



Arab Thinking Forum

Arab-Israeli conflict

Is there still a possibility of a two-state solution?

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Moderator: **Bill Law**

Editor, Arab Digest



Ilan Pappe

Professor of history and director of the European Centre for Palestinian Studies at the University of Exeter. Professor Pappe is the author of several books, among them, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, published in 2006. And his research focuses on the modern Middle East and in particular, the history of Israel and Palestine.



Dr Dalal Iriqat

She is vice president of the International Relations Department at the Arab American University in Palestine in Ramallah and since 2015, Assistant Professor of Conflict Resolution, Diplomacy and Strategic Planning.



Victoria, Brittain

She is a journalist and author. She was for 20 years with The Guardian, which is a foreign correspondent for many years, then served as associate foreign editor or published books and plays include *Shadow Lives*, *The Forgotten Women on the War on Terror* and most recently, *Love and Resistance* in the films of Mai Masri. She is vice chair of Prisoners of Conscience, chair of the Board of Declassified UK and the founding trustee of the Palestine Book Awards.

Moderator: **Bill Law**

Hello and welcome to this Arab thinking forum webinar. My name is William Law, I'm the editor of the Arab Digest and I'm very proud and honoured to be moderating such a distinguished panel. I will introduce them very shortly. I thought it would be useful just do a quick timeline of this most recent iteration of the Israel Gaza war. It began on the 6th of May .



It is over protests about the attempt to evict Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah. That was followed the next day by the assault on Al-Aqsa, by Israeli police and security, and which tear gas and stun grenades were fired. Hamas then issued an ultimatum saying, you know, withdraw from Al Aqsa, withdraw or we will commence a barrage. The ultimatum was ignored by the Israelis.

And then the barrage did indeed commence with Islamic Jihad and Hamas. It continued for 11 days and hundreds were killed. The majority, of course, were Palestinians and among them women and children. Gaza was terribly damaged.

Moderator: **Bill Law**

There were, of course, Israeli casualties, far less, but still casualties nonetheless. And there were riots in Israel between Arabs and Jews. At least one Jew was killed. One Arab was killed by mobs. These are very, very disturbing, I think, for the Israelis. For the Palestinians, of course, finally there was a cease fire.



And we are now at the point of wondering with perhaps Mr. Netanyahu on the way out, what happens next. So I think it's quite a timely moment to have this conversation. And really, we're going to look at the question, is there still the possibility of a two state solution and what happens next after this? Yet again, another terrible conflict with huge damage to civilian population and, of course, to the infrastructure in Gaza and very unsettling as well for the Israelis. So I'm very pleased to introduce my panel. And I will say that one of them has not arrived yet.

She is in Gaza and we hope to get through to her very, very soon. But let me present to you, first of all, Victoria, Britain is a journalist and author. She was for 20 years with The Guardian, which is a foreign correspondent

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for many years, then served as associate foreign editor or published books and plays include Shadow Lives, The Forgotten Women on the War on Terror and most recently, Love and Resistance in the films of Mai Masri.

She is vice chair of Prisoners of Conscience, chair of the Board of Declassified UK and the founding trustee of the Palestine Book Awards. Next. Ilan Pappe is a professor of history and director of the European Centre for Palestinian Studies at the University of Exeter.



Professor Pappe is the author of several books, among them, The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine, published in 2006. And his research focuses on the modern Middle East and in particular, the history of Israel and Palestine. And finally, and we have our fingers crossed. Dr Dalal Iriqat, she was vice president of the International Relations Department at the Arab American University in Palestine in Ramallah and since 2015, Assistant Professor of Conflict Resolution, Diplomacy and Strategic Planning. She's a weekly columnist at al-Quds newspaper and a frequent commentator across several other media outlets on Palestinian issues. Now, Victoria I'm going

Moderator: **Bill Law**

to begin with you, if I may, and I want you to talk about the impact; political and social of this latest Gaza war. Is it transformative? Also, I want to ask you about the role you play. Should be playing what it should be.

And finally, what about the rule of law? The Israelis have consistently ignored international law. UN resolutions pretty much trampled over various efforts in their pursuit of settlements in the West Bank and in their treatment of Palestinians. So you have six statements, lots to talk about and the closures.



Victoria Britain

For me, it's an honour to be here and to speak with them, with Ilan and Dalal when she comes. So, yes, to start where you started, the latest Gaza war has to be seen as a transformative event. And I think that the political impact can be positive.



I believe it faces the international community with moral and political demands, which can no longer be ducked, many people listening will remember that it was in 2012 that the United Nations warned that Gaza would be unlivable by 2020.

And in 2018, the UN special rapporteur at the time reported that it was already unlivable. Everybody knows that Gaza has become a prison blockaded by Israel since 2007.

This blockade has to end immediately. Gaza lives in a special normal. Which everybody knows and accepts shamefully as normal. The basic necessity of clean water is a dim memory. Unemployment is the norm. Patients can rarely leave for treatment even to the West Bank or to East Jerusalem.

Victoria Britain

Students win places in prestigious universities abroad, then aren't allowed to travel. Fishermen are not allowed to fish. Medical supplies are chronically short, and especially now because of covid. I think the UN secretary general said it first last month. If there's a hell on earth, it is the lives of children in Gaza. And now it's even normal for Gaza to be under fire.



This is the fourth time in 13 years but everything was different this time. This was a war about Jerusalem with the disgraceful Israeli violent attacks inside Al Aqsa, as you referred to, Bill, during the holiest night of Ramadan, coupled with the increasing Israelization of Silwan, the old city of Jerusalem, and, above all, the struggle over Sheikh Jarrah's homes. The Israeli army received, as you said, a deadline to withdraw from Al Aqsa or face consequences.

It's extremely important that that deadline came from Hamas and not only Islamic Jihad, but all the other armed factions in Gaza. Then the world had a display of Palestinian unity unprecedented in the uprising during

Victoria Britain

the 11 days of bombing uprisings in the West Bank, all over Palestinian towns inside Israel, Palestinians in Lebanon, Palestinians in Jordan united in resistance. This is a political transformation.

It shouldn't be at any point underestimated. And the other thing is there's a host of new Palestinian voices, many of them female, flooding the airwaves and social media and all of them with exactly the same message, wherever they're speaking from. They want freedom like anyone else in the world.

They want the end of the world's acceptance of Gaza's blockade, of apartheid, of no elections, of child prisoners in military jails, of land dispossession of people being forced to demolish their own homes. All this is transformative.

But the negative social impact in Gaza is disastrous, everybody's seen, as you referred to, the extent of the physical destruction of homes and hospitals and schools and mosques and infrastructure yet again. But there's something much deeper going on.



Victoria Britain



There's an unprecedented psychological impact from the Israeli army's new technique of shelling lasting 25 to 40 minutes, concentrated in one area and all over Gaza. Psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers are overwhelmed with requests for help for children, for women, for men alike. Two million people in Gaza were newly utterly traumatized in those 11 days. And the trauma of 2014, which was so well documented in the aftermath, is triggered again.

And that of 2012 triggered again and that of 2008 triggered again. Gaza psychiatrist Dr. Yasir spoke movingly of experience of fear himself as he never had before during those long bombardments, unlike anything of the previous wars.

One night, for instance, over northern Gaza, there were attacks by a 160 planes on 450 targets at the same time as 500 artillery shells came in. It's almost impossible for anyone outside to imagine what that ongoing impact felt like.

And also what was different was the attacks were right in the center of

Victoria Britain

Gaza City, bringing down those 13, 14, 15 story buildings, as we've all seen, and pulverizing neighbourhoods. Sometimes the warning phone calls came preceding the attack by minutes and leaving families scarified, terrified, running for safety.



But there wasn't any safety to run to. So besides the effects of this fear, Gazans are in mourning for those 66 murdered children and all of the 242 dead, and they're grieving for the wounded in hospitals, being treated in hospitals, which is short of every kind of supplies and equipment and with covid threatening and with several senior doctors having been killed with their families as they slept. And those families had no warnings.

In Gaza's communities where I've been visiting for 30 years, everyone knows everyone and everyone shares the trauma and the suffering of everybody else. So that's the negative bit of the transformative. But because it's so negative and so dramatic, I think it's transformative for the international community.

So I want you to move to your second question. Yes.

Victoria Britain

About the UK. Does the UK have a role? Of course it does. It's the author of the infamous Balfour Declaration of 1917. This was a careless post imperial throw away.

Throw away literally the English, giving away a country that they had absolutely no reason to have any viability in speaking of the future. So given the government that we have, it will be very difficult. But the UK has to have a role.



And as you've seen every weekend the streets of Britain are absolutely filled again with mostly young people saying this cannot go on. So for your last point about the rule of law, yes, everything you've said about the rulings of the ICC being ignored by Israel, everything about the UN being ignored, special rapporteurs not even being allowed in to make their reports, all of that is, of course, true, but with it, of course, underlying all of that is the shameful way that Western governments have never, never wanted to impose any penalties or any pressures for documented war crimes and all the other crimes I mentioned earlier.

Victoria Britain

And I know it's hard to be optimistic about this route to change, but I believe we can't afford to be pessimistic. And I've got some hopeful feelings about the recent moves inside the ICC itself and also about new moves in the United Nations by South Africa and Namibia, two countries that really know about transformations.

And above all, in that positive bit, are the armies of lawyers in the United States, in Britain, in Israel itself, and in many other places who are really relentless in attempting always to elucidate what is really going on and to demand action from the governments that could do it.

But of course, the real motor is going to come from what I spoke about before, from Palestinian unity and the same time for more and more Israelis speaking the truth, such as the two former Israeli ambassadors who spoke out about apartheid from their own knowledge yesterday. And I think of the well-respected psychiatrist, Dr Recalma Morton, who speaks openly and as often as she can get a platform of a country having become a psychotic society.



Victoria Britain

I remember that it took 30 long years of sacrifice and pain after the shock filled massacre of schoolchildren for majority rule to come in South Africa, and when it came, it came as a surprise to most people. I believe that this is possible.



Moderator: **Bill Law**

And I think you need to stress the message of hope in these very, very dark circumstances and also the determination of the Palestinians, their extraordinary courage and their ability to withstand so much and to carry on with such great effort in order to secure what is rightfully and has been rightfully theirs.



I'm delighted now to see that Dalal Iriqat has joined us from Gaza. Congratulations and welcome. I'm sure you're very delighted to be there after what? 21 years. I have introduced you already. So I'm going to if I may just move on to the conversation and the questions that I want you to answer.

First of all, I want to ask who wins and who loses in this latest Gaza war. Does the end of the Trump era make a difference? Because under Trump there was a huge, huge game by the settler movement and this impunity in this transactional approach that left the Palestinians completely cut out of the so-called deal of the century.

Moderator: **Bill Law**

I want to ask you too about normalization, the UAE, the role it's playing. UAE claims that it was the one that stopped the immediate annexation last year. That was the price of normalization. But as you well know and the rest of the panel well knows, the annexation is going on apace as we speak and Sheikh Jarrah is one small example of that. And finally, your thoughts on the two state solution. A lot to get in there, but the floor is yours.



Dr Dalal Iriqat



Well, thank you very much, Bill, and I'm very glad to be with Victoria and Ilan as well. My satisfaction and content comes for the first reason is that I am in Gaza for the first time in 21 years. My last time was in the year 2000. I really wanted to show you the background with the sea in Gaza. I want to remind the whole world that the Palestinians have a right to the Mediterranean and that there is hope, despite the destruction, despite the sadness, despite the pain that you could witness in Gaza.

There is a lot of hope. There are a lot of youth on the streets and there's a lot that we could do. And I want to remind every Palestinian and every foreigner and every conscious citizen of the world that's Gaza has a right on each one of us.

And we have to come to Gaza whenever it is possible. I wasn't allowed to bring in my laptop. And as you see that the Internet is not very stable. So I hope that the talk will continue to the best of scenarios. But to go back to your questions, Bill. Well, I wouldn't call it an outbreak; what's happening between Israel and the Palestinians. And let's not say between

Dr Dalal Iriqat



Israel and Gaza. You know, Gaza is part of Palestine and there will never be a state without Gaza. That's number one. Well, but the challenge for the Palestinian people now is to leverage our new visibility after the four years of the Trump's administration, which embraced the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and the steady expansion of the Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. What's happening today in Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque in Al Haram Al Shairf and in Sheikh Jarrah, up in Silwan up until Al Khan Al Ahmar, it it's not like it was something occasional. This comes part of the Israeli de facto annexation plan.

Our colleague Ilan might call it ethnic cleansing and I agree with him. However, I want to also put it in a context of de facto annexation. Israel is implementing annexation of East Jerusalem. It is totally isolating East Jerusalem from the West Bank. They are also pushing their limits to totally isolate Area C from the West Bank, leaving us with very tiny Bantustans here and there.

Dr Dalal Iriqat

So the Israeli attacks since Easter, not just during Ramadan, I guess the Christians and the Muslims of Jerusalem, were the reasons that Hamas reacted on behalf of the rights of the Palestinians to defend themselves in Gaza. On your question about the drums and the arrival of Biden and what difference it would make for the Palestinians, I have to admit here that Biden's language is indeed very, very civilized.

I was impressed to hear them talk about equal measures of dignity, prosperity, freedom and so on.

However, let us be honest with ourselves and with the American administration. All we saw until now is money and money is not enough. And I'm speaking on behalf of the Palestinian people and on behalf of the people of Gaza, since I'm here now. Money is not enough.

We have to start with the macro level of looking at the bigger picture of occupation with a 73 years of occupation since 1948, cultivated apartheid, cultivated persecution. So unless the American administration, unless the international community starts to deal with the problem of occupation,

Dr Dalal Iriqat

of ending the occupation, then I don't think that step-by-step approach would really help. They will only take us to details and they will go shattered. There are a lot of details which we could be discussing. You know, the rights in Gaza, no proper water, it's all polluted, no proper services the basic rights of Internet.



Even for a Palestinian who lives an hour and a half away from Gaza, it's not allowed to enter Gaza. I mean, there are a lot of details which we could discuss. However, I would rather urge and advise the American administration to focus on the occupation. Let us start by ending the occupation.

Let us start by recognizing the state of Palestine. And I want to remind the whole world that they need to identify the borders of the state of Israel, which they had recognized a long time ago.

So what is happening today? Biden and the American administration are talking about equal measures. However, we did not condemn that 2018 Nation State Law, for example. The Jewish nation state law where two

Dr Dalal Iriqat



million Arabs, Muslims and Christians are not treated like Jews. I mean, this is apartheid again. And he's speaking of equal measures when two million Palestinians are living in Gaza, deprived of the basic rights of any human being in the world. Well, let's go to East Jerusalem. The recognition of Trump on Jerusalem was not reversed by the Biden administration until today.

This means that the American administration is still giving a green light to what is happening in Jerusalem. And what is happening in Jerusalem is, again, annexing the Palestinian land, annexing East Jerusalem and protecting the Israeli settlers attack against the Palestinian people who, by the way, are facing their second forced displacement as the first time was in 1948 then they move to Sheikh Jarrah so now they're facing their second. So it's not really a legal issue.

It's a humanitarian and political issue to start with. They have a right there. 300,000 Palestinians, residents of Jerusalem do have a right. So when the administration talk about equal measures, we really have to

Dr Dalal Iriqat

remind them of those people living in Jerusalem with about two million in Gaza and another two million living as citizens of Israel. What Israel is doing is basically implementing that E1 and E2 plans to totally isolate East Jerusalem and Area C from the West Bank.



Americans want to treat us with a Deja vu Marshall Plan. I don't think this would work. Aid is very important. Funding is very important. We, the Palestinian people want to live in prosperity. We want investments. I would really love to see Gaza on top of the Middle East. Yes, I want development. I want a better life, and I want better standards for my three children to live as equal citizens of any other youth who live in Paris or New York or Tokyo, for example.

However, we will never accept economic solutions at the expense of our political rights. None of the Palestinians, and allow me to remind the whole world that the Palestinian youth generation is even harder. So we will never.

Dr Dalal Iriqat

Who on earth would convince my 12 year old boy that he is less of rights or less of a human being as any other kid his age in New York or in Shanghai, for example? Nobody.

All we're asking for is equal rights. We want the whole world and to start with the conscious citizens of Israel, to look at us and treat as equal citizens who deserve basic rights of life not only economically, however political and on a humanitarian level.



I want to also add here that what Americans are doing by adopting a silent policy and the talk about the two state solution. Well, this is viewed by my generation as a lip service and they need to know that the Palestinian public are all aware of the 3.8 billion in military aid that the US is offering to the Israeli military machine that bombs and destroys and attacks and kills the kids of Palestine every couple of years.

So when the Americans keep on shielding Israel at the United Nations, well, I think this needs to end. This needs reconsideration from the White House and the State Department and the Congress, because whether we

Dr Dalal Iriqat

like it or not, this way, if the US continues shielding Israel in the Security Council, this will only mean the implication indirectly or directly of the US in the Israeli alleged war crimes against the Palestinian people. They are involved in the Israeli war crimes against us.



They should proceed on Gaza to reverse the Trump's recognition of Jerusalem. They should deal with the rights of the Palestinians living in Israel and the rest of the Palestinians living in East Jerusalem and Gaza. It's time.

If we're going to go back to the talk of the two state solution, allow me to say here that I am afraid and I want to warn that we will go back to coercive diplomacy where the Americans and the Israelis are only coercing the Palestinians. This only means a Makavelian approach of negotiations where Israel, the US administration and those mediators who would accept to go back to the step by step approach.

The more procrastinations will only be buying more time for Israel to confiscate more and more land and to entrench the occupation and leave

Dr Dalal Iriqat

the Palestinians with no rights whatsoever living under apartheid and prolong the occupation. And you asked me about the United Arab Emirates and the normalization agreements.

I would like to emphasize here that as a Palestinian academic and as an analyst, I really don't think that it is our internal issue to comment on the Emirati's relationship with Israel, because to start with, it has been existing for a long, long time.



But our problem is with those regimes who want to strengthen their relationship with Israel, giving the excuse and justifying to their own people that they are serving the interests of the Palestinian people when they go into normalization agreements with the Israelis. Here we will not allow that any regime use us as an excuse in front of their public.

And here I want to send a message to the Emiratis, to the Sudanese and to the Bahrainis and to whoever went on signing those deals with the Israelis on the condition or the promise of a halt or a stop on annexation. I would invite them today to come and witness what is happening in Jerusalem.

Dr Dalal Iriqat

I would really be honoured to welcome them to Jerusalem, to Al-Aqsa Mosque, To Al Haram Al Sharif, to Silwan, to Sheikh Jarrah, to witness with their own eyes the Israeli settlers attacks, who are being protected by the Israeli occupation forces.



Annexation is ongoing. And this is something, this is the reality that those people need to realize and I obligate as Palestinians to remind them again, it is their own internal matter to build foreign relations with whoever country or regime they want, but never at the expense of the Palestinian national rights of the Palestinian people.

So under a two state solution, I would like to tell you that maybe the two state solution is the worst case scenario for the two peoples of the Palestine and Israel on the 67 border line.

However, as much as I am a dreamer and I'm a very optimistic person and I'm a resilient Palestinian who will forever live in Palestine, who will forever struggle for the rights of my people.

Dr Dalal Iriqat

I tell you, realistically speaking, that Israel did not leave room for the Palestinian state. And with the arrival of Bennett, of Naftali Bennett to the government, I would really urge the international community to start with the by the administration to reconsider before they welcome this government, because Bennett is very blunt and clear. His policy is clear, crystal clear on the two state solution.

He doesn't believe in the rights of the Palestinians for the state. And allow me to say that we, the Palestinians, we did not choose a two state solution formula.



It was our concession. It was not our position. It was the position of the international community. And we had made concessions for the sake of the children of Palestine and Israel to live in peace and dignity and security in safe borders.

However, we did not get what we were promised. 30 years of continued negotiations. It's only procrastination. It's only coercive diplomacy. And I'm afraid that we don't want to go back to the repeated experiences that

Dr Dalal Iriqat

talk about a ceasefire and after what happened in Gaza and the resistance of Hamas.

Here I want to also reiterate on the experience of Northern Ireland and what led to the Good Friday Agreement and the importance of including all the different political factors, if I may say now. Well, today, the inclusion of Hamas might sound crystal clear.



As an academic who had studied comparative studies on different peace processes around the world. Palestinian people today are very dismayed. We are angry with the international community, with the American administration, not only because they are silent, but because we expect more sanctions. We expect more accountability against the Israeli war crimes. We expect them to support us in our pledge at the International Criminal Court.

73 years of injustice. Well, it is time to consider that the Palestinian people have a right and the Palestinian people will not vanish. The Palestinians have learned from the past experience. We learnt from the

Dr Dalal Iriqat

history, we will forever stay resilient. We will struggle for our rights and we will stay in Palestine no matter what. It is time for the whole world to remember, that a new generation in Palestine is emerging. My 12 year old, my 8 year old and my 10 year old will forever be proud to be Palestinians. I am in Gaza today and this is a message to remind the whole world that we, the people of the West Bank or East Jerusalem, we look at Gaza as Palestine.



We will never accept any political status without Gaza. Gaza is Jerusalem and West Bank. And again, this is our concession. It is time to consider a one state solution where all the Palestinians and Israelis, no matter of ethnicity or religion, would live under equal rights.

Moderator: **Bill Law**



Well, thank you Dalal. And you make many, many good points, not the least of which is the obligation of the international community to enforce upon Israel the necessity of observing and respecting international law, the necessity of ending really the campaign of apartheid. I recall years ago, Bibi Netanyahu was asked what was his vision for the West Bank? And he said Swiss cheese, by which he meant the Bantustans of the Palestinian people, will be surrounded by Israeli settlers.

And Israel would have annexed most of the West Bank. And as you say, this is continuing apace. And really, this is something the world needs to wake up to and wake up to quickly. Your comments about the one state solution moves me perfectly on to Ilan Pappe.

And you are a proponent and have been for many years of the one state solution. I want you to explain how that would work for both sides. And I want you to reflect on well, we don't know yet, but the potential, let's put it that way of Netanyahu era, what difference that could make. And then again, the question about the Biden White House if is to pursue in an

Moderator: **Bill Law**

honourable way a one state solution. How would you think that would play out? And finally, if nothing happens, are we simply locked into another dreadful war in which the Palestinian people absorb by far the most severe damage?



Ilan Pappe



One state solution

Thank you again. Thank you for having me and thank you for allowing me to be alongside Victoria and Dalal. And it's a great pleasure. Yes, let me start with the first point that you raised. How would one state work? First of all, I think it's important to say who should tell us how it should work. And these are the Palestinians.

You cannot discuss, the one state solution if you are not changing your dictionary and language about the situation in Palestine. Terms such as the conflict, peace process are misleading terms, and do not reflect the reality on the ground.

Terms in a dictionary or vocabulary that uses entries such as settler colonialism, apartheid, anticolonialism, decolonization are far more relevant to the reality on the ground. So when we talk about the solution, we should be aware that we are actually asking for decolonizing historical Palestine as a whole in the 21st century.

Ilan Pappe

And decolonization in the 21st century is not an easy concept to deal with because in the minds of so many people, colonialism ended in the mid 1950s and 1960s. But it is continuing in Palestine and maybe not only in Palestine, but definitely in Palestine. So it's the anticolonialism movement. It's the liberation movement that should prepare a vision of the decolonized Palestine and how this would look like, what would it entail. And what we have now is a conundrum.



There's no doubt about it. Those who are now the representatives of the Palestinians, whether it's the Hamas, PA or the Palestinian members of the Israeli Knesset, most of them seem to still support the two state solution.

So the first step is to see whether they can be persuaded, rightly so, that this is no more an option, whether it's a good one or a bad one, it's not any more practical option and it cannot be relied upon anymore. And there is a need to revive the old new idea of the PLO, of a liberated Palestine as a whole, and to adopt it, of course, to the 21st century.

Ilan Pappe



But it has to be a Palestinian initiative. I belong to an initiative which is called the One Democratic State Initiative. And we do call ourselves a movement, but an initiative of Mubadala in Arabic because we want to disseminate the ideas and the discussion on one state, especially among Palestinian constituencies, and ask for an elaboration on the idea how should it work? How is the role of the Jews envisioned in such a one state and other aspects of this vision of a democratic state for all? In many cases, we don't have to reinvent the wheel here. We all know what an egalitarian state equal for each citizen means.

There is a lot of academic works about it. But in the end of the day, it has to be a strategic decision of an authentically, democratically elected Palestinian leadership that would take us all into a decolonized Palestine and with, of course, the help of international solidarity and Jews inside Israel willing to go in that direction and so on.

The important thing to realize within this discussion is that we are already all of us. And talking about Dalal and myself, I'm talking to you

Ilan Pappe

from Haifa and Dalal is talking to you from Gaza. We, Dalal and I live under an apartheid state in many ways, of course, with a different matrix of rule of power.

There's a different way Israel imposes its will on Haifa, and there's a different way in the way Israel imposes its will on Gaza. But altogether, it stems from the same ideology and the same non-democratic apartheid nature of the state.

And decolonizing it is the only option unless you want to continue with this apartheid structure that affects every Palestinian. It can be done incrementally from below, focusing on human rights, it can be done by enriching the vision of decolonized Palestine.

It has to be, as I said, a decision by the Palestinian leadership and other representatives democratically and authentically elected, hopefully on the basis of Palestinian unity as much as possible with greater representation of the younger generation.



Ilan Pappe

As Victoria noted this and I think Dalal also alluded to this, the Palestinian society is one of the youngest in the world, 50% of the Palestinians, wherever they are, are under 20 years old. And the younger generation has its own vision and ideas about the future. And they will be the ones who would lead the way eventually.



And I think there you will find a lot of constructive ideas and principles for decolonizing Palestine and dismantling the colonialist structure. For your question about Netanyahu. I think that the new government, if at all it succeeds in surviving, has nothing new to offer the Palestinians.

And this is why, for instance, the joint list of the Palestinian party in the Israeli Knesset still hasn't said whether it should support it or not, because it's very clear that given its composition, given the known positions of its members, that oppressive policy towards the Palestinians, whoever they are, will continue as it was, as it were, under Netanyahu.

So there is no new message here in terms of Palestine and the Palestinians, even if it would be a government without Netanyahu and

Ilan Pappe

his henchmen. I can understand the relief in Israel and in the democratic administration of the United States and among EU member states. But don't expect any change in the settler colonial policies Israel would pursue towards the Palestinians.



I'm afraid the same is true about the Biden administration. As Dalal pointed out, the language is more pleasant. The style is more it's more civic more civilized. And we don't have the very extreme and intransigent and rather lunatic language of President Trump. But I don't think the style is the main issue here.

What matters is the content of the policy, the essence of the policy. And we have historical precedents for the Biden administration, the Obama administration, before the Clinton administration. These Democratic administration, whose discourse was much more pleasant to listen to in the end of the day, continue to support Israel unconditionally when it comes to military ties, continue to veto a United Nations Security Council resolutions. Maybe they talk the talk, but they never walk the walk, as far

Ilan Pappe

as the Israeli expansion of settlements in the West Bank were concerned, they did nothing.

And I'm afraid the Biden administration will do nothing against the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians in the Jordan Valley in the south of Hebron, in the Naqab and of course, in East Jerusalem.

There will be condemnation which Trump would not have done, but this condemnation would not be translated to any meaningful pressure. What brings you some sort of optimism when it comes to the United States is not the change of administrations.

These are the undercurrents that have already been noticed before by the American civil society, especially among the younger Americans, including among the younger Jewish Americans. This is a shift that continues. A dramatic shift in support of the Palestinians. And this is very meaningful.

This is what really should give us some hope that eventually this shift in public opinion would be translated into new American policies from above, but it will take time for that to mature. But definitely there are incredible



Ilan Pappe

voices from within the American society, from sections that in the past were either indifferent or timid to talk about Palestine and Israel, who are now talking a very clear and loud voice. Finally, your question about the next war.



Well, the situation is quite simple. Unfortunately, if you don't deal with the source of violence, if you don't deal with the core of the issue, violence would erupt again.

There's very little doubt about it. Unfortunately, not that I'm crazy for another Palestinian uprising, but I cannot see how it can be prevented. And I think this time whether it would be a proper uprising or something different.

I think this time this Palestinian community inside Israel -the 48 Arabs- who play a far more important role than ever before. They had enough of the Israeli policy of criminalising the society, of not allowing them proper employment. And for the first time in the last 11 days in May, they felt reunited, especially the younger generation with the Palestinian

Ilan Pappe

communities elsewhere. The fragmentation Israel imposed on Palestinians, the fragmentation that some Palestinian leaders were willing to tolerate has been brushed aside by this younger generation, as in the case of Gaza, when they marched on the fence.



They're always willing also to try non-violent popular resistance, but they know the Israeli reaction would be the same to violent or nonviolent reaction to an armed struggle or diplomacy. So the Palestinians are there as I said. They're not going to disappear, they're going to be steadfast.

And they are still part of an anticolonial struggle that if the world wants to avoid this struggle to cause more bloodshed, it has to interfere in the in the form of sanctions, of divestment, of pressure, so that whatever the people around the democratic world enjoy would also be enjoyed by the Palestinians and wherever they are.

It would also benefit the Jews in Israel because rogue states, rogue regimes do not last forever. And they should also be aware of history if they think that they could continue with this kind of oppression for a very long time. Thank you.

Moderator: **Bill Law**

Thank you. I think the point of all of the stress on the young generation, is that that generation simply will not give up.

I think that's that's very, very important. And I think too that, as you mentioned, Victoria and both Dalal and Ilan of underlined is there has been a significant shift in international public opinion that is running very hard against that part of the Israeli society that wants to continue the process, as you call it, of colonisation.

I think we're seeing it here in the UK, as you say, we're seeing it certainly among American Jews, but also just generally young Americans and of course, young Palestinians, not just in Palestine and in Gaza, but but the diaspora.

What I wanted to ask you Dalal just quickly is that young generation, they must be fed up with the current political structure that they're facing, that there needs to be really a revolution. There needs to be a new political movement. Do you see that happening?



Moderator: **Bill Law**

I'm sorry you're breaking up. So let me go to you, Victoria. I'm sorry.
I'm very sorry Dalal, Victoria. Just that question about youth and the need
for a new political movement.



Victoria Britain

Well, I mean, it's absolutely clear. We've all talked about how remarkable it is in all of the Palestinian uprisings, wherever, that these new voices are there. And they're saying something significantly different from anything to do with the P.A.. But I wanted to ask Dala, but also Ilan, what do you think the impact of the Americans pushing for Palestinian elections urgently? Can that produce the kind of change we need to see in who is talking to the Americans and the international community?



Moderator: **Bill Law**

If you do want to put that up, you need to turn your mic on.



Ilan Pappe

I'm not entirely sure that elections can really be carried out properly under occupation and the colonisation. And I'm not against them, of course, and I'm not the Palestinian.

So I'm not going to preach to the press what to do. I think it's wrong not to allow the elections because you're afraid that Hamas would win seats. Of course, this is against my principles as a Democrat. But all in all, I don't think that the change that the younger generation is craving for would come through elections.

I think this will come through a different kind of movement, probably an upgraded and better version of the Arab Spring, because you need that popular impulse from below to generate this kind of energy. But you also need structures on organization to channel it in an effective way, which were missing in the Arab Spring. And I think Palestinians eventually can do this.

I will do and will do this. Dalal knows better than I do that the Palestinian people have respect for quite a few of the people who are part of the PA.



Ilan Pappe

Sometimes I think people from the outside don't understand it. These were people, some of them, were people who fought in the 50s and the 60s in Fatah and were part of the liberation movement. And so it's not that it's not that easy.



It's not kind of black and white situation. And therefore, I think it's a far more delicate process of substitution, which will happen. But I think we have to be careful of thinking that this is kind of, you know, the bad guys and the good guys and the, you know, who are the good guys are and they're coming and taking over.

It's not that it's far more complicated. And, of course, women should be part of it. I mean, I've participated myself in so many PA meetings, and you look in vain for women in those meetings. So, yeah, yeah. These things have their base that have their impulses and they are happening and they will happen.

And I think that the younger generation is there now and some of which we already saw in May the month of May, it's getting better. The only fear is

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how destructive the Israelis will be when they realize that they are facing something far more united, far more democratic, far more authentic. They will not clap their hands and would say, oh, great, we always waited for such as a united democratic Palestinian representation. They will use all the force they have. And that's what is worrying with the more the Palestinians are successful in being united, democratic, the more the Israeli's reaction would be.



Moderator: **Bill Law**

Dala can you hear us? I just I'm hoping to get Dalal back. Can you hear us all right? I'm trying to give you the last word.

Well, I think we're very fortunate that we were able to get Dalal for as long as we had, and it really underlines the difficulties that Gazans face in terms of all kinds of issues, not just not just the very, very difficult situation they face with the Israelis.

I wanted to thank all of you very, very much. And I'm so sorry Dalal you keep breaking up, but we did get the gist of your points and you put them in so powerfully. So I thank you.



I thank you very much. Dr. Dala and Victoria Britain, again, so strongly put. And Professor Ilan Pappe, I mean, we all of us hope that there is a solution that will not be too long in coming and that we have great faith in the youth in Palestine and hopefully across the world will take up that message that the apartheid efforts of the Israeli government, which is so at odds really with many of the best intentions of the people who established Israel, not all, but many really, that those good intentions should come to

Moderator: **Bill Law**

the fore. So once again, I think the Arab Thinking Forum and on all of you for taking part.



Dr Dalal Iriqat

Thank you very much. It was an honour and a message from Gaza, please remember that Gaza, Jerusalem are part of Palestine and Palestinians will not surrender, but they will stay in Palestine.

