



Exposing Canadian Foreign Policy, Neoliberalism & the Collapse of Healthcare in the U.S.

This transcript may not be 100% accurate due to audio quality or other factors.

Zain Raza (ZR): Thank you guys for tuning in today and welcome to another episode of The Source where we interview policy experts, researchers, whistleblowers or former insiders. My name is Zain Raza. And today I will be talking to lawyer, journalist and activist Dimitri Lascaris. Last month, Dimitri announced his candidacy for the Green Party leadership in Canada. Dimitri, thank you for joining us today.

Dimitri Lascaris (DL): Thank you, Zain. I'm a big admirer of your program and keep up the great work.

ZR: Thank you. So let's get to the first question. Can you talk about the general mood in Canada and how you are holding yourself up at this current point in time?

DL: So, I live in downtown Montreal, right in the old part of the city. Montreal is the second largest city in Canada after Toronto; it's in Quebec. This province has been hit hardest in terms of confirmed infections of all the provinces in Canada. Across the country, you know, we've been effectively in self-isolation for a period of, I think, three or four weeks now. You know, I think we've seen some small encouraging signs, but I think the mood in the country is one of great trepidation, as it is everywhere I imagine, certainly in much of Europe and a great deal of uncertainty. And I think for the time being, the national mood is one of solidarity, is one of commitment to following the government's instructions and particularly the instructions of health care professionals. I don't know how much longer this mood is going to prevail here and south of the border, where things are much worse, and we can talk about that in a moment, you know, because it's extraordinarily difficult for all of us, both from a psychological perspective and from an economic perspective to remain in these conditions.

And, you know, I myself, I've come to understand on a personal level that I'm a much more social being than I had thought. I always viewed myself as being somebody who liked solitude and had to find balance between the two, but I'm really missing my interactions with my fellow Canadians and others. And, you know, I'm blessed to have my wife and daughter here at home with me. But that's become a void in our lives, you know, the absence of friends, the absence of our opportunity to meet new people in the country. So, you know, I

don't know how much longer we can keep up this brave face, but I hope we can do it throughout the crisis.

ZR: I think what would be interesting for our European viewers to know is the difference between the response of the Canadian and American governments in the face of this crisis. It seems that on the surface, at least, Canada has managed Covid-19, the response to it, much better than its neighbour in the United States. For example, I just checked this morning. 20,700 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 509 deaths in Canada. And in the US

we have almost, I would say, 200 times, I think I got that wrong, 20 times as much in terms of how many people are infected. So we are talking about 460,000 confirmed cases and the deaths are approaching 17,000.

How do you assess the different responses of the governments in terms of how they approached the crisis when it first hit and how they have dealt with it afterwards?

DL: Yes, so just to put a little more colour on the numbers you cited, Zain. The U.S. population is about 9 times greater than that of Canada. So, if you adjust for the different population levels, nonetheless, the U.S. still has over twice as many confirmed infections as Canada. And it has something in the range of over three times or four times as many, over three times as many deaths after adjusting for population. And I think that that is a direct consequence of both the governmental response to the crisis and the health care systems in our countries.

So in Canada, there has been a high level of coordination, cooperation between the federal government and the 10 provinces. You know, they're working very, very closely together. There hasn't been really any mutual recriminations at all, anything of note. And in Canada that's unusual, because there's often, and there was right up until the time that this crisis began, a significant degree of acrimony between certain provincial governments and the federal government. That seems to have gone away entirely during the crisis.

Whereas in the United States, you've seen Trump basically at war, engaged in politicking and partisanship with some of the Democratic governors, including Andrew Cuomo in New York state, the governor in Michigan, who is dealing with a very difficult situation in Detroit. You know, and he's (Trump) been at the same time lavishing praise on Republican governors like DeSantis in Florida, who has actually done a terrible job of dealing with this crisis.

So what's different here then from the United States is you're seeing a lot of unity, you're seeing a lot of mutual cooperation. The populace has been much more, I think, attentive to the advice we're receiving from the government and health care experts. So in the United States, I still think as of yesterday, we still had six states that weren't in any real form of isolation, self-isolation. So even to this very day, there's a significant percentage of the U.S. population that has not been instructed by the state government to stay at home. And there are

state governments that have not implemented business closures. So I think this is having a direct impact on the results. And, you know, I really fear for our brothers and sisters south of the border, the numbers that are coming out of the United States, both in terms of confirmed infections and deaths, are skyrocketing. They're on a terrifying trajectory. And I hope that, you know, the United States government and the state governments begin to adopt an attitude much more like that you've seen from the federal government, the provincial governments here in Canada.

ZR: Another aspect I think would be interesting for our European viewership would be Canada's health care system and the differences that it has with the United States system. There is this perception, here (Germany) at least, that the Canadian healthcare system is free and universal and it kind of resembles the Western European countries health care system. Even Bernie Sanders last year mentioned that Americans travel to Canada to get, for example, affordable medicines such as insulin for diabetes.

Could you, therefore, examine the Canadian health care system for us and whether these perceptions are true and also differentiate it from that of the United States?

DL: Yes, so we do have a robust public health care system. You know, we don't rely on privatised medicine to any substantial degree. There has been a movement in that direction in Canada, as there has been in Europe, but it's been very attenuated. And for the most part, we have succeeded in this country in vigorously opposing and resisting efforts to privatise our healthcare system. There's very, very little appetite for that in Canada. And so, you know, for example, here in Quebec, where I live, under my health insurance program with the province of Quebec, I can go access, you know, a hospital, a doctor at no charge at any time for any necessary medical treatment.

South of the border, it's a radically different situation. I actually lived in the United States for seven years and can attest to what that's like. You know, you have to rely on private health insurance. It is, even after Obamacare for tens of millions of Americans, it is prohibitively expensive. And one thing you don't hear too much about, you hear more about the people who are completely uninsured in the United States, but then there are people who are insured, but their insurance is full of holes. And so they end up having to bear very significant costs when they seek access to the health care system, even though they have very expensive private health insurance. And so a lot of Americans don't go to the hospital even though they have health insurance, because of the costs that they would be required to bear as part of their health insurance scheme are simply too great, particularly at a time when, you know, I think 17 million Americans in the last three weeks have filed jobless claims, which is vastly in excess of what you saw at the height of the Great Recession. And so now you have this double whammy of, you know, either no health insurance or health insurance that doesn't completely protect you and loss of employment, loss of income if you're a small business person. And so I think what you're seeing the United States is, practically speaking, tens of

millions of Americans cannot or will not access the health care system at this time, which is disastrous. It's going to make it very, very difficult for the United States to come to grips with this crisis.

ZR: We just saw Bernie Sanders stepping back as a nominee for the Democratic Party, and he was the one who was the most vocal about a health care system for all. Biden I don't think we'll be pushing that when he will be debating Trump and if he might even come to power. So how do you see that in the United States developing now? For example, you just mentioned that people are in big economic trouble. What I read also is that people are trying to avoid getting tested, because they're being billed by the insurance companies right after they come out of the hospital. And so how do you assess this going forward? Is there any chance that in the United States, for example, a health care system that serves all of the population will be implemented at some point in time?

DL: You know, it was really interesting, Zain, there was a very telling moment in the last debate between Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden, which was all about the Covid-19 crisis. And, you know, Biden, I think he performed very well in that debate, because I think he had been very well-prepared with some powerful one-liners, which when you when you pierce them and look underneath the reality, you realise that it was just rhetoric. And one of the things that he said was, well, Italy has this fantastic public health care system and look at the terrible time they're having with this disease. They're far worse off than we are here in the States. Well, a few weeks later, let's look at what's actually happening. The United States now has the second highest level of deaths in the world and is rapidly approaching the total of Italy, which is in first place. And I think it's absolutely clear at this stage. I mean, it's terrible to say, but the United States is probably going to suffer far more casualties than any Western country, including Italy. And that does have something to do with the public health care system. I think that this has created in the United States, it's still early yet, and I think as this progresses, this will be even more true, an even greater level of support for public health care. There already are polls showing that a substantial majority of Americans, including Republican supporters, want "Medicare for All". I think that's only going to go up. The problem is that the health insurance industry and its lackeys in the United States Congress are so deeply entrenched, they have such a powerful grip over the political system, that I don't know that any level of public support for "Medicare for All" is actually going to change their minds. They will hold on to that failed and immoral system as long as they can, no matter how high the cost to Americans. And I think nothing short of, you know, active resistance in the street is going to force, the peaceful active resistance in the streets, is going to force Congress to finally do what the American people want and provide it with a humane, public health care system.

ZR: Dimitri, we're going to have to pause it here for a second. We're going to take a short break. So check out this commercial.

COMMERCIAL BREAK:

Glenn Greenwald: This is an act of pure journalism. Every journalist in the world should have been cheering for Edward Snowden. He did what every journalist is supposed to be devoted to.

Edward Snowden: Because we have evidence that when we do that, things go wrong.

ZR: Welcome back. I'm talking to Dimitri Lascaris, activist, journalist and lawyer, about the Canadian health care system. And now we are going to switch topics and talk specifically about Green Party politics in Canada. Dimitri, I want to talk to you about Green Party politics in Canada. For many of our viewers, I could imagine, akin to the way it was in the United States, nobody knows about the Green Party of the United States [in Germany]. For example, we had Jill Stein over here [Germany] in 2018, and many people that I met that came to the event or generally told me, "What there's a Green Party in the United States? I just heard of Democratic and Republicans." So I would assume that is the same case here [in Germany] about the Green Party in Canada. Could you talk about Green Party politics in Canada? Provide us some context and also talk about the struggles that are happening within the party at the moment.

DL: Sure. So the Green Party has existed in Canada since the 1980s. It actually has seats in Parliament, unlike in the United States, where at the federal level in Congress, there's nobody who is a Green Party supporter and who's won a congressional seat or a Senate seat. You know, and so here we've had more success electorally, but we still have only about 1 percent of the seats in parliament. We have three seats in a 335 seat parliament, approximately. And that's the best result we've ever had historically. And that happened in the last election in 2019. In this country, we have something called a "first past the post" system, which basically means winner takes all in the various ridings around the country in an election. Whereas in many European states and other states around the world, you have proportional representation. If we had a true proportional representation system in this country, which we've been lobbying for for years, then we would have approximately 6 percent of the seats in parliament, whereas now we only have about 1 percent of the seats, but we'd still be a small party.

And you know, in this campaign, one of the main messages I want to communicate to members of the Green Party of Canada is that our results, which have been so modest up until now, are not purely a result of the "first past the post" system. They're also a result of the fact that our party has tried to position itself as a centrist party. And in that regard, it has looked very much to the model followed by the German Greens. And I've been respectfully critical

of the German Greens over the years, because I think that they make too many concessions to neoliberalism, to the hegemonic agenda of the United States government and in other respects. And I think that what we should be doing in the Green Party in Canada and around the world is becoming a champion of the Left. In our country, we have a void on the Left. It used to be occupied by something called the New Democratic Party, which was decades ago more like a Scandinavian-style Social Democratic Party. But it moved to the centre. It is firmly ensconced there now, and nobody speaks for the millions of Canadians in this country who are strongly progressive, not in our parliament. So one way that I want to see the party do that is I want to see us to become a champion of workers' rights. I want us to greatly increase the top marginal tax rate. I think we should be having a conversation about putting limits, hard limits on wealth accumulation. I think we should make housing a human right, which it isn't in this country. I think that we should think about demilitarisation and drastically reduce our defence spending. And that's a critique that has been lacking in our party, I think, at the leadership level. So there is an opportunity for us to fill the Left, the void on the Left in the political spectrum. And there's going to be frankly a struggle for the soul of the party in this election, because there are people who want to continue down that centrist path. And, you know, we're going to have a vigorous debate about that.

And I think this is what you're seeing in Canada's what you're seeing throughout the Western world, you're seeing formerly left-leaning governments that have been co-opted by neoliberals. This happened in Germany. It happened in the kingdom under Tony Blair and Labour. It happened in France under Francois Hollande and the Socialists. It happened certainly in Greece. You and I, Zain, covered that very carefully, how even Syriza, this radically left wing party, ultimately acceded to an austerity programme, which was even worse than that of its conservative predecessor. So we have the same phenomenon here in Canada. We have to fight tooth and nail to put in place a party and a government that is truly responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable. So that's what the debate's going to be about here.

ZR: I want to talk about Iran and Venezuela. But before I do that, could you provide some context to Canadian foreign policy? Just to tell you, there's this perception in Germany to the people I talk to that Canada is a neutral member of the international community, does not interfere in the issues of other countries and is sort of a good United Nations member that takes into account United Nations [international] laws. Could you provide us a context how Canadian foreign policy actually functions?

DL: I'm very surprised and not surprised to hear you say that, Zain, because I myself have had conversations with people from outside of Canada who have that perception about Canada. But I'm surprised in the sense that I live here, I've spent most of my life here and I know the reality, and the reality is nothing like that perception.

So just to give you an example, yesterday, the Canadian government, when the entire country is distracted by this terrible crisis, we're dealing with both health crisis and economic crisis, it announced that it was lifting the suspension of the sale of deadly weapons to Saudi Arabia. OK. And I can't believe that it didn't choose to announce that now precisely because Canadians are very likely not to pay much attention to this development. So the Saudi regime, of course, is one of the most egregious human rights violators on the planet. You could even make an argument that it's the very worst human rights violator on the planet. No government which claims to be a champion of human rights, as our government has always claimed, would even contemplate selling weapons to a regime like that. You know, we have almost taken the lead in terms of trying to overthrow the government of Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela. You know, our government leads something called the Lima Group, which has been very aggressively trying to promote Juan Guaido, who's never been elected as the president of Venezuela, as the actual legitimate president of Venezuela. Our government has, by and large, supported efforts to increase the suffering of the Iranian people through an inhumane sanctions regime. You know, at this particular time, there have been calls in the international community to lift sanctions on countries like Iran and Venezuela so they can deal with the Covid-19 crisis. Our government has not been receptive to that at all. I could go on and on about this, but I'll only mention one other fact. There was a very interesting article, I think it was by the Grayzone project about our former foreign minister, Chrystia Freeland, who's now the deputy prime minister. They obtained some non-public documents which prove that her goal was to put the United States first in Canada's foreign policy. And this was being done at a time when a misogynistic, racist lunatic named Donald Trump occupies the White House. Our foreign minister wanted us to adopt a "US first" foreign policy with Trump at the head of United States government. That is how, you know, how slavishly Canadian governments have adopted the foreign policy of the United States over the decades. That is not changing. And, you know, I think our friends in Europe and elsewhere, as they hear Justin Trudeau lobby aggressively, as he has been, for a seat on the U.N. Security Council, I think they should think very carefully about the reality of Canadian foreign policy and ask themselves, what is this government, given its record, going to do if it, in fact, is given the position on the U.N. Security Council. Is it going to fight for international law and human rights or is it going to simply add another pro-U.S. voice to a Security Council that is already in many ways dominated by the United States?

ZR: You mentioned Venezuela. I read up today that the U.S. military has sent warships to Venezuela, citing that they're trying to combat "drug smuggling". Also, in terms of Iran, it's [the U.S.] ratcheting up sanctions at this moment in time instead of easing it. I also heard, I read, sorry, that it has blocked an IMF loan that was supposed to help Iran combat Covid-19. Could you talk about a) the anti-war movement in Canada, how strong it is and b) whether this sort of policy is only going to increase the risk of such viruses if we do not cooperate, or at least at this moment in time, put our past differences aside with so-called enemies.

DL: So, you know, the anti-war community is certainly active, the anti-war movement in Canada. No doubt about it. There are many wonderful people across the country, you know, working tirelessly in the cause of peace. But I think that, you know, we don't yet have a groundswell of support for demilitarisation and against U.S. government efforts for global hegemony in this country. And I think the big part of the reason is not that Canadians don't care about human rights and peace. They care very deeply about these things. But our media and the political class have done a terrible job of explaining to the public the reality of Canadian foreign policy and how we're harming people around the world who are quite vulnerable, including, you know, the people in Venezuela and Iran.

You know, let's talk a bit about Venezuela. Almost nobody knows this in Canada, because the media doesn't talk about it. You know, the most recent round of aggression, U.S. aggression towards Venezuela was justified on the basis of an indictment filed in U.S. court, accusing Nicolas Maduro of being a narco dictator. Well, you know, the vast majority of, you know, the U.S. government research and intelligence on the subject of the drug trade, you know, shows quite clearly that overwhelmingly the source of cocaine in the United States is Colombia, a U.S. ally, and something in the range of 90 to 95 percent, according to tests done on cocaine seized in the United States shows that it came from Colombia. The vast majority of that is not going into the United States through Venezuela. In fact, it's going, as the DEA itself has recognised, going through Central America. One of the countries through which it transits is Honduras, which is led by an actual narco dictator, Juan Orlando Hernandez, who is an ally of the United States. His brother has already been indicted, I think also convicted, of drug trafficking in the United States. But the United States continues to prop up this government. And so, you know, all of this is just a pretext to remove from power and increase pressure on a [Venezuelan] government that doesn't do the bidding of the United States. Whatever the flaws of Nicolas Maduro's government may be, and there are certainly legitimate criticisms to be levelled at his government, he's not anywhere near as bad as countries supported by the United States like the Saudi autocracy, Egypt, who has a murderous dictator in power, Israel's apartheid regime and so forth. It is not nearly as much of a human rights violator as they are. And yet they act as though, you know, Nicolas Maduro is the devil. And they're constantly concocting reasons, with the complicity of the Canadian government, to try to undermine the government of Nicolas Maduro.

In Iran, I mean, you know, people, even the U.N. secretary general, are calling for the lifting of sanctions on Iran. The country is having a great deal of difficulty purchasing, because of the punishing economic sanctions, indispensable medicines and medical equipment to deal with this crisis. And that is part of the reason why Iran has been one of the countries that has suffered the most in the Covid-19 crisis. If the American government or other Western governments truly care about the Iranian people and the people of Venezuela, the last thing they would be doing is imposing sanctions that increase their hardship during this extraordinarily difficult time. But that is precisely what they're doing.

ZR: I would go as far as saying if they care about their own people, because humans interact with each other on a daily basis and an infection in Iran can spread back to the United States in an indirect form or direct form, given how globalised we are. So it kind of baffles me.

But we have to switch topics here. In many countries, billions and even trillions are being rolled out to save the so-called economy. You're seeing nationalisation of many sectors, laws being passed, which are forcing companies and industries to produce equipment for hospitals and the overall health care sector. In Germany, for example, the concept of fiscal responsibility, which was hailed as, you know, during the so-called Greek crisis, has been thrown out and we are allowed to go into a deficit now. Could you talk about just generally where all of this money is coming from and what it says about the concept of austerity? When we take into account that we have been told the last many, many years, especially after the financial crisis of 2008, that there's no money for the Green New Deal. There is no money to help people out in Greece or at least ease the policies of the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed with Greece. Could you provide your assessment on this?

DL: Sure. I mean, the sums of money that have suddenly been conjured up to deal with this crisis are truly astonishing. So, you know, in Spain very early on, and this is a government that imposed one of the harshest austerity regimes in Europe over the last 10 years, or not the current government, but the predecessor government. They managed to come up with money equivalent to about 20 percent of Spain's GDP in a matter of weeks. You've seen, you know, similar programmes put in place under the right-leaning government of Boris Johnson in the U.K., the Netherlands. Germany came up with hundreds of billions of euros in order to support the economy. You know, in Canada, our country now has probably, when you put up all the various programmes that have been announced within the past three weeks, has summoned sums that are approximately in the range of 15 to 20 percent of GDP. The United States has a multi-trillion dollar stimulus package.

So one thing we can say with absolute certainty, Zain, is that the claim that the money isn't there is a lie. It's a flat-out lie. The money has always been there. And it was always there to deal with a crisis, which is an even greater long-term threat to humanity than this pandemic, and that is the climate crisis. We could have invested this money years ago. And, you know, where's it coming from? It's coming from two sources, principally at this stage. It's coming from central banks, which are effectively creating the money. And it's also coming from borrowing, overwhelmingly from the private sector, which isn't necessary in many countries. In Canada, we could be borrowing money from the Bank of Canada interest-free. And the Bank of Canada has almost limitless capacity to create currency to fund government deficits. The money's there, it's always been there. And what we should also be doing is accessing other resources, like we should be taxing the wealthy. We should be getting rid of tax havens. You know, we should be decreasing our military spending. We should be ending fossil fuel subsidies. All of this would be additional sources of revenue to deal with this economic crisis, to deal with the climate crisis and so forth. And I think that when all the dust will have

settled, Zain, the narrative, the austerity narrative will have been dealt a fatal blow. Nobody is going to believe this nonsense anymore. It is now absolutely clear that the money is there, and we have even bigger needs that have to be dealt with. And I think that we on the Left have to be relentless in reminding people in the days, weeks and years ahead, that this crisis proves above all else that the underlying rationale for austerity is a bald-faced lie.

ZR: What do you make of the argument of right-wing economists, which are right now in Germany being shown a lot in the mainstream, and even alternative media, I would go as far as saying, that a huge inflation is going to come due to all of this. And the most unproductive sectors of the economy are receiving a handout effectively, which will crowd out productive resources. I know we've wanted to not get too deep into economics at the moment, and [as] we're running out of time, but could you briefly comment on this?

DL: Well, I mean, let's look what happened after the financial crisis of 2008, 2009. Central banks around the world, the Chinese Central Bank, the Bank of England, the ECB and the Bank of Japan and the Fed in the United States collectively created trillions upon trillions of dollars in order to refloat the financial system. What happened to inflation after that? You know, it's been 10 to 12 years since they did that, Zain. Inflation has gone virtually nowhere. It is not at any point during the last 10 to 12 years posed any significant threat to the economy of any Western state. Look what happened to interest rates in the last 10 to 12 years. They have been even lower than they were in the 10 years prior to the creation of these massive sums. So the economic evidence is completely contrary to this narrative that money creation inevitably generates inflation. Most cases it doesn't. And it really depends on what is done with the money and the overall economic circumstances, whether it'll have any meaningful impact on inflation at all. But the sum total of the economic evidence is clear that this does not create hyperinflation. This does not result in a dramatic spike in interest rates. And particularly now, if anything, what we're going to confront in the months ahead is deflationary pressures, because there has been such a precipitous drop in demand. You know, people can't make money. They can't spend. They're trapped at home. So the last thing we should be worried about right now is hyperinflation. We should be worried about deflation.

ZR: To my last question. Could you introduce your work that you did when you went to Greece and also talk about your coverage on Gaza and then comment on the refugee camps currently in Greece and also talk about the situation in Gaza in the context of Covid-19.

DL: Sure, so you know, in Greece, there are one 110,000 people currently, you know, I'll say, interned. One might say more generously residing in migrant facilities. 40,000 of those 110,000 people are in overcrowded camps in five islands. I personally went to Lesbos where you have, I think, the largest concentration in the islands of desperate migrants. Greece has quarantined two migrant facilities and in response to this crisis. But both of them are on the mainland where there were people who tested positive for the Coronavirus. So far, nobody has tested positive, thankfully, for Coronavirus in these camps in the islands. And I say

thankfully, because these are extremely overcrowded facilities where there is a terrible lack of sanitation. Many people are suffering severe health problems. 5200 of the residents of these camps are unaccompanied children. And so these are as even Greece's conservative government, recently elected conservative government, has called these camps a ticking time bomb.

What they really need to do, and there have been many aid organisations calling for this, is they need to release the people from these camps as quickly as possible and give them alternative accommodation, which is going to greatly diminish the risk of a devastating outbreak of Coronavirus in the camps. You know, the response of the EU, I must say yet again, is extremely disappointing in this regard. I mentioned 5200 unaccompanied children. EU states have thus far accepted only 60 of them in the current crisis. Germany was the largest recipient of those 60 children. It took 50 children in. But that's about 1 percent of the unaccompanied children in these camps and about 0.01% or less than 0.01% of the total population of these camps. So in Greece, of course, its health care system has been ravaged by austerity. No health care system in Europe suffered more from the austerity fanaticism than did the healthcare system of Greece.

So I think what we're seeing yet again in the European Union is that there isn't much meaning to the word "union". There isn't really any solidarity at the state level amongst the various members of the European Union. And I think that this could be, you know, this could be the final blow for the European Union, I think. I hope that isn't the case. But I don't know if the European Union is going to survive much longer after this terrible failure to act collectively in response to the crisis.

You know, Gaza is in many ways similar, but even worse than what we see in the migrant camps in Greece. Gaza has about 2 million people. You know, approximately one-half of the population is children. Its health care system isn't anywhere near as strong as the health care system of the weakened Greece. You know, people are effectively trapped in Gaza. And there has been so far a limited outbreak, according to tests performed to date of Coronavirus in Gaza. But if that thing really takes hold amongst the population of Gaza, there is going to be incredible suffering. And people around the world need to demand right now that Egypt and Israel lift this inhumane and punishing blockade before it spins out of control. And this is something, as you mentioned, it's not just that these poor, long-suffering people of Gaza will pay the price, but we cannot globally control the spread of this virus if we allow places like Gaza, the camps in Greece, Venezuela, Iran to become places where the virus is spreading, you know, unchecked. We have to deal with this in a collective manner and recognise that no country is safe and that we're all in this together. So far, I don't think that that's happened.

ZR: Dimitri Lascaris, activist, journalist and lawyer. Thank you so much for your time.

DL: Thank you, Zain, again. Please keep up the great work.

ZR: And thank you guys for tuning in today. Don't forget to subscribe to our YouTube channel and to donate so we can continue to produce independent and non-profit news and analysis. My name is Zain Raza. See you guys next time.

END