



## **Israeli politician accuses Israel of "fascism" & "war crimes" in Gaza**

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**Zain Raza (ZR):** Thank you for tuning in today and welcome back to another episode of The Source, I'm your host, Zain Raza. And today I'll be talking to Israeli politician and member of the Israeli Parliament, Dr. Ofer Cassif. Dr. Ofer Cassif is also a lecturer of politics and philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and received his Ph.D. at the London School of Economics and post-doctorate at Columbia University. Dr. Ofer, thank you for joining us today.

**Ofer Cassif (OC):** Thank you.

**ZR:** Before diving into the most recent developments, I would like to begin with your situation. In October, an Israeli parliament ethics committee suspended you for 45 days after you criticized Israel's assault on Gaza. This came at a time when the Israeli government arrested more than 100 Israeli citizens over social media posts that were supporting Palestinians in Gaza. And it is reported that at least 70 Israeli university students face suspension or some form of disciplinary action for posting pro-Palestinian content online. Can you provide some details about your situation? And then talk about the wider crackdown that is happening in Israel?

**OC:** I am in South America at the moment. Actually a couple of days before the massacre committed by Hamas, I arrived in Mexico City to participate in a seminar of socialist, communist and workers parties. When the massacre took place, I was there. And then I couldn't get back, primarily because there were no flights to Israel and some other stuff. So I moved to South America, where my wife's family lives and I'm still here. I intend to go back to Israel, hopefully soon. But once I was suspended, I couldn't participate in the Knesset activities anyway. So I have been here, although of course, I would prefer to be back home. But that's the situation. And it has to do with your question, the politically important question, regarding the persecution of oppositional voices in Israel.

**ZR:** And how has the crackdown – are civil liberties in danger at the moment? And are dissidents and activists that are standing up against this facing some sort of crackdown from the government?

**OC:** Absolutely. Look, allow me to put it in the right context. I guess that your followers and those who are watching us all know that just before the massacre of the 7th of October and the aftermath, the government of Israel, which I must say is a fascist government, tried to pursue a coup d'etat. Of course, it was sugarcoated under the terms of a judicial reform, but that was not a judicial reform. That was a coup of the government with the intention of eliminating the very few democratic components that still exist there. And there aren't too many. They want to eliminate it altogether. Now they failed. Primarily because of the protest. So they just used the terrible, monstrous carnage that Hamas committed as an excuse to pursue with the very same ends they had when they tried to carry out the coup. So on top of the massacre that Israel is responsible for in Gaza – and there's no other way to describe it, I mean, we must be very cautious and so allow me to add some words. There's no dichotomy in the sense that if you oppose the terrible Hamas carnage and we must, of course, oppose it, then you, by definition, support the massacre that Israel carries out against the Palestinian innocent civilians in Gaza – and I emphasize innocent civilians. And the other way around, if you oppose the massacre that Israel is responsible for, the assault that Israel carries out against Gaza, it doesn't mean that you support Hamas or its own carnage. In that sense, I think that too many governments in the world, including the German one, are guilty of bloodshed. Because they allow it under the excuse of self-defense of Israel. This is not self-defense. And in the pilots of what the government of Israel has been doing since the 7th of October, on top of the massacre and the war crimes in Gaza themselves is, of course, using it as a smokescreen to ethnically cleanse the Palestinian of the West Bank, to wage a war against democratic Jews and leftists and the Palestinian citizens within Israel.

And if we have the time, can I detail it? And part of it, of course, it's turning Israel into a full fledged fascist dictatorship by partly what you quoted before: persecuting people who raise an oppositional voice, calling for cease fire, exchange of prisoners and release of hostages, for stopping the war and eventually for ending the occupation and reach a just peace, which is in the interest of all involved, of everybody involved. It is primarily a Palestinian interest, but it is also in Israel's interest. Security for Israel, and I and my companions, Palestinians and Jews alike, we support the security of Israel. And we are presented as if we were anti-Israeli. The only factor now behaving or executing policy against Israel and the Israelis is the government. So I call upon the German government and the German society, if you really want to support Israel, you must be against the war and against the government, because the government, the fascist government of Netanyahu, Ben-Gvir and the other thugs, they are the ones who oppose the Israeli society and they're a terrible risk.

**ZR:** You talked about this government trying to usurp the independence of the judiciary and

putting the executive in power. But I would like to further contextualize this conflict which the mainstream media in Germany is failing to undertake. Can you tell us about the makeup of this government? What kind of figures there are? And secondly, can you provide an overview of how this government, once it came into power in 2022, handled the situation in Gaza and the West Bank?

**OC:** Everybody knows that Netanyahu is charged with three very serious criminal charges. The only thing that drives Netanyahu is his own personal interest to stay out of prison. That's the only – not the main – the only thing that drives him. I must say that Netanyahu as a person is a psychopath, even when Yitzhak Shamir was prime minister of the Likud, and he was much more to the right, ideological speaking, than Netanyahu, he said 35 years ago, that Netanyahu is dangerous to Israel, that Netanyahu thinks only about his own interests. It was many years before the criminal charges. But now, when you add the criminal charges to this psychopathic character of Netanyahu, it's even more dangerous.

So why is it so important to talk about the personal issues of Netanyahu? Because when he composed the current government and coalition, he added the most fanatic, messianic, racist figures in Israeli politics, people who some of them were convicted of supporting Jewish terrorism. Like Ben-Gvir, like Smotrich, who was not charged for strange reasons, but he was supposed to be charged and he was caught by the Shin Bet. The Secret Service said during the disengagement plan about 20 years ago, he was caught with a huge amount of fuel on his way to commit a terrorist attack. So those are the people who control the government. Why did Netanyahu form a government with those bigots? And why – even more importantly – Netanyahu turned the Likud Party, which was a very, you know, acclaimed – of course, this is not my cup of tea, to say the least, never was, but the Likud Party was an ideological, throughout the years – again, I oppose the Likud Party's ideology, politics, all the time – but still, it was an ideological party and it was a paramount party in the Israeli politics, even when it was in the opposition before the first time they won the elections in 1977. Netanyahu turned the Likud into a *Bibist*. You know the term *Bibisim* or *Bibist*, which comes after the nickname of Netanyahu. He turned the Likud into a Bibist cult. Ex-people of the Likud say so. Many ex-ministers and members of the Knesset that were throughout the years in the Likud say so. There's no Likud but the title. Why is it so important? Because within the Likud, Netanyahu kicked out the more serious or founded ideological figures and he endorsed and paved the way to major positions within the Likud for people who are not different from Ben-Gvir or Smotrich. So it's wrong to only look at the so-called Religious Zionism Party as fascists and even worse. It is true they are, but within the Likud, there is a majority now at the Knesset that, ideologically speaking – if they have an ideology, because some of them are simply opportunists, but if we refer to the ideological ones, today they are much closer to the racists. And I'm talking about a real belief in racial fury that Germany knows from its history quite well. I'm talking about people who really believe in Jewish supremacy. So within the Likud, how many are like that? Now, the reason that Netanyahu did that is in order to hold the power in his hands. He didn't want people like Benny Begin, for instance, or Michael

Eitan or Dan Meridor. Again, people with whom I have huge debates, disagreements, but I cannot ignore the fact that they were honest and serious people. By the way, you can actually disagree and debate with them, something you cannot say about the vast majority of the Likud people today. So why did they kick them out and pave the way to really the scum of the earth? Because that's the way he could keep the power in his hands. He turned the Likud into a personal Bibist cult. Now he forms this government with those bigots, because the only thing he's interested in is to be prime minister and distance himself from the danger of being imprisoned. So in that sense, he's ready to do whatever he feels that can get him something. He is the beneficiary, not the Israeli society.

He is the main enemy of Israel now. He and his government. Everything. Look at the terrible massacre that Hamas committed. Who's responsible for that? Not who is the guilty. The guilt is wholly on Hamas. They are the murderers, who did it. But the responsibility, in negligence and in creating the circumstances that enabled this terrible carnage to occur is Netanyahu and his government. I will give you a few examples. First of all, the intelligence within the Israeli army warned Netanyahu already in March, we are talking about nine months ago, that if he continued, if the government continued with the coup, with the so-called judicial reform, Hamas, like others, Hezbollah and others, but Hamas in our case, will going to use it against Israel. The intelligence within the Israeli army warned Netanyahu that the continuation in this coup is putting Israel in a serious risk and danger. He didn't want to listen. On the evening, I remembered that I was there on the evening of the vote on the so-called reasonableness clause – which is a massive change of the judicial system by law, which lowers the independence and the possibility of the court to rule against decisions taken by the government – on the evening of the vote on this law, the chief of staff of the Israeli army with some other generals, came urgently to the Knesset, something that doesn't happen very often, if ever, to talk personally to Netanyahu to tell him: Stop, it's going to put Israel at risk. He refused to see them. He refused to meet them.

I don't remember exactly how much time before the massacre itself, I think there were 34, 35 battalions of the Israeli army on the frontier between the Gaza Strip and Israel. Netanyahu moved – Netanyahu, of course, is the head of the snake, but the government has a hold, but Netanyahu moved 32 battalions from there to the West Bank. He left only two or three battalions at the frontier with Gaza. Why did he do that? In order to defend the illegal settlements and the programs of the settlers, the programs they commit on a daily basis against innocent Palestinians, especially shepherds. This is part of the ethnic cleansing that goes on in the West Bank. So even Hamas terrorists that were caught during and after the massacre and now are interrogated – some of it was published – some of them said they were in shock. They were surprised that when they cut the fence and invaded Israel, no one was there to wait for them. By the way, in the kibbutzim at the frontier with the Gaza strip in each and every kibbutz there is local security that is supposed to be armed. The government, again Netanyahu as the head of the government, as the prime minister, took most of the arms from those groups that were supposed to secure the kibbutzim in order to give them to settlers in

the West Bank. Now, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Not only to prove that the government of Israel, and Netanyahu personally, are responsible for the massacre and should have gone home if not to prison five weeks ago, it is also to explain and to prove that the incentive of Netanyahu personally and of his government, their motivation has nothing to do with the well-being and security of the Israelis or the state of Israel, only the security and well-being of themselves and their close ones, that is the 5% of the population which are the settlers. This is something the world has to know because once they, and especially the government of Germany, because you are talking to me from Germany, must understand that as long as you support the government of Israel, you harm the Israelis. You act against the interest of the state of Israel. If you really are a friend of the Israelis, the state of Israel, you must act against the Israeli government, that puts all of us at risk. That's the right thing.

**ZR:** Can you also talk about the policies of the Netanyahu administration once it came to power again in 2022 towards Gaza and also the West Bank?

**OC:** First of all, it's not only this government. Netanyahu, throughout the years, as you know unfortunately, in the last 28 years, Netanyahu has been prime minister most of the time. There were just, you know, here and there some changes, Sharon, Olmert, Barak, but for a short time, relatively, most of those years, Netanyahu was the prime minister or a minister, like for finance, under Sharon. And why do I say that? Because since Netanyahu was prime minister, since 2007, I think, but maybe I don't remember the exact year, he adopted the policy of strengthening Hamas in Gaza and weakening the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. And why? He said so explicitly, it's not an interpretation of mine. In 2019, in a convention of the Likud Party, he said so explicitly, and I quote him more or less, he said: "Those who oppose the establishment of a Palestinian state, must endorse and strengthen Hamas and weaken the Palestinian Authority".

What is the rationale? Very simple. First of all, divide and rule. If you divide the Palestinians and you have won the West Bank, it's under occupation of course, but at least in part you have the Palestinian Authority and in Gaza the Hamas. And let's not forget that Hamas actually made a coup against the Palestinian Authority to [get] control by a kind of a coup in Gaza. Israel wanted that for the very same reason that Netanyahu said. Why? Because once there are two different and even conflicting authorities in the West Bank and in Gaza, you can say to the world there's no one to talk to about a Palestinian state. Let us assume that we'll talk to the Palestinian Authority, the Hamas in Gaza will never accept that and vice versa. So they wanted this divide and rule thing. Secondly, which leads us to what actually Netanyahu has been doing, not just saying, Hamas is well known as a fanatic organization. So once you strengthen it, you can say that there's no one to talk to; look at Hamas, look what's going on, they are fanatics, there's no one to speak to, no one to talk to. So Netanyahu as a prime minister continuously, for many years, actually transferred huge amounts of money, dollars, from Qatar to Hamas. Everybody knows it. Nobody denies it. Netanyahu doesn't deny it. This was the policy they wanted for Hamas. Now, we are paying for that.

By the way, 30 years ago and more when Rabin was prime minister or minister of defense under Shamir, I don't remember, Daniel Kurtzer, who later on was the ambassador of the United States to Egypt and afterwards to Israel, warned Israel 30 years ago and more, he said – because Israel supported Hamas even then, they fought, they fought like any colonialists power – that if they strengthened the alternative to the national organization, which is the PLO, then they can continue and manage the occupation. This is a key term, you know, managing the occupation instead of solving it or ending it, which led most of the Israelis and the world astray, as we saw it recently. 30 years ago, Daniel Kurtzer already warned the Israeli government that they were making a terrible mistake, that everybody is going to pay a huge price for that. Unfortunately, he was right, though I must say that the United States bears a lot of responsibility for that, although he said it though as an American official.

Anyway, so that's the policy of this government and all governments of Netanyahu, strengthening Hamas in Gaza, weakening the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, managing the occupation and worsening the occupation. If I may add another sentence, under this government, though it began in the government before, but under this government, there is an ongoing – before the massacre, now it is worse – ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in the West Bank. I mean, who practically carries out this ethnic cleansing? The settlers. They are allowed to do what they like. They are armed. They live in illegal settlements, according to international law, and many of them, the worst of them, live in so-called illegal outposts, which are illegal, even according to Israeli law. But this government ordered the military not to touch those outposts. So actually, the government of Israel violates the law on a daily basis. I personally visited two communities of shepherds in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley just a week before the massacre. And I saw there, good people, hard working people, never harmed anyone, are interested in normal lives with no occupation, with no persecution, with no harassment by the settlers or the occupation forces, under whose auspices the settlers act and carry out their crimes. And I saw communities, four communities by then were expelled from their lands because of those pogroms and harassment of the settlers; vicious, racist settlers armed ones under the auspices of the occupation forces. And now it's already, if I remember correctly, 14 or 16 communities were expelled. We are talking about an area double of Tel Aviv, that was ethnically cleansed. Where is the world? Where is Germany? Germany bears guilt and justly so for what they did, 90 years ago to the Jews, including my family. But they are going to regret 90 years from now that they did the same or allowed, not the same, but allowed crimes against humanity, against the Palestinians. That is going to be too late, you have the responsibility to stop it now – you can.

**ZR:** Let's look at some recent developments surrounding this conflict. On October 7th, on the day Hamas and Islamic Jihad carried out a surprise attack on Israel, they took around 239 hostages that included military personnel, civilians and foreign nationals. After initially rejecting a cease fire for a hostage deal, the Israeli government yesterday agreed to deal with Hamas. Hamas agreed to release 50 women and children for a four day truce and also

announced that Israel will be releasing 150 Palestinian women and children from Israeli jails that some call not prisoners, but hostages as well, and also allow hundreds of trucks carrying humanitarian-, medical-, fuel-aid and a lot of other goods that will be allowed into Gaza. Hezbollah also announced it would be joining the cease fire, which took effect earlier today. This is a two part question. Firstly, what is the significance of this development? And secondly, why did it take so long for Israel to come to an agreement with Hamas?

**OC:** I begin with the second question. First of all, you know, it's quite natural that when there are negotiations – it doesn't matter like now with whom – it takes time, normally. But there is another issue which I would like to raise which is that – and it goes back to what I said in the very beginning of our chat – that Netanyahu is interested in his own well-being and good and that is it. Netanyahu opposed this kind of deal. I don't like the term deal, but I use it because I cannot find a better one at the moment. The reason I don't like the term deal is because, I think people, human beings should not be referred to or regarded as commodities and when we talk about deals, it seems that we refer to them as commodities, which I really have a grudge against, but I use it for the sake of our conversation. But it was important for me to raise the reservations.

Anyway, Netanyahu was not interested and opposed this deal because he doesn't care about the well-being and lives of the hostages. He doesn't care. And as long as he thought that the public in Israel doesn't support such a deal, as it were, he didn't want to execute it. Once he began to understand, following the polls, following the demonstrations, the meeting, which were, not only helpful, but disgusting, disgusting meetings with the families of the hostages – and I'm saying disgusting because of the attitude of Netanyahu and some other ministers, who behaved in such a humiliating, inhumane way to the poor families of the hostages. They go through hell and on top of that hell, Netanyahu and his thugs added more; more fire to the inferno. And so in that sense, once Netanyahu thought or began to understand that the majority in Israel supports such a deal, he changed his mind again because he's only interested in his own good. But it took time. This is part of the prolonged time that it took to reach this deal. There are many things behind the scenes that we don't know. So I guess this is part of the time that it took. As I said before, negotiations, there are many of them everywhere, are implicit, you know, we don't know what's going on exactly behind the scenes. I'm sure that Hamas has a lot of responsibility for the ongoing time, without releasing the hostages. But as I said as far as Israel is concerned, the government of Israel is concerned, the time it took is mainly because of the interests of those who are involved, primarily Netanyahu, but not only. The old gang, entitled the government of Israel, has its own narrow interest, which is again, not the security and not the well-being of the Israelis in general and of the hostages in particular. That's the reason why it took so much time, in my view.

**ZR:** On November 19th, Finance Minister of Israel, Bezalel Smotrich stated, and I quote him here, quote, "I welcome the initiative of the volunteer immigration of Gaza Arabs to countries around the world. This is the right humanitarian solution for the residents of Gaza and the

entire region after 75 years of refugees, poverty and danger. The state of Israel will no longer be able to accept the existence of an independent entity in Gaza", unquote. Given this statement, what do you think Israel's plans are in Gaza? Where will 2.2 million Palestinian civilians go?

**OC:** Look, we began our conversation talking about my suspension. And by the way, in the meantime, another member of my party, the Communist Party and member of the Knesset, Aida Touma-Suleiman, my friend was also suspended for two months, like myself, for calling to cease fire, for accusing the government of Israel of war crimes and of massacres, only for that; to show that the persecution has many of so to speak, common people, but of members of the Knesset as well. This is part of the dictatorial process that Israel is going through. But I mentioned it because it's totally legitimate in Israel to call for the elimination of the Palestinians. Ministers and members of the Knesset and rabbis, and, of course, again, quote unquote, "common people", call for the elimination of the Palestinians in Gaza. The vice speaker of the Knesset actually, a couple of days ago tweeted, calling "to burn down Gaza". This is Nazi vocabulary. They can do what they – they just go on, in the public discourse in Israel and this is legitimate. So what you refer to, of the intelligence office, they published – it's unclassified, we can speak about it freely – they published a document that was published around the world a few weeks ago, a detailed plan out to expel, to transfer, to ethnically cleanse, the Gaza Strip from its indigenous Palestinian people. And it goes on. The world does not say anything. A minister just a couple of weeks ago called to drop an atomic bomb on Gaza. You can hear this language from ministers and members of the Knesset and social figures and celebrities, as it were, all the time. So I am really afraid that something like that, if the international community doesn't intervene and stop this madness, it may come true, it may.

Look what's going on. There is an ongoing massacre in Gaza. According to the information I have and I want to be very cautious here, because maybe this is not accurate, but I guess the general picture is more or less like that, there are about 14,000 dead in the Gaza Strip at the moment. The vast majority, more than 70%, are innocent civilians. More than five thousand children. The people who are still alive, are running out of water, if there is any, food, medicine. According to what was published a couple of days ago no hospital is functioning at the moment. All the hospitals in Gaza Strip either were totally bombarded or are just out of order, cannot supply any treatments. Already a few weeks ago, we heard and read about surgeries that were taking place under the light of mobile phones. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. So if Israel can commit such crimes, why cannot it continue with the ethnic cleansing plan?! So I urge the international community and again, especially the government of Germany, to do something to stop it. And I have to emphasize, this is first and foremost a humanistic right. I am regarding myself as a humanist, in the sense of seeing the life and well-being of all human beings as a prior value. I don't care about the origin of a person, gender or sex or political beliefs or religion or whatever, or nationality. For me, human beings are the vital value, the supreme value. So my cry is out of humanistic, first of all and first and



foremost humanist stance. But it is also an Israeli cry and a Jewish one. Because in my view, this is also in the interest of Israelis and Israel. Of course it goes without saying that it is in the interest of the Palestinians. And as I said, to start with, that it is in the interest of everyone who considers oneself as a humanist, but it is also in the interest of Israel. Everyone who wants to save Israel from the government of Israel must do everything not only to prevent this terrible crime against humanity of transfer [of Palestinians], but also to reach a real cease fire. Not a pause. A cease fire, totally. A withdrawal of all Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip. And for the sake of both peoples to begin a real process towards ending the occupation and reaching a just peace. This is in the interests of everybody who is involved, Palestinians and Israelis alike, Arabs and Jews, everybody. Do something.

**ZR:** What do you think the long term implications on Israel will be if it continues this war? Because it said this war could take years, according to Benjamin Netanyahu. What will be the ramifications on it domestically, internationally? And will the state of Israel be able to overcome all of the hardships that will come with it?

**OC:** Look, we all remember what happened in 1982 when Israel invaded Lebanon and stayed there for almost 20 years. The death toll was horrific, of Lebanese of course, but also Israeli soldiers who were killed there almost on a daily basis throughout the 20 years. And eventually Israel had to withdraw from Lebanon. It doesn't matter at the moment if it was too late, too little, I do not refer to that, but I'm afraid that this is a similar scenario. We may step into such a terrible, similar scenario in Gaza because, you know, there is this cliché that you can know how you get into a war, but you never know how you get out of it. Perhaps it is a cliché, but that doesn't turn it into a false statement. So even when I'm looking from the eyes of the Israeli army and government, and obviously I am an Israeli and I am interested in the well-being of my compatriots and my state and my country, on top of the crimes that it involves, war crimes, crimes against humanity, vis a vis the Palestinians in Gaza, it is also terribly dangerous for Israel and the Israelis; now, also economically. We already begin to see the cracks and begin to see the crisis, the economic crisis that is stepping towards us. And especially if we refer to the economic opinion of this government, which is extremely rightist as well. This government is not only, like I said before, a fascist government, a rightist government vis a vis the Palestinians or the civil rights, etc., or in its anti-democratic activities, it is also extremely rightist as far as the social and economic questions are concerned. And you can see that as far as, specifically Smotrich, as the minister of finance is concerned, he doesn't understand anything about the economy. Even the professionals within the ministry say so. But put it aside for a while. Of course, the investment, economically speaking, investment in this war, in arms, etc., that's going to come at the expense of something. It's already there. Who is the first one? Who's going to pay the price? The weakest classes. Women, Arab citizens, the so-called periphery, Oriental Jews, workers, the working class, small businesses. They are the ones who are going to pay the main price. That's not going to harm the settlers. That's not going to harm the ultra millionaires, Netanyahu and his family, or some of his ministers, who are immensely rich. It's going to cause a huge damage

to the most needy ones and including as far as I remember, a quarter of a million refugees within Israel. Because let us not forget that besides the terrible question of refugees in Gaza and in the West Bank, given the massacre of Hamas and following it, about 200,000 Israelis are now refugees because they cannot get back to their houses and home towns or villages in the south of Israel. And there are also thousands and thousands of refugees in the north that were expelled from there. They had to flee their houses because of the confrontation with Hezbollah. Who is going to pay for that? At the moment, by the way, the state disappeared. The state is still. The budget and the behavior of the government is for the benefit of the settlers and the ultra orthodox. But those who need the support of the state, especially those refugees I refer to, they get nothing or almost nothing. And as long as the war goes on, on top of what I said before, they are not going to get any support from the state. That's going to lead to a total collapse of Israeli society. And I do not want that to happen. I am very often accused by the rightists in Israel as being anti-Israeli. I'm not anti-Israeli. I think that our opinion, what we've been saying for ages has been proven right. That's one thing. And secondly, everything we oppose or support is for the beneficiary of the Israelis. And that's part of the situation. The government is an enemy of the Israeli state and people because it does everything to harm them in order to sacrifice the vast majority of Israelis on the altar of fanaticism, messianism and bigotry.

**ZR:** To my last question. According to our observation, Western media outlets, especially in Germany, when they invited experts to speak on Gaza and Israel, it mostly includes voices that support Israel's assault on Gaza, whether they are analysts, politicians or from the Israeli army, critics or dissidents from Israel, or even voices from Palestine are rarely, if at all, given a platform. How has your experience been, firstly in terms of the media in Israel? And secondly, has any leading media institution from Germany, US, UK invited you thus far to provide your perspective?

**OC:** As to the second question, no one from the so-called conventional mainstream media invited me, in Europe, I mean. In the United States, I was interviewed. I was interviewed by CNN and Al Jazeera, BBC, Russia Today, and some podcasts, etc., etc.. I was not, by other mainstream media. In Germany, you are the first one that actually interviews me. And as for the first question, I said that before, if referred to it before, I think that first of all, it's anti-democratic. Because a real democratic society, I would not like to say even state, a state is a specific apparatus, society is something wider, it includes the state as an apparatus of the institutions but it also includes the public, etc. and civil society organizations, etc.. A democratic society is not only a society in which the state, in which there are elections and of course basic liberties, etc., it must be pluralistic. And pluralism means that debates should come to the fold. Now, of course, in my view, this is a huge question in my view, and of course, there are margins, or there are limits. For instance, I think that racists or chauvinists should not get the chance to express their malicious sick views, but apart from that, I think that everybody is entitled to not only to express oneself, but to be exposed to alternatives. Otherwise how can we really seriously and rationally form our own views? We are supposed

as rational creatures to form our views upon knowledge or upon information. And if some of the information is blocked, especially if it is blocked by the market apparatus or the state apparatus, then we reach what perhaps, you know, something that a German scholar published entitled *The Spiral of Silence*, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. I think it was in the early 70s that she published this text in which she explained in length how the media creates, not only reflects public opinion, but also forms public opinion. So it is anti-democratic what you said before and I'm aware of that. I lamented that even among the leftists and, and Die Linke for instance, they even voted, for instance, to outlaw BDS. It doesn't matter what I think about BDS. I may agree with them, I may oppose them, but they have the right to express themselves. Now it's illegal and Die Linke even supported this. That's a shame. Not a shame, let's say that it is something that is not only anti-democratic but this is outrageous. So voices like myself and there are thousands like that in Israel, as well as thousands of Jews as well, not only Arab citizens, those voices should be heard. They must be heard. We began with the persecution of people like me in Israel, and we are ending with persecution of people like me in Germany. And I want to say that again: the German society, especially the German government, bears a lot of guilt for the carnage, the criminal monsters and carnage they did during the Holocaust and just is, that they have guilt feelings. They must pay for it. But it cannot be at the expense of other people. You do not support and you do not express your guilt and you do not pay for that, those guys, by allowing your victims to victimize others, you are going to regret that as well in the future. You have the chance to stop and change it now. And I emphasize it for the benefit of Israelis as well, because it's not a zero sum game, that if Israel wins, the Palestinians lose and vice versa. No, it's either a win-win or lose-lose situation. Either both Palestinians and Israelis win or both lose. And this is what I expect the German government – doesn't matter who is in the government – to understand and act upon it.

**ZR:** Dr. Ofer Cassif, Israeli politician and member of the Knesset, thank you so much for your time today.

**OC:** Thank you. All the best.

**ZR:** And thank you for tuning in today. Please do forget to join our alternative channel's on Rumble, Telegram and our podcast called Podbean. YouTube, which is owned by Google, can shadowban and censor at any time. Even though we can not prove this, our reach has been down significantly since the start of the year and therefore we are asking our viewers to join these alternative platforms. The links to these platforms are in the description of this video below. And if you're watching our videos regularly, make sure to donate today. We are an independent, nonprofit, small media organization that does not accept any money from corporations or governments. Hence, we only depend on you to continue with our independent journalism and provide you with an alternative perspective. I'm your host, Zain Raza, see you next time.

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