a study by the Glasgow University Media Group, Neslen noted that terms like “murder,” “massacre,” and “atrocities” were used dozens of times to describe Israeli deaths but never used once to describe the vastly higher number of Palestinian deaths. Other studies showed that for every Israeli death, there were eight mentions in Western media, while Palestinians were mentioned only once per two deaths. He criticised how mainstream outlets simply repeated Israeli press statements, using headlines that downplayed the scale of destruction, such as “Israel expresses regret” or “Israel says it’s scaling down the Gaza war”.



Finally, Neslen discussed the broader information warfare being waged alongside the military assault. He noted that Israel had 200 people working in its press office at the start of the war, focused on propaganda and disinformation, while simultaneously imposing military censorship on journalists. He highlighted the mass killing of Palestinian journalists in Gaza, stressing that this critical issue receives little attention, despite its enormous implications for media freedom and truth-telling. Neslen concluded by expressing his disappointment in the failure of journalist unions to respond, and called for serious reflection within the profession—including whether to boycott Israel’s Government Press Office in response to its attacks on journalists. He emphasised that information itself is a frontline in this war, and that the failure to defend it is a form of complicity.

Astrid Wagner began her contribution by shedding light on the increasing restrictions on freedom of speech in Austria and Germany, particularly concerning the Palestinian cause. Speaking from Vienna, she described how legal measures have made it extremely difficult to express solidarity with Palestine, noting that even the slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free” is criminalised under current Austrian law. She explained that this legal environment is having a chilling effect, not only on activists but also on lawyers and their clients, as freedom of expression is no longer guaranteed in the way it once was.

She stressed that this repression is not just political but legal, as individuals face prosecution simply for criticising Israeli policies or Zionism, even when such



criticism is clearly distinct from anti-Semitism. Wagner expressed concern about how Zionism and Israel are increasingly conflated with Jewish identity, making it harder for critics of the Israeli state to voice their concerns without facing accusations of hate speech. She highlighted that freedom of speech is being curtailed, particularly when it challenges mainstream or state-endorsed narratives about the war on Gaza.

Wagner also shared details about an upcoming anti-Zionist Jewish Congress to be held in Vienna in June 2025, organised by Jewish activists who oppose the actions of the Israeli state. She noted the historical irony that Vienna hosted the first Zionist Congress, which laid the foundations for the establishment of Israel, and will now also host a Jewish anti-Zionist Congress, marking a significant symbolic moment.

Despite the pressure and legal challenges, Wagner affirmed her determination—and that of many others—to continue advocating for the right to speak freely and criticise state violence. She concluded by reiterating that the fight for free speech in Europe is deeply connected to the broader struggle for justice in Palestine and warned that silencing criticism only serves to further entrench impunity and repression.

**Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK**



Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK  
المنظمة العربية لحقوق الإنسان في بريطانيا