

Yanis Varoufakis on the ongoing genocide in Gaza perpetrated by the State of Israel

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

Yanis Varoufakis: Genocide is happening now in Gaza, in tandem with Israel's opportunistic ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. We are here because our humanity is being tested, because future generations are going to censure us for having allowed the death count to exceed 10,000, mostly women and children. We are here because when our grandchildren ask us, Where were you in 2023 during the mass murder of Palestinians, there will be no hiding behind excuses such as I didn't know. We do know. Our governments know. Everyone knows because the Israeli government proudly proclaims its genocidal intent. Was it not Israel's prime minister who quoted biblical scripture to justify the wiping out of Gazan Palestinians? Are key ministers in the Israeli government, not run by fundamentalist extremists, peddling what can only be described as messianic visions of a land from the river to the sea in the hands solely of settlers cleansed of Palestinians? No. No one can feign ignorance anymore. This is why we're here. We're here to tell our rulers, enough. Put an end to the slaughter. Or the slaughter will haunt you in your sleep till the end of your days. Your nights, too. Enough. We shall never let you forget how you are aiding and abetting crimes against humanity. Even if the International Criminal Court disgraces itself by not moving a finger but friends to be on humanism's right side, we must be very clear on who the enemy of humanism is. It is not the people of Israel. For they suffer, too. It is not the Jews outside of Israel in the same way that the atrocities of the British Empire against the people of Kenya, of India, of other colonies, could never be blamed on the majority of Britons who were also the victims of expropriation, humiliation and exploitation by the same British authorities. In precisely the same way that our friends and comrades in Israel today are suffocating under the apparatus of Israeli apartheid.

To drive this point home, allow me a personal note. Back in 2015, while fighting the international financial oligarchy as Greece's finance minister, a Greek oligarchy newspaper thought they diminished me by depicting me in a cartoon as a Shylock like figure. What these

idiots did not realise was that trying to tarnish my image by depicting me as a Jew was a badge of honour. Whenever an anti-Semite bundles me together with the people who have suffered racism for so long and so very bravely, I feel deeply flattered. As long as a single Jew feels threatened by anti-Semitism and anti-Semites, I shall carry the star of David, eager and ready to be counted as a Jew.

At the same time, as long as a single Palestinian is terrorised, deprived of water, bombed, maimed or killed, I shall wear the Palestinian flag as a symbol of solidarity with people living under a system of apartheid built by reactionary Israelis, thus damaging my Jewish and Arab brothers and sisters, and stoking the fires of racism, which, by the way, always reliably forge a stillier form of anti-Semitism. Here's a question to well-meaning people who think that the centuries of pogroms against the Jewish people, culminating in the uniquely evil Holocaust, make it incumbent upon us to defend the state of Israel come what may. How far must Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestinians proceed before our utterly justified collective guilt over the Holocaust no longer prevents us from confronting Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestinians? Until the last Palestinian is killed or exiled? Is this the kind of legacy we want to leave behind, those of us who are opposing anti-Semitism in its every variety or form? Does anyone think that our justified collective guilt over the Holocaust can be washed clean with Palestinian blood? I do not believe so. And now a message for those who believe that Hamas's atrocities justify all and each of the atrocities upon Palestinian people with the West's full and unconditional support. Have we not learned the lessons of recent history? The undisputed fact that Saddam, Qaddafi and the Taliban were bloodthirsty tyrants was a terrible reason to invade and to bomb to smithereens the people of Libya, of Iraq and Afghanistan. Consider also this, what if Hamas never existed? What would be happening now in Gaza and elsewhere? There is no need to speculate or to imagine. Just look at the West Bank and East Jerusalem, where there is hardly any Hamas, and the Palestinian Authority has laid down its arms and is cooperating with Israel. What we see is mass murders, evictions, collective humiliation, apartheid methods, and of course, the ethnic cleansing of all Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Clearly focusing on Hamas's atrocities is a very cheap trick for ignoring the true causes of this one sided never ending war against the people of Palestine. Meanwhile, our established parties, the government and the main opposition will tell you with presto their main idea for sorting out this mess, is the two state solution. They are lying. They know perfectly well that Netanyahu's life dream and project was the destruction of any possibility of a two state solution. An aim that the European Union, Britain, the United States, the West, in general, have allowed Netanyahu to fulfil, which of course was a great gift to Hamas, who use the Palestinians' ongoing ethnic cleansing to justify their own atrocities. Which of course gives Netanyahu a further excuse for even greater atrocities against the Palestinians. At that point, the West comes in, condemns Hamas and gives a carte blanche to Netanyahu to continue with his project of destroying the two state solution that the West claims to want. And that's how Netanyahu and the religious fundamentalists in his governing bloc are destroying any

possibility of the two state solution and wrecking whatever credibility Western governments have. So this is why we're here, because our Western rulers are a clear and present danger for world peace.

What should happen now? Four things to begin with. First, an immediate ceasefire. Secondly, the release of all hostages by Hamas and of all the hostages that Israel keeps, the thousands of them, in Israeli prisons. Thirdly, the immediate recognition, symbolic but crucial, of a Palestinian state across the land occupied since 1967. And fourth, a genuine peace process under the United Nations that safeguards equal political and civil rights to everyone from the river to the sea. The end of apartheid and the beginning of a new, peaceful era. Our rulers will not push for any of this. This is why we're here. This is why you are here. Because when the rulers fail history, it is the people who must make history.

END