

NORMALIZING ISRAEL, WHOSE AGENDA?

2023

"NORMALIZING ISRAEL: WHOSE AGENDA?"

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MLN MOVEMENT FOR LIBERATION FROM NAKBA

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SPEAKERS

SHARRÍ PLONSKI
Research Fellow for Gulf Lecturer in International Politics at Queen Mary University of London. Her work, which is anchored in the political terrain of Palestine and the Israeli state, focuses on the materiality (and mobility) of colonial relations and the struggles that reveal and challenge them. She also co-produces the podcast series 'Surviving Society Presents: Material Crimes' and she loves to tell stories – the current one she is working on is about a train.

ELHAM FAKHRO
Research Fellow at the Centre for Gulf Studies at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Exeter University, and an Associate Fellow at Chatham House

Malaysia 500 pm; India 230 pm; UK 900 am; Aotearoa 1000 pm; South Africa 1100 am; Palestine 1100 am

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Hassanal: I just wanted to say one small thing that we want to thank everyone for joining us today. So today's topic for the webinar is hosted by the Movement for Liberation from Nakba (MLN). It is on the topic of Normalizing Israel: Whose Agenda? A very important topic to discuss, especially when geopolitical tensions are rising in regards to the concept of Israel's place in the larger geopolitical game that's being played right now, especially to do with Palestine the Middle East and the world over. So I would like to thank everyone for joining us today, on this special webinar that we're hosting and I'm not going to speak much, because I would like to pass the floor now to our capable moderator John Minto. John, I'll let you introduce yourself and our speakers as well, floor is yours.

John Minto: thank you Hassanal, thank you very much, those are a few words of welcome to everybody in the language of the indigenous people of this country, Maori People. Those words say a welcome to all the speakers, welcome to our distinguished guests and welcome to everybody from around the world, who's joined us for this really important webinar this evening. I've got a few, sort of introductory remarks and then we'll pass over to our two speakers, whom we are really privileged and really delighted to have on our webinar today. So the topic is about Normalizing with Israel. I mean, Whose Agenda is being followed here? It is important. What I want to do here, is to put that into the context of what's happened over the last 20 years, because over the last 20 years or so, there's been a growing gap

between the views of the people of the world and the views of their governments with regard to the Middle East. The people of the world have been moving inexorably towards support for the Palestinian struggle. But the governments of the world remain very stubbornly supportive of Israel, while mouthing platitudes about supporting a mythical two-state solution and all that goes with that. So also on display recently has been the hypocrisy of Western governments, who have rightly and roundly condemned Russia for its Invasion and occupation of Ukraine, but have looked the other way again and again, when Israel's occupation Army and illegal settlers work hand in hand to ravage Palestinian communities, on a daily basis. These same governments shut themselves horse over Russia, but then issue calls for calm and restraint, when Israel's unbridled violence provokes Palestinian retaliation and the Palestinian resistance. So those are two, I think really important observations that we should we should keep in mind, as we go through the seminar.

The last few years have featured moves by the U.S and Israel to normalize relations with Arab states through the so-called Abraham Accords. This is a strategy which could only be described as tacky and cynical. So what do I mean by that? Let's look at three of them. So for example the UAE has agreed to normalize relations with Israel in return for the U.S providing the UAE with F-35 fighter jets.

In Morocco's case, normalization with Israel is on the basis of the U.S recognizing Morocco's illegal occupation of Western Sahara. And in Sudan, it has normalized relations with Israel because the U.S agreed to remove Sudan from its terrorist State list and remove economic sanctions against Sudan, provided it normalizes with Israel. Despite those agreements, the people of these three countries are very strongly supportive of the Palestinian struggle. In this webinar, we're going to look more closely at this gap between the governments of the world and their people with regard to how they see issues in the Middle East and what implications this has for Palestine. We will also be looking at what can be done to remove this gap in favour of Palestinians.

So tonight we are joined by two really very distinguished guests to talk about this issue. The first of them is Dr Elham Fakhro. Dr Fakhro is a research fellow at the centre for Gulf studies at The Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies at Exeter University and an associate fellow at Chatham house. So without further ado, very warm welcome to you Dr Fakhro and we are heading over to you over you.

Dr. Elham Fakhro: Thank you so much for the introduction John and it's wonderful to be here today. I'm really honoured to be in such distinguished company. Thank you very much. So for my for my kind of contribution, I just wanted to draw out a few themes, generally about the trajectory of normalization and specifically about the Gulf States and what it means. First of all, just to take us a little bit to the past, the Abraham accords are significant because they mark a significant break from the past and the general broad history of public

Arab solidarity with the Palestinians. So going back to 1948, with the Arab boycotts of the state of Israel upon its creation, this continued in 1967. After the conflict the Arab states came together again, around the Khartoum declaration and again collectively refused to negotiate with Israel or recognize it, until it returned the lands it had occupied during that conflict to Egypt Syria Etc. The most recent iteration of the joint Arab position, is the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, spearheaded by Saudi Arabia, in which 22 Arab states offered Israel effectively peace in exchange for the return of lost territory, during the previous conflicts between Arabs and Israel and the creation of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem at the capital and a just solution to the refugee issue of Palestinians. So throughout you know since 1948 and even a little bit before, there has been a collective joint Arab position in support of the Palestinians and support of the other Arab states at the front lines of the conflict with Israel. Now throughout this history, there have of course been two notable exceptions right? So Egypt in 1979, entered into its peace treaty with Israel and Jordan in 1994. Both of these were done very pragmatically. They were done to recover lost territory. And in Jordan's case, to settle border and water sharing issues, and would characterize these agreements although they are peace agreements, was the fact that they were built around this idea of a cold peace. They were pragmatic. They were done to settle, what needed to be settled. At the same time there was never just kind of warm embrace of Israel, as we're seeing today with the Abraham Accords and that's also what sets them apart. There are two factors here; there are peace agreements between parties, who have never been at War. The UAE has never been at war with Israel, but at the same time there is this embrace and recognition and celebration of Israel's Zionist ideology, which really no hasn't happened in the past, even between the Arab states that have normalized relations. To me, the second Point that's worth discussing, is how this marks a crisis, not only a crisis for the Palestinians, who have you know seen really the solidarity in favour of their cause fall apart because of this, but it's also a crisis of governance within the Gulf States. It showcases that kind of governance and this kind of Crisis. It's a crisis of unrepresentative government governance. The reality is that states, that none of this would have been possible, without the creation and developments of the kind of infrastructure over the past decade that has effectively curbed dissent and hampered mobilization. So in the case of Bahrain there has been a body of legislation enacted since 2011. So heightened penalties for the stands for criticizing the governments and even on the weeks leading up to the Accords, there were specific legislation tightening penalties for individuals expressing views contrary to government's policy or criticizing the government on social media and particularly for state employees. So I think we have to recognize that these agreements set our rest on Bedrock of infrastructure that is fundamentally repressive. In spite of that, there has been mobilization against normalization, particularly in Bahrain. When this agreement was announced, there were petitions from both Pro and anti-government groups. I mean, even from groups that are normally supportive of Government's policy. They took massive risks by coming out and saying, this is not a decision that we agree with. There were small scale protests at the time. This was during the peak Covid time and despite that there were small-scale protests. I think

importantly polling data shows us the same thing. So the Washington Institute for near East policy in Washington, carried out a poll on the eve of the accords in the UAE, asking the question ,do you agree that individuals who want to have ties with Israel whether in sports or business should be allowed to do so? And 80 percent of respondents answered “no” to that. Before the Accords, there was really very little support for this kind of thing. The Arab opinion index has also done work around this and found support to be in the single digits across the Gulf States for normalization and the aftermath of the Accords. What’s really interesting is the Washington Institute again carried out a similar poll and results hadn't really changed much. So really, that hasn't actually changed public opinion on the matter, which remains deeply supportive of the Palestinians. This kind of brings me to the third point I wanted to discuss, which is, if these Agreements are so unpopular then why are states entering into them? Why is that happening? To me this is there because there are factors beyond kind of a single exchange of Hardware or kind of a single transaction, it's much broader and it's much more systematic in a way. So going back even to the 90s, the earliest forms of cooperation between Israel and the Gulf States which took place kind of underneath the surface, but they were there as early as the 90s, really centred around their shared threats from Iran and their shared threat perception from Iran and they shared a kind of desire to push back against Iranian influence in the region. More recently since 2011, there's also been a convergence around U.S retrenchment. So for the Gulf States back in 2011, the Obama Administration announced its intention to dry down from the region, the Middle East generally and kind of pivot to Asia, to contain what they see as the rising threat from China. This has rung alarm bells in the Gulf States, and as a result of that they've pivoted a little bit towards Israel with this idea that they need greater security guarantees from someone given that the US is planning to take a kind of a back seat in the region. If not a backseat and at least draw down a little bit. This has been another motivator for greater ties with Israel. What we're seeing now, is this real triangulation that's taking place with the US, playing this intermediary role and encouraging not only normalization between the Gulf States and Israel, but also air and missile defence coordination cooperation between Israel and the states that are not involved in the Accords. One of the main things that have happened since the enactments of the Abraham Accords is moving Israel from the European zone of command to CENTCOM, where it's in the same grouping as the rest of the Arab states, the Gulf States and others. So just that kind of that move facilitates all kinds of defence cooperation between the Arab states and Israel, even when there's no normalization. So I think, what I also want to highlight, is the fact that normalization is also affecting the countries that haven't signed up to the Accords, because of things like this. The moves of Israel dissent come also accompanies many other things, including there's been a passage of the defence act in the US recently and that also facilitates certain kinds of cooperation, which are a bit too technical and detailed to talk about here. For the two Gulf States that have normalized, I think there's also the factor of reputational redemption. Both have used their new relationship with Israel to portray themselves as liberal, as tolerant, particularly towards a western audience that has criticized them for their human rights

records in the past. There is that element of it there too, a really kind of strategic reputational management. I think this is really most of what I wanted to go through. I think, I don't want to leave on a terribly bleak note, but there are also reasons to be optimistic. What the past looked like was the Arab states really acting as the champions of this cause within the context of the global climate that really didn't care too much about the Palestinian cause and I think you touched on this a little bit John. What we're seeing now is in some ways, a move towards the reverse of that as the Arab states are kind of leaning towards Israel, a little bit more joining their accords or at least engaging in covert cooperation or cooperation that's behind the scenes. We're seeing a much bigger rise in solidarity with the Palestinians globally. I think this is something that I would be interested in unpacking with other panellists and having been the focus of the rest of the discussions here today. So thank you very much. Well, thank you very much.

John Minto: thank you very much. That's really fascinating talk. I really like the way you summed up the situation by talking about this as a crisis of unrepresentative government, where you have governments, at the governmental level doing deals that are deeply unpopular among the among the citizenry of those countries. So thank you very much for that and I think you've encouraged people to ask questions and if people put questions in the Q, we'll pick up those questions after our two speakers and after Chandra our discussant has had his say. So thank you very much. We're moving on now to our second speaker Dr Sharri Plonski. Dr Plonski is a senior lecturer in international politics at Queen Mary University in London. Her work which is anchored in the political terrain of Palestine and the Israeli State focuses on materiality and mobility of colonial relations and the struggles that reveal and challenge them. A very warm welcome to you, Dr Plonski. We're really looking forward to hearing what you have to say.

Dr. Sharri Plonski: Thanks very much John, Hassan and the others in the community for organising this and inviting me. I'm just going to share my screen, hopefully it works. Okay, does everybody see that, so you have nice things to look at besides me. So yeah, in my work, I've spent the last five years, interrogating Israel's infrastructural plans for harnessing trade and transit corridors across the Middle East and how through particular markets, nodes and interlocutors in the region and beyond. How Israel has also been moving into an extending and amplifying its access to global, financial, technological, diplomatic and security channels. Making it seem as if it's this urgent and necessary concrete and very much unchallengeable partner. And to me these products really embody the epitome of normalization and also perhaps point us to tangible ways of disrupting them. But to talk about this, I am going to now need to backtrack a little and tell you a bit more about where my thinking comes from. Hopefully this will make sense. So I've watched this kind of slow incremental making of these lines of connection and circulation, what I call infrastructural corridors. Since I started following the inauguration of what Israel calls the HaEmek railway in 2016, and started just about a few months before being launched by Netanyahu, who

launched the train in a public speech, where he called the HaEmek, a potential Peace Train that would change the future of the Middle East and Israel's place in it. Now this train he was talking about 65 kilometres long, takes 45 minutes to travel end to end from Haifa port terminals to four kilometres just shy of Jordan's Border. For passengers, it's a total of about nine stops. It seems innocuous. It travels between Israel's Backwater peripheries, which have their own story of under development, a story that will leave for another time. But the HaEmek barely made a glitch in critical conversations about Palestine. No one was looking and this is probably because it was moving in what felt like a parallel universe. Seemingly and intentionally disassociated from the much more spectacular modes of violence happening in Gaza or the West Bank or even closer to home in Palestinian villages within the green line, only a few miles from the train. Everywhere else you really see blood, you see walls, you see checkpoints, you see apartheid roads, you see soldiers, you see settlers, and you see displacement. Clear examples of removal, erasure and replacement. But the train seemed and still seems very much scrub clean of violence and this is what I think is really relevant to our conversation today. As we try to track down and make visible agendas and projects aimed at normalization, it's these off the radar plans that I think need our attention in and very much point us to the gaps and holes in our thinking about Palestine and the violence of the settler colonial state as it moves both visibly and invisibly in material and virtual conceptual and ideational ordinary and spectacular ways. Because projects that are orchestrate and underwrite Israel's Mobility are always very much intimately tied to projects that underwrite Palestinian immobility. Historically Massey tells us to make some things slow others always must be controlled secured and blocked. Violence is an essential requirement to make things move, even if you can't see it. And violence very much accumulates in these projects and then is reproduced embedded naturalized and normalized through them.

From the beginning this train, which really does go nowhere, was already being imagined as a train to everywhere, very much the epitome of a fantasy to make Israel normal through the physical project of overland transport infrastructures across the region. The UAE and Gulf States and the scaled up financial potential they offer were always the shiny, who wasn't to which it aimed, something that seemed impossible in 2016, but as we've seen, much less impossible in 2023. There was also this deep nostalgic tinge to this imagined landscape of normalcy, one in which that might be familiar to students and scholars of colonial nostalgia, in which Israel positioned itself in the Emek as inheritors of the Ottoman Empire's Jezreel railway, which once the link to Haifa to Damascus, on to Medina and then during the British mandate also linked the rail further south to East Cantera and Port Saeed. Following the Spoils of this virgin like another phase of the Empire and then was connected to a brand new deep sea port that the British built in Haifa to circulate oil minerals and goods from the newly integrated mandated states in the region, that is all before it's disruption in 1948, in the Train's final closure in 1951, due to one reads as a lack of resources or supposed need for this fruit inland in National archival documents about the

train. After this moment, Israel seaports would become the only way for goods to move in and out of the country and until today 99% of all goods reach Israel through the sea. What becomes really normal in this telling of Israeli history is obviously, this erasure of Palestine as the node in this connective infrastructure. Even the name of the train is left off all posters of propaganda. It was the Palestine railways or the fact that the disruption that is spoken about regarding the train and silver land routes from Haifa occurred first because issue of militias blew up physically, actually blew up the bridges that connected the train to Syria and Jordan in 1946 and 1947. That disruption was obviously sustained because of the violence of an ongoing nakba, which severed Palestine from the Middle East and North Africa. So this is what already lives in Israel's making of a train to everywhere out of a train to nowhere, one where Palestine does not and never did exist, which leaves the pathway very much open for a future without Palestine as well, which to me is at the centre of the normalization project, to make Palestine disappear.

So coming back to our infrastructural lens, which is kind of the shaping of this kind of project I've been doing when I come back to Deb Cowen. So Deb Cowen has been writing about settler colonial racial capitalists and carceral infrastructural terrain for at least the last decade and has been the key to helping me think through Israel's work to concretize its infrastructural fantasies, as fundamental to normalization. She points to how infrastructure enables and supports or disrupts and alienates the possibility of motion and movement, connection and circulation. In the context of colonialism, she and others like Nick Estes, Elder Simpson, Emer Aries, have written incredible amounts about the premise of infrastructure being dispossession, extraction, destruction and alienation of indigenous faith in life. There is no training pipeline, no court, no law that isn't also tied to legacies of you know violence, blood, conquest, and there are uneven iterations across the world. This isn't something that's just relegated to history as well, as Khalili writes in this gorgeous book *Sunnis of War and Trade*. This violence has left indelible marks that continue to shape contemporary trade and transit routes. In our current global dependence on the smooth uninterrupted movements of goods and capital coloniality continues to determine, who and what threatens these flows as well as where and how to structure them. So again as Deb Cowen says, there is no circulation, no Global supply lines, no integrated chain of you know retail and commodity manufacturing Market, without prisons, borders, camps and reserves and the criminalization police services surveillance and security apparatus that accompany and accumulate through them. But most importantly, because infrastructure exists to underwrite and materialize connectivity, it's a very dense physical and violent modes of its making and unmaking quite easily really disappear into the background noise. It becomes an ambient, unseen, it's a hyper present and seemingly durable part of daily life essential to everything you know we do, eat, consume by turn on ride. So long as things move and according to the logics of capital accumulation and circulation, everything must move, must keep circulating, must keep flowing like hyper speeds. So long as everything works and of course everything must work, it must work smoothly. The flinchingly infrastructure in

particularly quarters of connectivity operates by being invisible in plain sight people. They remain invisible by displacing violence, friction and disruption elsewhere onto different places and different lives. There doesn't even have to be that distance, it just needs to be somewhere else. This is what I think we're talking about when we're thinking about linking the HaEmek Railway to regional and global supply lines and markets a project that to me has at its core an interest in the displacement, containment and management of violence threats and disruptions, so it can remain invisible, normal and normalizing. All the active intentional work of securing, surveying, managing life and friction in Palestine, further disappears into the background. Swallowed by the kind of mobility infrastructure's seemingly endless attempts to what's called eating space and time. It's amazing, though to me about the Emek project is that it really isn't invisible at all. We're watching it come into being an increasingly visible like and acutely spectacular processes. It's no longer, just moving in the background and under the radar. So you know, we're starting back in like let's say 2017-2018, with the Israel tracks for regional peace plans, when then Finance Ministries trial caps shops around the Gulf region and introduced at every state visit, you know this precursor to discussions that led to the signing of the ever chemicals. They were talking about this train that was going to connect the region. You have like trans- economic prosperity to peace plans, in which the train linking Palestine to the region and to hyper port is this featured element and targets investors and real estate speculators. You have like even more recently the 2021, Shanghai International port group, China's biggest Court operator, launching their brand new automated terminal in taipa Bay and effectively linking Israel's shipping circuits to one of the most connected logistics networks in the world, at the heart of which there's China's Belton Road initiative, which is like these 10,000 kilometres of connected land and sea routes intended to link Europe, Africa and Asia. Then again in 2022, you have the Adani group, India's largest private port operator, in one of India's you know biggest commodity conglomerates, buying the old hyper port and adding it to their portfolio and therefore linking Israel to apparel Land and Sea Trade Network to those orchestrated by SIPG. All of this is surrounded and supported and implicated, in like all these other super high profile projects that shape the space in which Israel is operating and being amplified through these Abraham Accords. So you have like, the 10 billion dollar tree deals between UAE and Israel, and memorandums of understanding that established flows between the start-up and scale-up Nations, you have the new eye to YouTube forum which constitutes, what's been called like the new mini lateral quad of Israel, India, UAE and the US. I just can't resist mentioning, this project called The Great Green Wall Initiative, which is a project that spans 22 countries, to reforest a 100 million hectares of degraded land in Africa and Israel, becoming one of its key Partners at the COP 27 because of its expertise allegedly in desert-based agro-attack and desertification techniques, effectively turning Israel's make The Desert Bloom Project and the land with no people without land mythology, from which it's based into a critically needed approach to climate change and desertification, both of which should be interrogate themselves as colonial processes. But again, we can have a different conversation about that. But even calling Israel the Start-up Nation, as it's allegedly known

as, really about normalizing Israel's knowledge and mode of practice, which everyone in here, I'm sure knows is a euphemism for security, surveillance and Vortex that is field tested on Palestine and Palestinians. As I continue literally, to number off all the new and allegedly excitingly shiny infrastructural projects happening to link Israel to global flows and markets, we're already meant to feel like this is happening, regardless of what we do. Normalization starts to feel like us being trained, when you can't jump off, even if that train still goes absolutely nowhere, ending four kilometres shy of the Jordanian border. Of course, you know, this isn't really the case you know we know, that P Azalam has already pointed to like, really key powerful interlocutors, who are actively invested in Israel being normalized like Adani, like SIPG, like UAE, like India, like the US. They have all made it so that if Israel loses, they lose and they have become completely entangled then in the project of containing, destroying and facing and replacing Palestine. So keeping these two registers of Israeli Mobility, the normalcy and the violence they cause in Palestine separate and disconnected, is key to the success of that project. So for us keeping those, you know, keeping the connection visible, putting a spotlight on it is then integral to disrupting normalization and disrupting the idea that this is inevitable or flowing, smooth or unstoppable. An infrastructural view, then really reminds us that nothing is fixed, determined, final or finished and that the normalization of Israel isn't any of those things, without active investment in the project. It literally goes nowhere, so we have this you know, go back to this example of the train again, there are so many holes physical and conceptual, preventing the corridor from becoming a reality. It requires physical and diplomatic bridges across Jordans, Saudi Arabia and UAE. It requires a huge amount of Financial and political investment and the physical, violent containment of anyone who threatens its connection and movement. So active tangible acts of disruption, which make visible what is really being normalized here and other modes and methods of solidarity, connection and unity movements, let's say like BDS are also really key and I think I'm going to end this intervention with this idea that, disruption is really necessary impossible and I look forward to all the discussion that we'll have about this. Thanks.

John Minto: Sorry about that, I was muted. Thank you very much. That was a pretty amazing presentation. It wasn't what I was expecting at all and I think that you talked about us needing to keep an eye on things that are under the radar or off the radar plans. The train and the Great Green Wall Initiatives, these are things that that I know very little about and they're obviously so important. I think the way you juxtapose the idea of normalization versus disruption, our job is to is to disrupt normalization because with normalization comes, you know, I think you talked about making Palestine disappear, and that's at the heart of it. Thanks for the fascinating presentation. I'm going to have to go on later and look at those maps again and all that stuff because that was fascinating. Okay, we've got, just before we open up for questions, so, remember put your questions in the in the Q&A section and we'll get to those shortly. We've got Dr Chandra Muzafar, who's going to speak to us. He's the president of the International Movement for a Just World, which is a human

rights advocacy organization in Malaysia that works to implement global justice rooted in universal moral principles. Chandra is a very important part of our MLN Network and where I welcome here to give his sort of response to the two speakers we've heard. So Chandra, looking forward to hearing what you have to say.

Chandra Muzafar: Thank you John. I'd like to thank the two speakers' - presentations. I personally learned quite a bit from both the speakers and especially all those arguments about normalization, which many of us are not familiar with. It's linked with infrastructure development, and an infrastructure development, that appears to have a very conscious plan to exclude Palestine, which in a sense is reflected with larger politics. In the midst of normalization, the people who are key to that land into that region, they are being citizens, sure the comments that one may want to directly to two speakers. I suppose the audience will have questions and so on. But what I would like to do today, is perhaps speculate or two possible trends which would impact upon normalization and the response to normalization. If normalization succeeds, meaning by which it goes beyond the four states and to include, so will five of them that are normalized relations with Israel recent past, if those who are pushing for Abraham accords pushing for this particular dimension of Israeli relations, if they succeed in bringing in countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia which are very big Muslim majority Nations, they're all persuaded for a variety of reasons to recognize Israel, if that happens, if let us say this is followed by other attendance at embracing Israel and if a situation arrives one day when all those Nations that have been reluctant to recognize Israel until now, if they are prepared to go along with Israel, this happens, this becomes a new reality. In other words, there is a push towards recognition of Israel which is even stronger, than what happened after the Oslo Accord, which as you know also happened to the great push of stewards recognizing Israel, countries like China and India recognized Israel after Arsenal. Now if there's a much bigger push this time, what would this lead to? Well it will be a diplomatic victory for Israel, without any doubt at all; it would weaken the Palestinian cause. But beyond that what will it mean? In Practical terms, because of what I'm going to talk about, in a while, you won't be very much yes; many countries will recognize Israel, if this continues with of course the United States of America doing all it can to ensure that this happens. Many countries will recognize Israel and Israel would be happy with all these newly forged diplomatic ties. And they may feel that Palestine has been further isolated, but what do we mean in reality? And this brings me to the second point in one two ways; I don't even mean very much why do I say this? Because I think there are other developments, which work against this type of normalization. The most important of these developments, is something that has been alluded to by a speaker. It's the way people feel about Israel today, the way in which people have committed themselves to Palestinian courts, much greater than perhaps in any other point since 1948. It's the people's commitment to Palestine, which should be distinguished by the way, in which Elites are pandering to Israel, that's something else. But here we're talking about the People, John alluded to this point in this introductory remarks and it is this Dimension which I haven't. There is a clear dichotomy

developing between Elites and people, all the question of Palestine. I would like to perhaps, add a little bit to this, though it's not directly relevant to what we're going to discuss, this dichotomy between Elites of people is expressing itself in many other areas. Check for instance something that should be very obvious to us because of what's been happening in Ukraine. You have Elites spending billions and billions of dollars of pounds in arming Ukraine, while they're people their people are more concerned about bread and butter issues, and this has not been taken care of at all. People are concerned about jobs, about rising food prices, about the galloping inflation this is what they're concerned about. But the elites, they're obsessed with military hardware. So you see a dichotomy and you find that they caught me in many other areas which is something that people should look at, that this is what the way in which change is taking place, a way in which it's expressing itself in this very clear stock dichotomy between elites on the one hand. So that I think is a very important factor. The people are not with this sort of normalization. You can have all the trains in the world, all the infrastructure development, you can pouch ties, you can establish relations, trade missions and all the recipe, but the people have a different view and that came out clearly in Qatar, during the World Cup, and how ordinary People felt about Palestine, the support that the expression it may be just a microscopic example of what is taking place. But nonetheless, I think is important the people are looking at the question differently and the elites have not understood this. The elites are not responding to the people's feelings. But nonetheless, you know if you look at some of the meetings that are being held in conferences, some of them are behind closed doors the elites are worried because they know that there is a dichotomy that in spite of what they're doing, people are not with them. And believe me, it has had an effect in another respect, they would have pushed much harder these feelings especially in those countries that chose to normalize relations with Israelis is past. Some of those Elites, they were hoping that they could bring in Pakistan, using of course all sorts of tactics in order to force Pakistan to also recognize Israel. We're hoping that they could perhaps, artist Indonesia and other countries and even a small country like Malaysia. You know it is on their radar and they're trying these tricks, but it's not working. And the moment people began to speak up, I think there is this feeling that they cannot really push very hard and they're holding back, they're holding back. So it is having an impact. So people, the way people are responding, is a very important factor and that should continue and that's where I think all of us will be able to play a role, those of us who are part of Civil Society, those of us who've taken a stand. I think we should not despair, just because we see Elites forging relations and Elites playing their games at the level of people we just approach. That's a point that we must keep in mind. Number two, if you look at it in terms of the United Nations, though we know that the U.N is not effective as far as the Palestinian issue is concerned, but nonetheless by getting so cold into the Palestinian issue via the United Nations, so I think the UN has been drawn into this development. The changes that are taking place, and the fact that you are now, meaning by which Palestine state, that has got a certain role within the UN process, the fact that there are people pushing very hard for the question of occupation to be submitted to the ICJ

International Court of Justice. There is pressure upon Israel, the fact that these things are happening. It's significant though they may be, in terms of the bloodshed and the killing and the violence and so on, they are important, because that's it another dimension that we must keep. Dimension of course, is the BDS movement, it is getting stronger and stronger more and more companies that get involved, more and more groups in Europe, in particular signing up to be BDS and that movement I think it's got tremendous potential, don't forget it is a movement that began in Palestine itself. It is rooted in Palestinian society and that is that provides some code. And that movement I think is also part of the future that we should think about. There is a fourth factor and the fourth factor is Israel itself. The more extreme Israel becomes, the more barbaric its behaviour is, the greater the reaction of people, not just in Palestine or the Arab world or in the larger Muslim world, the people everywhere. And you will begin to see it in Europe, United States of America, in countries like Australia and so on. People are standing up and they are taking a position because of what Israel has done. Its different walls against the people of Gaza, and helpless people of Gaza over a period of time you know through three-four invasions the two claims. But even in recent years, in recent times, we look at the killings that are taking place especially under the ages of the new government of Israel, the brutalization, which has reached an extreme level and then I think is producing a reaction. This is something which is not unusual, if you look at every great movement for change against globalism and so on, a regime contributes to the conscientisation of the people of developing their Consciousness, because of their brutality, because of their viciousness and because utterly merciless approach they adopted towards dissent. So that's yet another Factor. The fifth and final factor, which may perhaps be one of the most decisive, the global situation is changed and it's not in favour of Israel, and it's not in favour of those who support normalization, all those Arab countries which are part of this game. What do I mean by the global situations? The U.S has been Central. It is really politics, Israeli power. Israel is able to do various things; it's pushing for a certain agenda. It is partly because of anxious America, it is behind Israel including the Abraham Accords. It's the US. We know the role played by specific officials in the U.S government, as far as the Abraham and causation. So, U.S. is very important in this whole game, but the U.S is getting weaker. The US is no longer as dominant in Wars. The U.S is coming to the end of its dominance of the global system. The US would be the last one to recognize it of course, but we all can see it that it no longer has the part once commanded in world trade, in World Investments and even in the realm of technology and science, which is central to the rise of power in history. We look at all the great paths; science has been very important factor. But if you look at what's happening in the scientific area, in the area of Technology, the other competitors who are really very important now. The United States is no longer able to hold on. So in other words, the global situation is changing rapidly against United States, against the type of dominance that Israel had enjoyed because of U.S power. So friends, in spite of everything, I think it changes you. So now we have to conclude by suggesting this, that if what we are seeing is a people's movement, people's movement aided and better in a sense by all the other Developers handy for people's movement has to produce an alternative, an

alternative meaning by which even the process of the struggle, we have to show this is what the New Palestine will look like, this is what the new State society that we have in mind. We look now, and then I think it is so important for those who are struggling for the Palestinian course and I say this is someone who has been totally committed to this course in a very long while, but I am not a Palestine and I'm not from that region. But I think it'd be a great pity, if we think that in the alternatives that we are envisaging for the future, that the alternatives would be either a Palestinian state that looks like Saudi Arabia or a Palestinian state that looks like Iran. I don't want to see that as the alternate, neither one see this is an alternative between an Islamic State and a secular state, as a piece of the only alternatives. This is the interesting point that I'd like to introduce with our discussion here. Let the people in Palestine and in West Asia for a moment, turn their gaze to Southeast Asia. The largest Muslim country the world is here in Southeast Asia, it's Indonesia. Indonesia is today the world's fourth biggest country in terms of population. It is a country which is poised to become the world's 4th economic power within the next 10 years, given its economic rise. Indonesia is a country to look at. Palestine is thinking of social structure, cultural value which is different, I think Indonesia offers some it is a multi-religious society. The Palestine of the future will have to be doing this, there will be not just Muslims but Christians and Jews and others. They must all feel that they are part of a society, must feel that they're treated as equals. Indonesia has committed itself right from the beginning, to a concept of a Nation from 1945, which did not project an Islamic State or a secular state, in the way which the term is understood. It has got a philosophy called the Manchesira, my principles the Manchesira. The first principle is the belief in God Almighty and other principles related to humanitarianism, social justice, sanitation and all the rest of it. That's very interesting, that they involve something which makes sense within their society. That is what Palestine, I may say this and so Palestine should also do. If the future is not in the sort of models that have been there, because it may be disastrous in the long run if you pursue those models, people may turn against you. On the other hand, you present something that is very new, which draws upon the fundamental characteristics of your Society and believe in God, something which grinds both Muslims and Christians, and Muslims and Christians in the Palestinians struggle offer much greater solidarity than you see many other parts of world between Muslims and Christians. Now that's all to believe in God and the values that emanate from that Humanitarianism, Justice, Dignity of a human being, all these things should be part of that future. If that sort of vision is articulated, that Vision itself will strengthen the struggle of the future, rather than seeing it as something that is linked to models, which are there and which may not offer the best future. This to my mind is something that we want to look at. Someone from Southeast Asia, Indonesia's neighbour. Let me leave you with this thought that, maybe one has to look east to determine the future of the Palestinian struggle. Thank you.

John Minto: Chandra, thank you very much for that. That's very positive in terms of a topic which could be very depressing and leave us all you know going away and having an aspirin

and never come having a cappuccino lie down. What you've done is, you've said, that really we have a secret weapon, in the in the struggle for Palestinian Liberation. The secret weapon is the people of the world working against these elites, which are determining what happens at sort of at 30,000 feet. But in fact what's happening on the ground is something quite different. I think we always need to remember that. So thank you for that. I think, you've pointed also to the barbarism of this new Israeli regime. It's been quite staggering in just the first two months and I think that's going to only get worse. But at the same time it offers an opportunity for the people of the world to see in greater clarity, what is actually happening. This is not a conflict in the Middle East; this is a military occupation of the land of Palestine by Israel, which has gone on the longest military occupation of modern history. So thank you very much for your presentation. We are really keen to hear what Sharri and Elham think about the positivity which you bring to this discussion. So we've got questions. We'll do this through questions, but Sharri and Elham feel free to jump in on anything, which anybody has said, aside from what's in the actual questions themselves. So we'll kick into questions and see how we go. So we've got a question from Dr Abraham. Dr Abraham says normalization of violence, whether it is structure or otherwise, is surely the agenda of any oppressor across the globe and we see it happening repeatedly in politics, religion, development policies, etc. Palestinian attempts to disrupt this normalization process through a few strikes or other local agitations, do not reach anywhere. How do you envision a pathway to Palestinian re-existence? Okay, I think that a pathway to Palestinian, I think Liberation, might be a better way of putting that. Elham, I'll throw that to you and see what you can make of that, thank you.

Elham: So thank you for the excellent comments. I think that was fantastic and particularly the points about the dichotomies between elites and popular and public opinion. I am really seeing this as more of a global trend than anything specific to a region. I think it is a really great point and this need to develop people's movements to address not only the Palestinian issue but I like linking this to other really serious issues facing the planet, climate crisis, crisis of poverty, lack of representation, authoritarianism. All of these things are deeply linked. Liberation Movements for native people and recognition in all sorts of ways. These are all deeply tied together. It's the same structure that's kind of that oppress across the board. I'm really in favour of trying to create linkages across these mega issues. I think that's the way you did that in some way, with people's movements is absolutely correct and needed in the discussion. Otherwise we just see ourselves as kind of isolated causes here and there across the globe. Whereas I think we really are talking about almost one interconnected issue.

So normalization of violence, a pathway to Palestinian re-existence, I think it comes back to this in some way, the more we are able to tie things together as a single Global movement for justice in a way. I think, I'm always particularly heartened when I see the Palestinian flag raised in other contexts right at climate Summits for example or movements for rights of indigenous people. I think it's really forging that interconnectivity to me which is really

necessary. But I really would love to hear other views on this as well, generating grassroots solidarity from and in a bigger way. I hope I'm articulating that correctly. I mean should I go down and address some of these other questions and then turn it over to other speakers in front of this.

John Minto: So that thing, you need to read the questions Elham, because I don't think about it.

Elham: So the next question is from Steve. Did the Emirates slash Saudi Arabia that states had a concept of subservience, as a feedback mechanism for disaffected civilians or a civil society seen as a threat, rather than a force for social change? I think that's a good question. No, there really isn't space for that at all, and increasingly there's less and less space for that. So I think Civil Society is certainly seen as a threat. There have been all sorts of efforts to subdue Civil Society, either through co-option right or through repressive mechanisms. Both ways, both are strategies that have been used for a very long time, in some cases even demographic changes. So bringing in large foreigners, many amounts of big groups of foreigners, to even change the demography of these countries. Across the board, we are seeing situations where the local populations are in fact a minority in these countries. So these are all ways of doing Civil Society. I think there isn't room for defence. I think that's really the Crux of the problem, otherwise we wouldn't have normalization.

The next question, the Gulf States like the UAE and Bahrain have been over the years increasingly viewing Israel as an attractive model to emulate in terms of the management of internal dissent and external security here is the situation now? Yeah absolutely, I agree with that fully. Their attempts to procure Israeli technology are not new. So as far back as 2006, the UAE was procuring Israeli satellite data from Iran. In 2008, the UAE began the creation of Falcon Eye; it's a system of cameras providing surveillance over the capital city of Abu Dhabi. It was described as a traffic management system, but even as early as then, that was built on Israeli technology, and it wasn't completed until 2016. I think the Accords, if you look at certain examples, you can see why the Accords are necessary in terms of procuring Israeli technology. So into that, around 2009, there was a proposed project I think, Sea Wolf, which was called so, to convert unmanned vehicles into drones by an Israeli provider for the UAE. The Israeli Ministry of Defence actually blocked the deal, seeing it as potentially undesirable to sell, to provide this kind of technology to a country with which it did not have ties. There were even limits to cooperation behind the scenes back then, without normalization. You can see now how normalization has actually facilitated that technology transfer, most recently in 2002, with Israel approving some of its missile defence systems for the UAE. So normalization has accelerated this technology transfer and even when it comes to spyware, which is I think what you're speaking to more specifically, the use of Pegasus has been since around 2012, found in the UAE pre-normalization. There's no doubt that normalization itself is going to accelerate the use of these tools by the Gulf States from Israel. Yes, they do view Israel as an attractive model to emulate, in terms of the

management of internal designs, especially these are the Palestinians. The way that Israel has used technology to subdue and suppress the Palestinians is absolutely something that I think the Gulf States view with some level of what they see as an effective management strategy. Yes and they are relying on some of those same tools that is the reality. Now we can expect this to accelerate in the future. Let me go down a little bit, Syria, I leave for someone else.

Okay there's a question. Down here the points about the Gulf country's ruler's gap with their populations, opinion of normalization, extends to perhaps the biggest part of the Tel Aviv, Washington and the Gulf have been pressuring to normalize with Israel. Pakistan, the only nuclear-armed Islamic country of 230 million people, with one of the world's most formidable militaries, there the gap is closed to 100 million against normalization, while the military and civilian political Elites are keen on normalizing for a variety of reasons including their Envy of India's proximity to Israel. It has widely felt that the main factor behind the regime change operation against foreign former Prime Minister Imran Khan was his unequivocal support for the Palestinians and refusal to normalize. Now we have regime in Pakistan that is completely subservient to Washington. This is of grave concern to the Palestine solidarity campaign in Pakistan. Do you have any thoughts on this? Many thanks for your presentation.

Thank you, I don't you know this is unfortunately. Pakistan is a gap in my knowledge, at least to this extent of detail. So I would leave it for the other speakers, if you're able to talk to speak on whether the current regime or governments in Pakistan is moving in that direction, particularly compared to the previous one. I think there's more much more expertise on this point than I have. But I think the other side of it which is maybe something I can speak on a little bit, is that the other prize I believe is Saudi Arabia or Israel, that you know just yesterday there was a piece on the Wall Street Journal which covered this recent development. The two delegations from the US had been to Saudi and per their reporting those delegations had spoken to the leadership about normalization and the question of the Palestinians apparently had not come up at all. It was discussions about the Saudis asking for help with building a civilian or a nuclear program and assistance with U.S security guarantees in the future in exchange for normalization. So that was seen as the kind of ask from Saudi Arabia as security guarantees from the US and some nuclear assistance. That's per the Wall Street Journal yesterday, but and the lead up to this Saudi Arabia has remained committed to the peace initiative, so every public statement that study officials have made since normalization and there have been so many, has been you know we are willing to normalize, on the basis of the of the peace initiative which provides for the creation of the Palestinian states. So at least where we are now is at the former level Saudi Arabia is committed to that, but behind the scenes it does look like other things are taking place. I think one thing that strikes me about this is how quickly things are moving, because there's already defence cooperation behind the scenes between Saudi Arabia and Israel. There's no doubts about that, that's almost public from the American side. So there's very little

stopping this from, that stops us from growing ,if not publicly then behind the scenes, and then once that infrastructure, they're behind the scenes, it's a matter of time really before it becomes public facing in my view. So there is a real question on Saudi Arabia in terms of how or when. But it's the other big one in my view, which would also set the balance even more. I did want to briefly talk about Israel itself, when I spoke about the crisis of governance, I think it's important to kind of touch on this a little bit. The Abraham Accords are built on under pressure in the gulf, but they also validate the worst tendencies in Israel, which is I think something that we haven't really talked about. They really do validate Netanyahu's approach, which is Peace for Peace rather than Land for Peace. So throughout the history of discussions and negotiations on the Palestinian issue, the framework for that has been land for peace. This idea that peace will happen, when Israel returns lands to the Palestinians and to the other Arab states that it occupies approach. Netanyahu's approach, he's not the first Israeli leader to coin this approach here before him others, but his approach was that Israel should rather than deal with the Palestinians at all or recede any land, it should focus on strengthening its economy, its military and its relationship with states on the periphery and that when it does that it would be powerful enough that the Arab states will want to normalize with it in exchange for really nothing. So that has been the hallmark of Netanyahu's approach since 2009. He has overseen the expansion of settlements massively across the West Bank. Initially his approach was not endorsed or seen as even reasonable by the centre in Israel. This idea of land for peace was still seen as okay, if we're ever going to normalize relations with the Arabs, it has to be to land peace. But he's pushed this through so much and the Abraham Accords, I think are the ultimate validation of the Netanyahu approach. It's no longer seen as an extremist peripheral view, but it's actually almost seen as an expectation now that well, which Arab states are going to normalize next in exchange for nothing. That's the really poor precedent that's been set for Israel itself. I think it's worth talking about, how this has also created a change and is really thinking around land and around peace and around occupation and effectively stripped the past logic and the past incentives that used to be in place around land for peace, as the framework, instead validated his peaceful piece of approach, which is this is going to happen in exchange for nothing. So that's another point that I wanted to add in. Other than this I'm happy to turn over to the other speakers, panellists who have more insights on matters like Pakistan and maybe some of the other broader issues. Thanks.

John Minto: Thank you very much Elham. You've cruised through a lot of those questions and that's and that's really good. And I think very insightful comments. Really pleased to hear that. Now Sharri, do you want to do something similar? Would you like to respond to anything you've heard so far or go through the questions? It's over to you. We're sort of freewheeling it a bit here.

Sharri: That was amazing; you did such an incredible job. So I probably won't question my question, but I think you actually responded in incredible ways. But I think there are a few things I do want to highlight. I guess that kind of responds in general to some of these

questions, but also I think brings some of the cards I've been thinking about together, as others have spoken. So the first is like, we need to start, maybe back to that thing about you know Liberation and re-existence of Palestine or the first question that idea that Palestine isn't. I got the feeling for the question, that there was a feeling that Palestine doesn't disrupt or doesn't do this work of acting in distraction. I think that's kind of erasing all the incredible years and work of struggle of Palestinians. So we should be really careful when we talk about solidarity from outside, that we're not also erasing the agency of Palestinians and the amount of risk and struggle and disruption on all levels of Palestinian practice, whether we're talking within you know West Bank, Gaza, whether we're talking about within the supposed Green Line, whether we're talking about refugees, whether we're talking about around the world. Just to keep that present, like the reason we have disruption, the reason we have BDS, the reason we have active solidarity around world, is because of Palestine, and not from the other way. So we should just, I just wanted to highlight that, that is and that just because normalization is a project that seeks to disappear Palestine, doesn't mean Palestinians are pacified and agree to disappear. Actually there's and we saw it in 2021 with this incredibly violent, what's called the intifada. But we're seeing people now on the ground literally fighting. I kind of feel like, let's just keep that in our kind of conversations. The second thing also I guess that I wanted to highlight, is that it is amazing, also the kind of way that spectacle of violence moves. We're talking about this you know, this newly extreme, which I don't think is new at all version of the Israeli State and the right-wing Israeli State coming in, and you know initiating nuance on the ground, new violence on the ground. But perhaps a little bit more obviously with settlers and soldiers working together in a place like what, but that's been going on for as long as I can remember in other ways. Also like we've shifted this gaze to like this violence in the West Bank, as if the last you know nearly 20 years of siege on Gaza hasn't happened, and constant every few years of destruction, inherent policy of constantly raising Gaza to the ground is it like and the amount of destruction infrastructurally, and in life you know that happens there.

So it's an interesting thing to also keep in mind that kind of what I was talking about before about the way we disassociate spaces and experiences and violence and the way these things really become in people in a way, when we kind of focus our attention on the particular acts of violence in one place, and miss all these other ways that it happens. So that's something else I wanted us to think about. How do we keep it all in sight rather than pick out this moment as something more extreme, because we're not looking at all of it at once? And I guess the third thing I wanted to bring up, which really came through in the way that Elham was talking about, what's happening in like kind of the project of normalization within the Middle East is one to keep in mind like these collaborations were amplified with the Abraham Accords and becoming more visible and public now. But they've been going on for a really long time. We have like at least a decade, two decades of normalization. But since Gaza was contained, you know like we need to think about the fact that did nothing to stop these security operations and surveillance operations. But it also then made me think

about the fact that this isn't government to government. We should stop talking about it as if this state normalized relations with this state, as if it's only a diplomatic relationship or even a security or surveillance kind of relationship. This is also between huge conglomerates and companies and logistics operators and managers and weaver like, it's all about that as well. There's a lot you know and that is key like to normalization, is that it's not, it's also private operators and we tend to lose that when we talk about Israel as if it's one state and all the UAE, if it's one you know. It's also lots of these kinds of private operators that are key to normalizing these relationships. Then that's what I mean also by looking at what happens a little bit less visibly, under the radar. That kind of also brings me to the fact that, it's not just about security or surveillance. I'm going to share my screen again because I think this stuff is really interesting, and not me if you think this is like super obvious, but I think it's important to notice things like this. So you have something called you know the Food For Future Global Act Tech Expo and Adam here writes in his book on many markets and monarchy is about kind of the importance of agrotech and agroconglomerates to kind of this recirculation, not really like the circulation of global cap sorry Gulf capital moving through the region and reorganizing the region.

And so there's like huge thing around food security. And if you like it, there they've got a Food Expo coming up. I was looking at this yesterday and they're highlighting key like innovators for the future, key innovators for the future like food Security in the region. And they're one of their big focus are like these new high-tech ways of doing this. And the first company that appears is a thing called Tevel, and when I was looking at the page, I went; oh that immediately to me brings Hebrew. So I went and looked it up. This is Tevel. I don't know if this will work well, if you can't see this let me know, and I'm just battling now. But you know Tevel and all of its big investors, what it is, I don't know if you can see the image here, but it's basically like this taking drone technology, and turning it into harvesting technology and what it's selling is drones. There's like if you want later, I can put a link for you in the in the chat for everyone to go and have a look at what they're doing. But what's amazing to me, it is not just like thinking about the fact that you're highlighting Israel's like security and surveillance capacity, but it's these other piece, what the other thing that it's normalizing, let's say in the technology like this if you read, what they're writing here is also about removing labour and the problem or the expense or the disruption of using in particular in Israel foreign labour, and this being like highlighted in the UAE, which is also a place that depends on foreign labour for so much of its construction, any work that is kind of labour intensive. It's like giving you like, look we'll bring you our drones which we know that we created based on and everybody by the way who's in. The other interesting thing here is anybody who's been on it, I wish I knew how to here we go team, its key team the people running this company we're all part of like Israel Aeronautics. I can't really read that anymore, like they were all people who obviously had their experience in the high-tech industries of Israeli military. So it's amazing how much it's all tied together.

We have like this thing, about like, let's get rid of like this really expensive and like untrustworthy foreign labour through drone technology. Let's also sell our drone technology that we used on Palestine, which we brought to you in UAE, big huge trade conference, where a lot of these big trade conferences have and so on and so forth. To me, that is the ultimate normalization project, is to make security infrastructure used in the everyday. And you see it over and over again in the way that Israel uses its technology in the way it's bought and sold and wanted by so much, so many companies and countries in the world. That also brings back to the really wonderful thing Elham said about the reading together all these different people's movements. I guess or Global movements around you know what, Ruth Gilmore, I think calls like changing everything or what we might also call abolitionist movements. But it is about seeing the connection and even though we also need to acknowledge that the connection is completely uneven, right like this doesn't all happen in the same way in same places. But this is the point before, about saying like them, when one place has made mobile, another is made in mobile, is that these things are all intimately connected and these movements are becoming amazing and showing their intimate connection. We're not just talking about the direct optimize, but also like the acts of like of capitalism, we're talking about climate crisis, we're talking about the way to think about the world as dependent and contingent on different relationships, different violence. These movements are including how Palestine threads through them, in this incredible way, you know, enables us to do that work of collective solidarity and talent. I think in wonderfully new ways. So again like let's end on that kind of wonderfully happy and positive note that Chandra brought that these movements are happening and are powerful. We shouldn't just assume that normalization or that violence or oppression or that conquest is going to happen, because that also gets us off the hook of taking risks and participating. So that's sort of what I wanted to say. I'll leave some of the other much of them.

Oh, I did want to have that point about it, that somebody asked specifically about a Adani, about like the benefit to Adani having 70 stake and good old remaining three percent and so on. That this just benefits, yes of course it benefits like the kind of catalyst interlocutors in this process. But normalization is also about just the legitimacy offered the state of Israel and its relationship to India. Also Adani had spoken about the fact that who is also a really huge like connected individual to Modi, like that active decision to invest in Israel actively decides that Israel is a legitimate partner in these big you know projects, something that India had not been part of. But obviously that has changed and there's like a really new wonderful book that's coming out about normalizing India Israel relationships. I think just came out with Pluto press, that I would highly advise people to have a look at.

John Minto: Okay Sharri, thank you very much for that. You've covered a huge amount of ground here. I was going to draw your attention to that one question, but you've covered that one. There's another one here, I just want to in a sense people have seen Christians in and so we'll cover the ones we haven't covered so far. This is one from Albert. Go back around. Just which is the group that Chandra represents, is urging the US British Australian

Canadian Swiss and the EU and the Arab League governments, to lift what is termed the unjust immoral sanctions against Syria, in order to listen the immense sufferings caused by the recent quake of February 6. Your comments please. You make some quick comments there, is that anybody want to well.

Chandra: Thanks John. I'll just add very quickly to what has been said already, about the sanctions against Syria. I'm glad to observe that their demonstrations in the United States, asking that these sanctions be lifted from church groups and I belong to participate in one of those discussions with the number of church groups. I think this is an interesting development we don't know how far it'll go, but one hopes that the momentum will be maintained and other groups get involved in this struggle to get the sanctions lifted against Syria. This other question that I think Professor Junaid had asked about Pakistan, what he said is absolutely true about why Imran Khan is targeted. This is certainly one of the main reasons. It is a very firm clear Palestine and the rights of the Palestinian people. There are other countries which I think are watching the situation very carefully, which is why if let us say the popular movement. This is a first-class example for people in Pakistan fails then the elites will be responsible. They're going to say well, we'll be able to handle it. But if on the other hand the movement succeeds, it's going to have immense impact upon other people's movements, even small fledgling movements in other parts of the world. So it is important that the people succeed in Pakistan. Unfortunately, if you look at the media and this includes the media in the non-western world, you'll find that this repeat reporting that is done in the western media, without looking at the real situation. There's no attempt for instance to send their own reporters to Pakistan, which for many Asian countries it's not a faraway land you know, they should be able to provide some insights into what's happening. They're not doing that and this to my mind I think, is at the heart of one of the major problems that pieces. And it's not just the mainstream media mind you; it is the alternative media too, which does the same thing. They just mouth what the mainstream the media does in some instances and even when they adopt alternative positions, you'll find that they don't deal with the fundamental dimensions of major challenges. Thank you.

John Minto: Sorry thank you very much Chandra, I've hit by myself on mute again. Look we've got two, we've got another question here as well, but there are two questions that have just come in. Well have yeah, so questions we haven't dealt with. So we'll do this very quickly if we can, because we're coming to the close of the Christian session. Somebody says, first of all a great dimension that I had not thought of while Arab countries have been behind Palestinian Liberation. Well while Arab countries have been behind Palestinian Liberation but those countries themselves have a very bad track record because of the human rights and democracy does it really matter if these Arab countries normalize with Israel? Any quick comments on that Elham or Sharri?

Elham: Yes, I think it does matter because of two reasons. First of all, they're parts of a collective entity that was once almost uniformly supportive of the Palestinians. So when you

have even peripheral States kind of breaking from a collective position, it matters to the centrality, so the ability of that body to maintain coherence. So I think it matters tremendously to the general ability of the Arab states to collectively support Palestine. The reality is that they don't anymore. I think we can say with these normalization agreements.

The other issue is I think, we have to consider their importance within the either Regional or Global strategic landscape. I think a Palestinian politician made this point that, amongst the Arabs, the population of UAE and Bahrain are trivial, so it doesn't matter if they normalize. I see that point, but I think it matters if it's part of a bigger Trend which it seems to be, and it matters when you think about the importance of normalizing States within the general global or regional landscape. I think this is where this the question on Saudi Arabia becomes especially important, and of course a country like Pakistan. If they follow this trend started by the normal, the smaller and maybe less significant States, then this becomes a bigger problem. But I think it's relevant because they've set something into motion now, which is rippling through. I think, I would also remember the fact that this has created a new infrastructure of covert growing, not necessarily converted, behind the scenes cooperation between Israel, the Arab states and the United states, so that triangulation has been set into motion because of the Accords sparked by these tiny countries. It matters for that reason, I think. That's my answer to that.

John Minto: Thanks Elham. Sharri, do you have any comment on that.

Sharri: I think I'm going to just agree with everything Elham says all the time. Nobody I think also like that ignores all the stuff we've been talking about. With like normalization, is a project of also, like durable, like setting in stone, this kind of durable relationship with Israel, making it first of all urgent, relevant partner. Also we can't seem like this has always been right. So it's not necessarily whether or not it's a good country liking good countries, bad countries. It's not actually about that, at its accord, is about Israel's in a crazy way has always thought about this book box on the ground that that are durable, that make it impossible to turn it back or seem like it, which I don't believe that that's true either. But that's how this kind of a historical processes work. I'd actually like to hear you Ilan about that too, because I know he's taught for a long time. But I actually am hoping I didn't understand there's another question there, that said to Ilan but I think its Elham, who you know. What does the Iranian Saudi deal disrupt Israeli normalization effort, like will the Iranian Saudi Arabia deal disrupt Israeli normalization efforts in any way ?and I think Elham was starting to talk about this earlier. As to how this operates and I think you know, just thinking about the fact that, at the same time, that we're you know represented from the US involved in this conversation. I'm really, I'm a fight trepidations to believe this is some kind of interruption in this process .I'd love to hear from Elham actually.

Elham: So yeah do you want Elham or Ilan. We don't know very much about the Iran-Saudi Normalization efforts, but definitely Iran has the potential to act as a counterweight to this,

if Iran can be brought back into the fold a little bit. The reality is now that it's not .So much of what we're seeing, is in fact shaped to be to counter Iran that it's built to oppose Iran, all of these normalization efforts. So the extent which Iran can actually be brought into the fold, if this is the beginning of that, I don't again; I'm reluctant to be too optimistic about this. But that is potentially a counterweight to this trend of course. Again I'm reluctant to comment too much because we don't know this was announced yesterday and the content is not that clear. But I think important to note that one way of seeing much of this is, in opposition to Iran. So that would be a very big shift, if Iran were to be brought back and then to push Israel out would be actually the opposite of what's happening now. It would be a complete reversal of what's happening now.

John Minto: All right, thank you Elham, thank you Sharri. Look that's a really good question, or really good point to move to bring Ilan into this conversation. So Ilan has the job of bringing threads from this discussion and sort of looking at how things might move going forward. So you Ilan I'll welcome you to the conversation and ask you to address that question first of all. So the question this was for Ilan, will the new Iranian Saudi deal disrupt Israeli normalization efforts in anyway, this was a deal which was brokered by China and just announced yesterday? But let's just before you start, I've got to introduce you properly. Professor Ilan Pappé is an expatriate Israeli historian and a socialist activist. He's a professor with the College of Social Sciences and International studies at the University of Exeter in the in the UK, Director of the University's European Centre for Palestinian Studies and Co-director of the Exeter Centre for ethno political studies. So welcome to the conversation Ilan, looking forward to what to do to what you have to say.

Ilan Pappé: Thank you John and thank you everyone. I think I'm now unmuted properly and Elham and Sharri and Dr Chandra for your incredible contribution and John for your introduction. Before I go to my kind of general remarks which will be very short, as so much has been already said and elaborated by previous speakers.

As far as Iran and Saudi Arabia, as Elham rightly says, we don't know yet enough about it to factor it into our understanding of the future. But we can say that the certain International, Regional actors and Local actors on the ground in Palestine, such as the Hamas, that if the International community or the regional community of States, I'm not talking about the Societies or States would be willing to pressure to legitimize their involvement in the issue of Palestine. This could definitely be a game changer in many ways because the language would be different, the discourse would be different. But as Elham rightly said, we don't know yet how significant this is. Maybe it is something there, but we have to wait and see on that. So I'm sorry if the person who asked the question, is not is not fully satisfied by either Elham's or my powers of prediction. We really I think, we should be cautious here. We need to wait on this one.

Generally speaking, I think so much has already been said, that talking about the way forward is even something that all of you have already covered as well. So I just want to add few points rather than really repeat what already has been said so forcefully, and so clearly. One is I think, that sometimes these webinars and the discussions between us are a bit in a bubble, in the sense that we are talking to ourselves as people who have a similar discourse, a similar agency, a similar way of looking at things, and we are looking for ways of expanding our audiences, so to speak and think of what can we add to their knowledge and understanding, which is lacking. I was thinking for instance about the recent developments in Israel, and I'm not just talking about the elections, but also the demonstrations of the Israeli social and economic elite, that many of you are probably aware of, either visually or through information. I was watching the way newspapers such as the New York Times or the guardian, and particularly I'm looking at the liberal left so to speak in the west analyzed these developments, and it just leaves you with the impression that there's so much work still to be done, in even beginning a logic conversation with people, who are kind of signifying they're more open-minded part of the western society. And how far they are from grasping the essence of what goes on in Israel and Palestine often or for even being able to contribute in any constructive way to the reality on the ground. So I think we should continue and talk to people and not give up on them, and frame in the right way, the situation in Israel and identify, I think Sharri already said, that this the whole idea that there's something very different has happened in Israel, is ridiculous. It's just another stage in the process that has already been going on for many many years. But I think it's important to therefore repeat the things we have said even before that that crisis, this whole idea of the leftist colonizer, the liberal colonizer that is actually someone who mentally cannot go out of the perception of colonialism, in this case settler colonialism. This extends beyond Israel. I don't think that there's much to be talked about the left in Israel, although this new energy of the social and cultural, mostly European Jewish elite in Israel. The whole idea that we are just talking about the left in Israel or the Liberals the elites in Israel is too restricted. There is a whole audience, there's a whole groups of people, especially in the west, but not only in the west, who somehow see a lifeline in the fact that there is this resistance in Israel, almost trying to revive this fantasy that Israel is really still a democracy. Look how these people are fighting for this, and comparing it to the Arab Spring, comparing it to the movement in Pakistan, comparing it to others. This is so dangerous because I think most of us understand what it really stands for. But I think it is important to make sure that, people understand the nature of this resistance, what it resists to and how does it not deviate from the settler colonial reality, mentality and frameworks. I think that's one thing we all understand, but I don't think we realize how much it is misunderstood beyond our comfort zone of people, who talk the same language and understand each other very well. I think someone already; I don't remember who mentioned correctly, that the rise of this extreme right-wing in Israel is also because of the normalization. This is very important I mean, not that I want to cast the blame on the Arab regimes for the kind of government that Israel has now, but it should be an analyzing in a way. I mean the normalization allowed the Israeli

electorate to believe that, there's no need even for the rate of democracy or human rights, if this is how the region reacts to Israeli policies and attitudes.

Now the second point that was I think Elham brought it up and came up also in the questions and I think Sharri and Dr Chandra also commented on this is, how far do we give up on the Arab in the Muslim world? I mean since we are kind of seeing this flood of normalization agreements, you know people kill you know, people state skewing to normalize a relationship with Israel. Maybe a historical perspective here is very important. Some political scientists have a tendency to close the chapter, what was wrongly called the Arab Spring, but this is the resistance and revolutions in the Arab world to reshape the post-colonial world, that was very much focused on state but not on societies. I think that historically, every revolution has a counter-revolution. We are not, we haven't seen yet, the maturation of the way civil societies either in the Arab world or the Muslim world. I think Pakistan in this respect is very important, have been able to bridge the gap that Dr Chandra was talking about between elite and non-elites, and the agendas of elites and non elites. I think we are in the middle of the process rather than at the end of it, where we can kind of say you know this is this is the way it's going. The very complex global economic and ecological issues are not over yet and somehow I think that it is very important for a country like Palestine that was De-Arabized culturally, geographically, politically, demographically, to be strongly and organically part of the Arab and Muslim world. Therefore, I don't think we can really get out of this conversation. We just have to be part of the same movements of resistance and change, and make sure that Palestine is not isolated as something that is different from anything else, that's going on in Lebanon, Syria or elsewhere. Situations are different from country to country, but reintegrating organically Palestine and culturally and politically and economically Palestine to the hinterland, the Arab Hinterland the Muslim Hinterland. The Muslim civilization is one of the most important part of any successful decolonization process in the future.

The obvious was already stated by some of you, the whole idea that pax Americana is the only way of bringing peace, reconciliation, I think is something else that we can hammer in again, although we have talked about it and we all agree about it. I think it is still not easily understood. I think, this is important but I won't kind of dwell on it. I think that that's very clear. It brings us all to this idea that I think many of us are aware of, that the project like Zionism has two pillars on which it stands, the moral pillar and the material pillar. For many years, many of us thought that we are very successful and rightly so in undermining the moral pillar. It was I mean even without a very successful and efficient Palestinian campaign on this sometimes, it itself erodes, it implodes from the inside. There's something when something is morally and sinful in its Origins, it doesn't, it cannot be sustained for long, even without a serious Challenge from its victims. Sometimes the victims are much better, sometimes but less better in challenging and depends a lot on the Regional, International support for their agency. But I think what we found out lately that, in a very bizarre way, the moral issue now impacts the material pillar. This is not because I think many of us are

particularly interested in that kind of process or are enthusiastic about it, but we should pay attention to the fact that because Israel is so closely connected to the neoliberal, a new capitalist world, its image of instability is causing economic hardship of the state of Israel. High-tech money is getting out of Israel. The Israeli kind of credibility is under danger, as in all these agencies that are afraid in Israel, which until now framed Israel, are very successful and stable and thriving economy. I'm saying this because I don't think this is the way to decolonization. I don't think that the neo-capitalism, neoliberal of Israel, would bring it down or would definitely not in the short term future, would ease the oppression of the Palestinians. I'm just saying that exactly the opposite, that we should not be mesmerized by the implosion from inside Israel by giving up of the need to build the postcolonial vision, by asking the Palestinians who have as Sharri rightly reminded us, to have agency they showed resilience, they showed resistant, we're not wiping it out. But I think this still owes us some sort of guidance on the collective Jewish presence in Palestine, in post-colonial liberated decolonized Palestine. I think this is important. Sometimes when you think that the implosion from the inside, you somehow say, what do I have to do? I mean anyway these guys are going to either eat each other or kind of you know collapse on the inside, but that's not enough. I think one of the reasons we had what we have in the postcolonial Arab world was exactly that, the destruction of the colonial and imperial powers did not mean that ,the issue of the post-colonial world were properly dealt with and built. And I think this is a good point.

My very final point is to not forget the incredible phenomenon that I can only describe and I would not dare to give it a name, but I think it's important to take it to a car when we think about the way forward. We are in the third uprising. Any talk about, will there be a certain uprising is ridiculous, we are in the third Uprising. We always think that Uprising, the third one would look like the second one or the first one. No, it has its own characteristic and one of it the most important. The two most important characteristics which I think we should ask ourselves as a solidarity movement is how best we can help the two characteristics, which deserve further pondering on our size and joined with this, I end. I'm sorry, I've taken more than probably I should have, one is that this is a focus on decolonization , sometimes on an individual level, local level, village level, the town level, without bothering and asking us not to bother too much now, about the question of the so-called solution or the vision. This is a struggle that asks for all the energies and all the agencies to survive the struggle of very brave young people, who know that they don't have the power to end the oppression or the occupation, but they don't they say they, have the luxury to stop the struggle. And we have to think about this, that this is decolonization that is taking place, without a very clear vision of post colonialism. It happened in this story before by the way, sometimes it ends very disaster, sometimes it's actually a prelude for a much better period, but we have to be aware of the second one, and it's connected, we are in a non-solutionism era. This is the known solutions era, the discourse on the ground, the discourse inside Israel about the Palestinians. The discus is a discourse that says this is not the point. Now the word solution

is not an interesting word, a concept. It's a very good question whether from the outside, this is something we just accept and we say okay, so what do you need? Or because of the very complex Palestinian situation that has inside and outside, and has exile, and although never developed the concept of government in exile. What is the global pan Palestinian discussion on this, giving that the sacrifices paid by the young people themselves on the ground? I will just mention one example, not every Palestinian outfit that was involved in the unity intifada in 2021, did good service to the unity intifada. Which was an amazing moment in the history of Palestine, but some I won't mention names, but some organizations took it over and diverted it to a less healthy direction in my mind. This could have been a far more powerful potential explosion in the chapter of decolonization. So this whole sensitive interaction between outside and inside, strategizing, envisioning and the actual people who are sacrificing their life courageously in resistance and resilience, is also something for the way forward. Not that I have a way forward for it, I'm just saying I'm bringing it up as something that should be discussed and elaborated further. So thank you very much everyone and it was an incredible webinar, at least from my point of view. Thank you.

John Minto: Thanks very much. It's always a pleasure to listen to you and your kind of insights. I think that I haven't heard that it would have been a non-solution era, I haven't sort of processed that before, but that's an interesting observation about where we are. So thank you very much for that and so I want to close it up now, it's gone. We're well over time actually, we were supposed to be just maybe a bit more than an hour and a half or almost two hours. I'm going to thank everybody first of all Professor Pappe and I think Chandra. I'll go away with this Chandra feeling, very positive kind of overview, of how you see the situation. But the biggest thanks really are to Elham and Sharri. Your presentations were incredibly stimulating and incredibly interesting. And I think they kind of gave a very clear lucid picture of where we are, with no frills attached. I think that was incredibly valuable. So I want to thank you the two of you especially for that, that were absolutely fantastic. So that ends up for us. So kuamutu as Molly would say, that that's the end and thank you all, thanks to our panellists and thanks to everybody online and thanks to people who asked questions, thanks to everyone. So kyota Koto and have a lovely day wherever you are. I'm just about to head to bed, thank you.