

Transcript

Good evening, and welcome to the very, very first seminar of the 26-27 academic year in the Middle East Center. My name is Eugene Rogan, and as director of the Center, it's a real pleasure to welcome you all. It's a particular honor to welcome Francesca Albanese and to welcome back Avi Shlaim for an event that we could barely described as saving the best for first. Francesca Albanese is an international lawyer specialized in human rights and the Middle East. Since May 2022, she has served as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. An affiliate scholar, at the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University. Albanese is the author of prestigious publications, including *Palestinian Refugees and International Law*, published by Oxford in 2020, considered as a landmark of the literature on the subject, and most recently, *Jacques*, published in 2024. Her academic works cover various aspects of the question of Palestine, the legal situation in Israel-Palestine, and Palestinian forced displacement, including the mandate and the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, better known as UNRWA. Since 2018, Albanese has taught and lectured at various universities in Europe and the Middle East. He is also responsible for the research and legal assistance program on migration and asylum seekers in the Arab world for the think tank Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development. and is co-founder of the Global Network on the Question of Palestine, a coalition of prominent regional and international experts and scholars engaged in the issue of Israel-Palestine. Prior to her scholarly engagement, she has worked with international organizations, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Relief Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees. As Special Rapporteur, she has published numerous legal opinions and several major reports on violations of the law of self-determination in the occupied Palestinian territories in 2022 on the widespread and systematic mass deprivation of liberty of Palestinians in 2023 and on the theme of unchilding violating childhood in the occupied Palestinian territories in 2023 as well as genocide in 2024 two reports Avi Shlaim is Professor Emeritus of International Relations at the University of Oxford and an Emeritus Fellow of St. Anthony's College and of the Middle East Centre, which has been his intellectual home since 1987. He is author of a remarkable body of influential publications on Israel and the Arab world, starting with his *Collusion Across the Jordan*, published at Oxford in 1988. which established him as a leading Israeli new historian. This was followed by *War and Peace in the Middle East*, his magisterial *The Iron Wall*, *Israel and the Arab World*, which came out in 2000 since reissue, *Lion of Jordan*, *The Life of King Hussein*

and War and Peace in 2007, and a stunning childhood memoir reflecting the three worlds in which he grew up between Iraq, Israel, and the United Kingdom. He has also penned a number of influential essays for leading literary and scholarly journals that have been gathered together in two books, Israel and Palestine in 2009, and most recently, Genocide in Gaza, for which Francesca Albanese wrote the preface. It is no exaggeration to credit Avi with being one of the most influential public intellectuals of the Middle East in Britain today. We will start with a conversation between Avi and Francesca. Before opening the floor to you, our audience, for your questions, and before we get started, would you please join me in extending the warmest of Oxford Walkers? I hand the floor over to you to get us started. Would you like to begin the conversation?

Thank you very much, Eugene, and thank you for your extremely generous introduction to both Francesca and myself. The way that Eugene presented us made it sound as if this is a match made in heaven. But the truth of the matter is that Francesca was going to be in conversation with Eyal Weizman, the brilliant Israeli archaeologist and the director of forensic architecture, not archaeologist, the director of forensic architecture, the architect. But Eyal Weizman couldn't make it. So Eugene had to scrape the bottom of the barrel. And here I am. But I'm absolutely delighted to be here. First and foremost, because Francesca is a very dear friend. But more importantly, I'm really honored to share a platform with her because my admiration for her verges on hero worship. because she is an outstanding public servant. She is an extraordinary expert in this field, and Eugene mentioned her publications. But she is a very profound scholar, and now she is the UN Special Rapporteur, and I've read all your reports to the UN. I'm quite interested in the Arab-Israeli conflict, so I read a few reports, international reports, on this conflict going back to the Peel Commission report of 1937. And I can honestly say that Francesca's reports represent the highest level of international reporting on this conflict. The profound that are in depth and they always go to the heart of the matter. So she has written quite a few reports and in her report she says that Israel is an apartheid state. But she doesn't stop there. She says, we need to know why Israel is an apartheid state and it's because it's a settler colonial movement that led to a settler colonial state. The other reason that I admire Francesca so much is her courage. My wife Gwen once said to me, Francesca isn't afraid to raise her head above the parapet. And I said to her, Francesca never lowers her head below the battle. Otto von Bismarck said that courage on the battlefield is very common. Civic courage is very rare and she is a shining example of civic courage. So I'm absolutely delighted to be sharing this platform with you.

Well, that's a great conversation starter.

I'm so glad it's recorded. Yeah, so when I feel down.

All right, I'm going to sit here in the middle, keep things going. Did you have a starting question? Or would you like me to get things going?

I can also inject.

You can inject? If you like.

So thank you very much. First of all, It's so wonderful to be back to this room where I have forgotten, but we have on the 5th of.

February.

It's called trauma. It was the 5th of February 2020 and my first book, Palestinian Refugees in International Law, had not been printed yet. And still, I came, you invited me to present it. The room was surprisingly full because back then there was not this sense of urgency probably among people to talk about a century-old tragedy, a genocide in the making, because now looking back, we should have opened our eyes earlier. But however, it was beautiful. It was so, it was a good, really a good wish for the months that followed in preparation of the book. And it's so nice really to be here with Avi Slime, whom I met on that occasion. And our relationship has evolved into a friendship indeed throughout the genocide. I have to say that my friendship landscape has completely changed over the genocide because most of those with whom I interact regularly are not childhood friends, but either genocide scholars or the likes. But I have to say, I have to correct really for the record any precision. I mean, you were ill-informed because I would have never, accepted you to be second to anyone sharing a platform. What Eyal cancelled Was it private dinner? So yes, I was supposed to be in conversation with Eyal over a meal and then he cancelled because he had to go to South Africa. And then I said, let's go and shine and let's see if we can have a discussion about genocide. So here it is. Look, I just want to make a couple of comments and it's not false modesty when I say I don't think courage is the word that characterizes what I'm doing. Because I do that consciously. It's decency. It's just decency. Courage is something else. Courage is the one that the journalists in Gaza are displaying. Many of them could have left that hell on earth and saved their life and that of their family like Anas al-Sharif because he knew that he was on the kill list of Israel. He knew because he was called every day for months. and be reminded that he would die. And so it was. He's been waiting for the execution of his death sentence, showing up time and times again. And this is courage. The courage is that of fathers and mothers who run in a really something that recalls probably the most macabre episodes of Hunger Games, running for a bag of flour. under fire by soldiers who are shooting at them just to bring something to feed their starving children. This is courage, not mine, not Abby's. We are still sitting into our privileged landscape and this is why we have chosen to be decent human beings and especially me as a European. I think that there is nothing else that I could have done Because really I grew up in a family feeling ashamed, having this sense of

shame for what had been done during the Holocaust. And for me, never again has a very specific meaning. It's just to make it real now. And it's already laid, really, toward the Palestinians. But so the other thing is that yes, I chose to be direct, to use plain language supported by the rigor of international law, which is clearly a powerful ally on the side of the Palestinians as well as other oppressed people, if only, if only those administering, those having responsibility to enforce international law, to make it real, abandon their platitudes and their entertainments and decided to put aside their the considerations about their career for once and stood on the side of justice because I mean three years into genocide this is what I feel toward international community. I'm preparing to present my 9th report to the to the United Nations and then three more to go and then I'll be free from this mandate. But I mean I don't know what to say to these people anymore. Diplomats were sitting there listening to this litany of death and massacres on an everyday basis and then pushing papers. I don't think that the change will come from there. This is why I've invested since the beginning of my mandate so much of my time to speak especially to the younger generations. Every book I've written ever since, there's been *Jacques Cuse* and then *When the Word Sleeps* and then *The Light of Awakening*, all of them are written to tell what I can tell. The story of Palestine through international law as I've done in my reports, but really speaking to in the most accessible and least legalese possible ways so that there are no doubts.

And it's effective. But we're living in an age where arguably the applicability of international law is under assault. In other words, what is the value of international law unless the powers of the day are willing to abide by it or enforce it or be constrained by it? And you and others who have taken the position of condemning the events in Gaza as a genocide and found yourselves under attack, under legal limitations. The United States has targeted you, *Nabi Pillai*, the most recent Nobel laureate. So there's a wrecking ball coming for international law. How do we use international law to be an effective tool for protecting people in 2026?

Look, I think that when it comes to Palestine and Israel, the assault on international law has been endemic since the beginning. Israel, for a number of reasons that we all know, but also for reasons that we do not know, how racist and also the kind of ideologies and private interests, economic financial interests that are behind it, and this is nothing to do with with anti-Semitic tropes. I mean, I've exposed in a report called *Economy of Occupation, Economy of Genocide*, what I mean. Israel is an integral part of a system of exploitation and profiteering from death and destruction. It's not the only one. Otherwise, if that was only an Israeli problem, that would be easy. But no, microcapitalism is a phenomenon that envelops the world through a network of predatory elites and religion has absolutely nothing to do with that. Zionism has become an often quoted ideology and it has not even much to do with the Jews or the Jews only because in fact in my country most Zionists, meaning those who are supporting Israel as greater Israel. Today it's about greater Israel and it's about

conquest and annexation. So these are crimes. They're Christians and there are Zionist Muslims. So this is why I'm saying let's put religion aside and let's focus on the crimes. So I think that there has always been an assault on international law because hundreds of resolutions were passed years after years and violated systematically. the day after that being passed. What is happening now, it's different. It's of a different nature, league, and order. And it's the cannibalization of the multilateral order that was built after the Second World War. Look, there is a former Secretary General said, the UN system has never been meant to lead us to heaven. but to spare us from hell. And I think this is very true because those who drafted the UN Charter were still imbued of colonial thinking. I mean, even the European Union, when you read the annexes to the founding treaties, you will find transitory dispositions that regard the administration of the overseas territories, the colonies. So what is happening now is that it's happening, it has amplified, it has been escalated since October 2023, it's this assault on the very body of international law. Today, and this didn't even start in fact with the genocide in Gaza. For me, there is a direct line a continuity with 9-11, because 9-11 was the first really successful attempt at dismantling legal guarantees. Torture was normalized. Indefinite detention without trial or renditions. It was all normalized in the wake of the self-defense interpretation of the interpretation of self-defense that the US imposed. And the culprit is also the sense of impunity that has been granted to the United States. And then in the wake of that reaction, Israel has also claimed a self-defense that under international law it didn't have, which doesn't mean that it didn't have to react. It didn't have, it had to react. to the massacres of October 7, no question about that, but within the limit of the law, something that Israel has never been used to do. So, I mean, the problem was the unconditional support. You never give unconditional support to anyone, including your parents and your children, because every support should be conditioned, especially in international relations. And this, I mean, this support remains unconditional. 73,000 people killed later. So what I think is happening is that the US is demonstrating a clear intent to dismantle the very construction of the multilateral order premised upon universal rules. And so civilians have lost all protected status. I mean, today you can have genocidal wars as it's happening in Lebanon. In Lebanon, I mean, no one is talking about that. No one is talking about that. But Israel has extended what it already calls cynically the Gaza doctrine. So civilians become targets. And so, and also the institutions who are supposed to help us, to create an origin, to create a barrier, are being dismantled. the United Nations, also thanks to a very weak leadership, I have to say, which has chosen accommodation instead of a principle holding the fort. And then the rest of the international community, Europe is proving, and my case is testament to this, Europe proves to be a colony of the United States. And so What's happening to the International Criminal Court has been in the air for months. People had already statements ready in order to express condemnation. Thank you. We will add this to the trash bin of history because this is what words of condemnation are for today. We need

a blocking status to protect institutions and people in this continent from the assault on fundamental freedoms that is coming from this U.S. Administration.

But not just the U.S. Administration. I mean, one of the problems with the post-war architecture, and the United Nations is central to that, is that at least two of the permanent five are, in a sense, rule breakers.

You're right. You're right.

And so there is a kind of broader culture of disregarding the rules that constrain your choice of action.

Yes.

And where the whole principle of the United Nations being to try and resolve through diplomacy rather than resorting to force has now been abandoned. And pretty much the first response of any party with a grievance is force.

Yes.

So is the architecture of that post-war order under a pressure today that it can no longer withstand? Is it actually breaking up under the pressure?

If it's a yes or no answer that you guys expect, yes, it's crumbling. I'm not suffering for the system itself. I'm suffering for us. For us and future generations. Because especially the younger generations is paying a price for the bad, myopic, absurd choices of people born in the past century who don't even understand, appreciate the apocalypse that surrounds us and its climate. we call it climate change, it's not climate change, we're going to burn. I mean, Israel and Palestine will not even be habitable in 40 years, as Ras Sigal argues. So Palestine, and suddenly so the martyrdom in Palestine, which has reached an unprecedented level of brutality, is a prototype. of containment strategy of unwanted people. It's already being experimented elsewhere. I was in Lampedusa, which is the European entry point for migrants and refugees. Lampedusa, an island, which is technically in Tunisia, but it's the lowest Italian, the lowest point of the Italian border, and so Europe. And this is where most migrants and refugees those who manage, those who are not intercepted by the Tunisian or the Lebanese guards, coastal guards paid with European taxpayer monies arrive and they are put in confinement areas. And the technology, the surveillance, the technology, the gates, the drones, guess who produces them, where the technology comes. This is why I keep on talking of Israelization of our societies. And I agree with you. This is not just the US. Russia is the other violator, systemic violator of international law at this scale. However, the US is more dangerous. And let me tell you why. It's because of militarism. Because China has one military base outside of China. Russia 9. the US over 1000 and 1035 are in my own country. So this is why I'm saying yes, we are a colony and this is, but look, crisis is also the matter of opportunities. And what I think, what I think is not, it's an absolutely grim

scenario, an horizon. I'm not even sure that I will ever have a day of peace comparable to what we had before the genocide from now on. But it doesn't matter. Yes, we could decide, honestly, this is what I've been discussing with my lovely husband, saying, look, if we didn't have children, I would wrap up everything we have and move to a remote island and spend the rest of my life there. Selfishness is not an option because of love. Because we have kids, and even I know my family, even if we didn't have kids, we would still be worried. And this is the thing, today we need to realize that we cannot, we will not save ourselves alone. We need to stick together, think together, put divisiveness aside, put a little bit of our comfort and private interest aside. And I'm talking especially to the not to the students, to the professors, especially those with tenure. And not just because in academia, I mean academia, and this is, I mean, those, I remember, I remember only once I went, when I was in Palestine, I lived three years there, and there was, and my husband would join every week as a UN person, I couldn't do that, would join every week the presence that Israeli Israeli civilians, about 20, 30 people would organize in order to escort, to accompany kids to school or to stop the settlers. And they would organize people in this way, who has an Israeli passport. You are the first liner. Who has a US passport? You are the second. And the Palestinians would be the last. And I've seen the same thing in October 2023 when I was in the US, and I've seen huge mobilization, especially of young people occupying train stations and blocking roads. It was Jewish Americans. first. And they were instructing people to stand behind, other people, especially of Arab descent, to stay behind, because they knew that it would be another 9-11, that it would trigger anti-Arab racism, which is, I mean, we can see how widespread it is. So now it's time, the system is like naked in front of us. We see it. Let's say what I call the common enemy, which is not Israel, is the system that has allowed Israel to turn from apartheid into genocide and has armed it, has profited from its crimes, it has sold its bombs. So it's all of us. We need to change that system. This is the opportunity we have. It's not easy. It's not, frankly, considering how slow we are, it's not given that we will succeed. But know that But if we want, if we want, we will make it. And it will be really the only decent way of getting out of this genocide better than we entered. Because for sure, we will not get out of this genocide the same way we entered it.

Threats to international law, to the rule-based international order, and Israel has launched a systematic assault on the UN, on international law, and on the representatives of international order. I wrote an article, one of the targets of Israel and its Zionist friends is Francesca, and I once wrote an article in defense of Francesca against her critics. It was in Jadaliyah, and I think I called it Israel's war against the UN. Um is the Hebrew abbreviation of the United Nations, and Um is a dismissive Yiddish expression that, you know, what does it matter? Ben-Gurion used to refer to the UN and say what matters is not what the goyim say but what the Jews do. So that was the philosophy, that was the framework, and in it I replied to all the main criticisms of

Francesca. But Israel has also attacked international civil servants, especially in the UN, like the Secretary General Guterres. He made a mild statement after the 7th of October. He condemned the Hamas attack, but he said that the Hamas attack didn't happen in a vacuum. It happened in a context. And then there was an assault on him, calling him anti-Semite and calling for his resignation. Israel has also launched an assault, launched an attack on UNRWA. The UN agency that looks after Palestinian refugees. Israel created the Palestinian refugee problem. We should be grateful to UNRWA for providing the services to the Palestinians, but instead Israel used 9/11 to accuse UNRWA falsely of 12 officials who are said to be Hamas members. And Israel, without any evidence, succeeded in really dismantling these important UN organizations. Israel has also gone after the ICC, the chief prosecutor, and all the judges. This is nothing new. Israel has always been opposed to international law because international law, 99% of international law supports the Palestinian position in this conflict. And so Israel has always been hostile to the United Nations and to international organizations but since the Hamas attack this has been more blunt, more crude, more obvious and more virulent. Now on the 2nd of June 1948, a senior official in the Foreign Office, Sir John Traudvic, wrote a memorandum to Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. In it, he complained that the Americans helped to create Israel, helped to create a gangster state with a thoroughly unscrupulous set of leaders, a gangster state with a thoroughly unscrupulous set of leaders. I used to think that this judgment was too harsh, but eight Israeli military assaults on the people of Gaza, not on Hamas, on the people of Gaza. The current war is the eighth, by my count, the eighth Israeli assault on Gaza persuaded me that this judgment was not too harsh. This is what Israel is.

Francesca, I mean, I think following up on what Avi says, the criticism is valid, and yet Israel is so empowered when it comes to the Israel-Palestine question, that in a sense the challenge is how do you address your agenda to an Israeli audience to try and influence their view? Because frankly, the Palestinians will never be in a position to change the formula. It's only Israelis and Israeli voters. And I would say that while you've been so effective in mobilizing an international audience who believes in the case of Palestine, it has totally shut you out of an audience in Israel.

Yeah. But let me tell you, I don't think that this has been organic because from the beginning of my mandate, one thing that I've done persistently and with a degree of success has been the engagement with segments of the Israeli society. I used to have regular meetings like public events remotely because I couldn't enter Palestine, I couldn't enter Israel, with academics, with think tanks, even think tanks that would be considered Zionists. openly, I mean, two-state solution at best. Okay, never engaged with violent settlers. But however, this and I, the thing is, the normal answer, the normal reaction to me, my words, and I've never minced words with the Israeli interlocutors, was she's honest and she's much calmer than she's depicted. She's not anti-Semitic. But then there has been such a campaign aiming to create reputational damage. I was

not prepared to it, but the strength to resist this has come from something that I've seen in Italy. I don't know how many of you have watched the documentary NASA.

It's not come here yet, but I think probably everyone's read about it. On the 15th. Okay. Tell us more.

One of the things that I learned, because frankly for me, and I'm very fond of the two filmmakers, not filmmakers, documentaries. This is not a movie, it's a documentary. And I have huge admiration for Yuval. I have to say that what he, there is, we have not talked about that. But my understanding is that he produced a documentary because people were not reacting. Because if you read the article he published in December 2023, denouncing the use of artificial intelligence and this technology, like programs like Lavender and Where is Daddy, to target civilians, to intentionally kill, slaughter civilians, it was already clear. This is one of the most convincing and compelling pieces of information I had in preparing my reports for the one that was eventually titled Anatomy of Genocide. So it was known what has been added is the voice of those who committed those crimes. But there is one thing that has really that really struck me is that at a certain point, there are many things at a certain point, one soldier say, I don't want to spoil, but just one soldier says, I've been I've been told, I've learned that the bad guys were the Nazis who killed the civilians, and now my question is, Who am I? What am I? And the other thing is that another soldier says, we could hear everything they said. They could hear that already in 2023 had announced that Palestinians were spied even in the toilet. Israel had bagged all phones of Palestinians, internationals, many Israeli activists, so they could know. This is why I've always been suspicious about the intensity, the gravity of the damage that was done on October 7, and now something is coming, not something that I've investigated, but something that is coming to the light, because it's incredible. But you hear the soldiers saying, we have used the information that we could get in order to threaten people, in order to silence them, in order the fear of reputational damage used to shut them down. So imagine the kind of boring life I have if the only thing they could keep on doing is to doctor videos creating a patchwork of things that I've either not said or sometimes I also make mistakes. It's not, it's human. It's called human being, a human being. But however, there is this spying thing that is constant. and has accompanied life of the Palestinians. So, sorry, I forgot what was the train of thought. I apologize. I forgot what I was, what was the question itself or? No, the, yeah, can you tell me again?

So, no, I was just wondering how you actually, because what you're describing for us is a very thoughtful.

No, I remember.

I remember.

No, what gave me, because it's been a bit torturous cycle of thought. In Italy, during the 90s, the anti-mafia, the most famous anti-mafia judges were killed. And the thing is, they are the judges who had exposed the political system. It's called the Tratativa Sato Mafia. They had exposed that the mafia was not about the thugs, like managing the prostitution, like human trafficking or drug trafficking. The real mafia, the danger of the mafia came from the political and financial economic establishment entrenched in the, I mean, doing business with the thugs, with those who were called mafiosi. And the thing is that when they were killed, it was at the end of a long trajectory of smearing and slandering. And there is a word in Sicilian, which is *mascariare*, which means mudding, mudding someone's reputation. So this is why I often refer to what's happening against the international system, this turning the rule of law into rule of lawlessness as mafia style techniques, because ruining people's reputation is a way, on the one hand, to destroy them psychologically, And on the other hand, to silence them, to make sure that at a certain point, they will have had enough and they will drop the ball. So of course, this has not, clearly it has not changed. I mean, honestly, I am much stronger than I was three years ago. I created a monster. But I didn't know I was this person. Yesterday. Yeah, it was yesterday. I had a dinner with a friend from 20 years ago. I had started the UN career say I would have never expected you to turn into this. Because you were so shy. You were barely talking, even on critical issues. Yeah, I was not like that. But you know what? This is decency. When you see, you see something, say something. And this is what has happened to me. So yeah, it's.

Can you talk a bit about that? how much hate, because so many women in public life, in political life, are on the receiving end of so much social media hate. Obviously, there's so much hate in the press of people who are opposing the agenda you put forward. But could you talk a bit about a prominent and publicly exposed individual?

As a woman.

As a woman, on the amount of hate that you get.

Of course. But just to conclude, so I think the Israeli public hates me. Because of the work of Unwatch, the Jerusalem Post, and Times of Israel. I mean, they've done, they should be sued them for the reputational damage that caused me and my family. One day, I hope we will have the time to deal with personal motives, but now we have to stop at genocide, right? Is there a gender dimension? Absolutely, absolutely. I've never seen diplomats turning so rude in to someone as I've registered that even even my UN colleagues like sitting in meetings and say you really trigger something in them because I'm a woman and I don't get schooled by I mean yeah genocide deniers because and I've never been I've never I decided not to sit quietly, again, being schooled about *raison d'etat*, when the *raison d'etat* means protecting a genocide. I remember once I told a German official, I quoted, I think I forgot it, there was a *tacitus* expression on the Germans, which was I'm sorry, I forgot, but it was, they lie, the Germans lie, and then

they believe it. It's been there, written by Tacitus, a Roman historian, about the Germans. It's been there from the Roman times. And I didn't make a joke. I really said that. The guy was furious. How do you dare? I said at the very beginning of the Russia aggression of Ukraine, I told a EU representative that Europe was displaying double standards. And he told me, quote, I cannot believe that someone with a UN tag, end of quote, can be so insulting. I don't think that this is, so, you know, it was probably was an unfair or an asymmetric confrontation. Because I had the lightness of independence and they had the burden of the chains of diplomacy. At the point in history where diplomacy has been turned into not even the really the the bystanders before diplomats were those who were discussing, before political decisions at the international level were made, were discussing war. Now war has been taken out of the hands of diplomat and is being decided by no, I will not use the expression that Norman Finch has still used. I keep it for my next publication. He said that he would like very much me to repeat his words verbatim. However, I called President Trump the Caligula of our time, and he totally deserves the award in the sense that he's the one who decides war on Twitter. He communicates through Twitter. And this part of the world, which is still used to, I mean, the colonial mentality, the diplomacy of the old days, sending letters, I mean, we get this, I understand that psychologists call it psychological overwhelming, every day crazy news, so that we get entertained with the craziness and he goes ahead. and with this traffic and it's dispossessing Palestinians and others, but including their own citizens. So this is where I think we are right now. I don't, I think that it's about women. I've suffered significantly the fact of being a woman, but I think I've turned it into an opportunity, honestly, because I've, again, this is what has come out, I felt so offended, so insulted, so disrespected, but instead of staying there and crying in the corner where they would have loved to put me, I kept on pushing back.

Bravo.

Yeah.

Do you have any more questions?

I had a comment about Donald Trump. he described the Iranian leaders as deranged scumbags. And if you wanted to see a real deranged scumbag, all he had to do is look at himself in the mirror.

Well, Avi, I think you'll find a lot of affirmation for that viewpoint in this audience.

Can I add one other point? Please. And that is Trump's Israel and America's attack on Iran which has caused so much turmoil and suffering all over the world, so many problems, so much violence. The latest repercussion is the Houthi attack on the airport in Riyadh. This war is Netanyahu's war. It was he who had the idea of attacking Iran. For the last 30 years, Netanyahu has been pushing and campaigning for a joint American-Israeli attack on Iran. Trump is the only American president who was stupid enough to

fall for this mad scheme. And now we're all paying the price for his stupidity. So we have malevolence and evil on the part of Netanyahu who has turned Israel into who is Israel under Netanyahu is an agent of chaos and he dragged America into it and the result is regional instability, bloodshed, violence and it spread all over the region to the Gulf states, to Lebanon, And so this is a really lethal relationship with a very clever and evil man and an extraordinarily, staggeringly stupid and ignorant American president. And we are all paying the price.

I'm not I see arguments in favor of what you're saying, but I really don't think that it's just Trump's madness. I really believe that there is, I mean, we tend to, we are focusing on Trump and Netanyahu because it's like with corruption. There was a US anthropologist who had a very interesting point on the matter. She was saying we tend to look at corruption as something symptomatic, or we have a symptomatic approach to corruption. We focus on corruption on the who has corrupted whom or who's being corrupted when, and then we deal with this as an isolated phenomenon. But here we are, I mean, the current scenario is revealing itself as a systemic corruption. There is, again, Amnesty International calls as denounced the predatory elites, predatory elitism. We are governed, and this is a shock, especially for people in so-called liberal democracies. We are so shocked that our voice doesn't translate into a political change. 70% of European citizens think that Israel has committed a genocide. Very few think that it does not. There is probably 20% of not decided, but 70% want Europe to curtail to cut ties with Israel, to stop, and even there are the International Court of Justice decisions in this respect. And still, European leaders go ahead. And actually, even accrued businesses between the European Union and Israel, how it's possible, it's because there is a system. We tend to think in terms of states as the ultimate, the sanctuary of decision making on behalf of their citizens. This is a very naive way of looking at things because in fact, the very fact that billionaires and trillionaires have amassed an amount of wealth that is so disproportionately bigger than the GDPs of entire countries, the fact of the 0,001% of the world, 56,000 billionaires, so trillionaires, have three times the wealth of the 50th, sorry, of the 50%, the poorest 50% of the world. This tells who takes decisions. fossil fuel, extractivism, and then militarism that needs to secure access to natural resources. The finance system that is needed to ensure that the traffic of funds and wealth is maintained, and that technology. This is the system that has enabled the genocide. And these are, it can be reconducted to people. This is what I'm saying. I don't think Trump is a, I mean, is grotesque in a way, but he's allowing a system to continue to profit. And this is really sad. The other thing is that I'd like to to ask you, I understand why you say this is Netanyahu's war, because Netanyahu is really leading it. But unfortunately, many in Israel support it, because many in Israel are cultivating this deranged dream of greater Israel that is not even confined to the old from the river to the sea. Greater Israel is not even about territorial control. It's about dominion that today can happen without even setting foot in the

country. It's just through subjugation and oppression and impoverishment and dispossession. And so the turmoil in the region is not a collateral damage, is an intentional aim, in my view, of this war. And Netanyahu is profiting from it, but unfortunately he's not the only one.

So we change the leaders, but we're still going to face the same problems.

If there is not real, I mean, for me, this could be also the next stage of emancipatory, sorry, emancipatory, an emancipatory revolution. We have much more sense of humanity than we have ever had. Again, I always bring the example of the fact that in Europe there were countries in which people of color were held in zoos until the 60s. And European countries, there has been a European country where stoning women has been allowed until the 80s. So, and there were genocides during our mature adult life in Rwanda and in Bosnia and Cambodia. I'm not born back then, but no, and but the thing is that Palestine has triggered an awakening that it's also a reckoning with the past that was not there. I mean, how many people were as knowledgeable about the Nakba as today. It's understood. And today there is a level of literacy among ordinary people about what's happening in Palestine. And you say apartheid Israel, yes, it's getting criminalized, but why? Because many more people are using this. And we can debate. about whether it hurts people's sensitivity. But I can tell you legally, it's an apartheid state and it's racist. So the fact that today there are countries like Italy, Italy is the avant-garde of the Israeli hospital. Italy is about to pass a law that will criminalize saying that Israel is a racist state, that Israel is an apartheid state. Now, if we can debate about that, but we must debate It's not that you have to criminalize my freedom of expression. So the situation is very bad and it's very bad because this awakening has a potential for change. So we are at war. It's not a usual war. It has not forced us to step to take weapons yet. And this is the Bureau of International Law. So I closed the cycle with the first question you had. Can international law still serve a purpose? Yes, it does. It's like it's pointing us in what direction to go. And it's the last peaceful tool to get out of this madness. But we need to, because surely there should be a change in governments. And it must be a real change, not just in words, in deeds, but also it is to, I think it's for the younger generation to take a bolder step forward. And again, you will have no choice. You will not be afforded the platitudes of my generations of pontificating about what you will have to protect future generations as a priority. Otherwise, you'll burn in, not in hell, on this earth, with all of us.

Now, I'm going to pause this there, because you guys have been amazing. It is about 7.15. So my question to your audience is, Are you up for about another 30 minutes or are you ready to call tonight now?

And I'm looking at you in the room if you like.

But since you've been so great, I'm going to give the 30 minutes to you. All I ask is that you make them questions. We're going to go three at a time. Please keep them short because I have a funny feeling a lot of you have questions. And then Francesca.

I'll be brief.

Will you? So take the notes. We'll take three at a time. We don't have a roving mic. I'm going to point at you. I want you to stand up, say who you are, and we'll take you starting right here.