Israel Has Inflicted 'Moral Injury' Upon The World w/ Susan Abulhawa

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

Dimitri Lascaris (DL): Good day, this is Dimitri Lascaris coming to you from Kalamata, Greece, on October 17th, 2025 for Reason2Resist. Today I'm very pleased to be joined by Susan Abulhawa. Susan is a Palestinian novelist, poet, essayist, scientist, mother, and activist. And her debut novel, *Mornings in Janine*, published by Bloomsbury in 2010, translated into 30 languages, was an international bestseller and is considered a classic in Palestinian literature. Its reach and sales have made Susan the most widely read Palestinian author. And her second novel, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, also published by Bloomsbury in 2015, was also an international bestseller. And she's also a political commentator and a frequent guest speaker. She joins us today from the Philadelphia area. Thank you very much for coming on to Reason2Resist, Susan.

Susan Abulhawa (SA): Thanks for having me, Dimitri.

DL: So Susan, today the Donald put out a rather remarkable post again. I'm just gonna put it up on the screen, which prompted a comment from you. This was yesterday actually, that this was posted. He said: "If Hamas continues to kill people in Gaza, which was not the Deal, we will have no choice but to go in and kill them. Thank you for your attention to this matter!" Your reaction, Susan.

SA: I mean first of all it's infantile. It also contradicts what he said literally a day ago or two days ago, that Hamas needed to go in and deal with the gangs that he knows had proliferated across the Gaza Strip thanks to Israel who had been arming and funding them in order to sow chaos and to basically instigate a civil war. They were of course unsuccessful in doing that, but they did manage to recruit a few gangs of unscrupulous, you know drug addict Palestinians in the strip. And it seems that after he said that, after he made that comment that, yeah, they need to deal with those people, somebody must have given him a talking to, which seems to be the case. So he reverses. Many people in his inner circle have said that Donald

Trump's opinion is in line with the last person he spoke with. And the evidence would point to the truth in that statement.

But aside from that, aside from Trump's ramblings and his gratitude for our attention to this matter, this is, I mean, it's hard to fathom that we are all watching this naked colonialism, this naked genocidal colonialism, this land grab, this resource grabbing, this idea that like that we're children and they're gonna come in and spank us. I mean, it's shocking. You have an indigenous population that has been living under this horrific, brutal Israeli colonial siege and barbarity for decades, who finally fought back and the whole world, it seems, or at least the whole of the Western world, and including corrupt Arab regimes as well, are ganging up on a principally unarmed, defenseless civilian population. And simultaneously, as they do this, as they pummel and starve people with no place to run, no way to protect their children, simultaneously they speak as if they have moral capital. They'll talk about these grand words of democracy and the rule of law and all of these insufferable slogans that are hollow and basically have no meaning and they've just become these bats that they beat us all over the head with in one way or another. So now the United States wants to come in and kill us. And suddenly Donald Trump is worried about Palestinian lives. It's absurd. If it were not so brutal and horrific it would be laughable. It would be a comedy of the absurd. But those are the times we're living in right now and it's a reversion to really dark dark times in human history that we all hoped were over.

DL: I've often said that when they employ this sanctimonious language, the corporate media should fall over in uproarious laughter because it's become so absurd no one can take seriously the claim that they [care about] human rights or international law. In any case, I also want to address something you spoke to on social media in the last couple of days. There was, I'm sure you saw this, Susan, we're mortified to learn that after 90 bodies of dead Palestinian detainees were turned over to the health ministry in Gaza a couple of days ago by the genocidal entity, and doctors inspected them, they found that virtually all of them had been blindfolded and had a gunshot wound between the eyes, and many of them had clear signs of torture, having sustained torture before they were murdered. Your post today about the bodies of Palestinians that have been retrieved went further and it touched on a subject which the corporate media avoids like the plague, and that is the subject of organ harvesting. Can you tell us, you know, just elaborate on what you said and what is your understanding of these practices and the evidence that you've seen that in fact Israeli military personnel or others are engaging in this horrific activity on a significant scale?

SA: So, first of all, the bodies were also bound; the hands, the arms were bound and the feet were bound and so forth. So I want to point that out because clearly these people were tortured and then murdered while they posed no threat whatsoever. A lot of the bodies returned missing vital organs, missing corneas, missing ligaments. Some were headless, some were limless, and some of the bodies had been clearly dissected and then stuffed with cotton inside, they were emptied of their organs. So there's very clear evidence that Israel stole the organs. I mean, it's not refutable. And there is a history of this. There's decades of this. Palestinians since I was born, as long as I can remember, Palestinians had been complaining

that their loved ones were returning from Israeli prisons or Israeli captivity, I mean, Israel routinely, by the way, embargoes Palestinian bodies and holds Palestinian bodies for years on end, and basically blackmails people and extorts them in order to return the bodies, and the bodies over the years were routinely returned, having been dissected and stuffed with sometimes newspapers or cotton or whatever, with a lot of the organs missing, especially eyes and other organs in the torso. So Palestinians had been complaining about this and talking about it for decades.

I think it was in either in the late 90s or early 2000s, there was a Scandinavian reporter who finally broke the story and documented it. He had been investigating it for years and finally broke it. At one point I knew all the details of this, but it's been so long. I can't remember the reporter's name, but anyone can look this up. Of course Israel started screaming blood libel and you know they made a big fuss about it. The reporter was threatened, he had to go into hiding. I think he was probably also fired, the newspaper was sanctioned. But anyway, the story didn't go away and ultimately it was investigated by I think Israeli media and eventually Israeli physicians who had harvested the organs admitted it, admitted that yeah, this is a practice we've been doing. And then there was recently a viral clip of the director of the skin bank in Israel. It's apparently the biggest skin bank in the world. And the reporters were asking her, like: Where does it come from? Do Israelis, is it a culture of donating organs? And she laughed. She says: Oh no, no, no, we don't take from Jews. She said it mostly comes from foreign workers and Palestinians. So there is plenty of evidence that they have that they have been doing this for many years. And also they were digging, Israel when they were in Gaza, they dug up the cemeteries. They literally body snatched corpses.

DL: I've followed fairly carefully the reporting coming out of the major Western human rights organizations. Are you aware of a single one, Amnesty, Human Rights Watch, or even B'Tselem that is taking up this subject, conducted any kind of a meaningful investigation?

SA: Not that I know of. I mean, they might be doing it now. I don't know. They are quite slow. When it comes to this issue, I find that these rights organizations take a long time to actually move, and it's only after massive public pressure and massive evidence that they just cannot ignore anymore and still maintain credibility. Like for example, it took B'Tselem you know, close to two years before they came out and called it a genocide. And even then in their report, they still qualified it as a response to October 7th. Which is bullshit, and they should know it's bullshit. And they pointed out that that was the instigation, that's what instigated the genocide. And I just feel like does anybody – can we talk about what Jews in Germany did to instigate the Holocaust? I mean, can we talk about that? Like who instigates a genocide? It's completely inappropriate, but it seems like everybody just understands that when it comes to Palestinians, they can say things about us, for us, that would never fly if it were any other group. Our lives are cheap, they are nothing in the international consciousness and certainly in Israeli consciousness, and even among human rights organizations. You know, one can always find this kind of hypocrisy.

DL: Yeah. You know, it took Amnesty also four years to accuse Israel of apartheid, four years after Professor Richard Falk, the former UN Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Palestinian

territories, wrote a detailed report in which he concluded that the evidence of Israeli apartheid was overwhelming. That was in 2017. And I actually quit as a supporter of Amnesty because I was so upset about their refusal to say the obvious. Anyways, I want to talk to you now about the right of resistance, the right of armed resistance, because there's a lot hinging upon this at the moment.

Netanyahu, this war criminal has been unequivocal that Hamas has to be disarmed. And of course, anybody who's paying any attention is thinking, has a functioning brain, knows that he's not just talking about Hamas. He wants all weapons in the possession of Palestinians to be surrendered, the capacity to make weapons, the complete demilitarization, as he puts it, of the occupied Palestinians. And although Trump was kind of equivocating before the Israeli PoWs were turned over to Israel, he then came out and said: Oh no, Hamas must disarm. And if they don't do it, we're gonna do it for them and perhaps violently. So this matter is going to come to a head. And the resistance groups have said unequivocally they are not going to disarm. And the other thing I want to throw in for your consideration is that a poll done in May by a reputable polling agency in the occupied territories found that 80% of Palestinians are opposed to the disarmament of Hamas, of those living under occupation. Which is higher, substantially higher than the percentage of people who express support for Hamas, which is very interesting. So even people who did not express support for Hamas, many of them were still saying we don't – so my question to you is as a Palestinian and one living in the West, not under the occupation, what is your feeling about armed resistance? First of all, do you support the notion that Palestinians living under occupation have a right to armed resistance? And secondly, do you think that they should exercise that right in the current circumstances?

SA: Palestinians not only have a right to armed resistance, they have a moral obligation to armed resistance. Palestinians have tried everything, including Hamas. We tried every non-violent means and every instance we were met with unbelievable violence and horror and deprivation and denigration and reduction. And Palestinians were left with no choice. We know and the resistance knows that we are militarily no match for Israel. But there comes a point when one refuses to live as subjects. One refuses to live such undignified lives and to live on one's knees. And you get to that point where death is preferable. And the Palestinian resistance has a credo that comes from Al-Qassam, the original Qassam. It's either victory or martyrdom. They're not gonna lay down their arms, nor should they. [Speaks Arabic] It means basically we will fight until liberation or until death.

SA: It's no different than Western chants for give me liberty or give me death. It's the same, it's the same human impulse. Nobody wants to live in shackles as Palestinians have been living. So I do not support the disarmament of any Palestinian faction. I do not support the disarmament of Hezbollah. Why should we? Why? When this barbaric genocidal colony is literally telling us that they want to wipe us off of the earth. It would be mind-blowing, it would be humiliating and horrific if we did lay down our arms. And we actually have experience where Palestinians did actually lay down their arms after they were given assurances from the United States through Ronald Reagan, Philip Habib, and if you recall Alexander Haig in the 1980s, and the Palestinian Fedayeen, the PLO withdrew from Southern

Lebanon, and they went to Tunisia, they laid down their arms, and they did so on the expressed assurances from the United States that their families and children left behind in the refugee camps would be safe. And what happened? Ariel Sharon sent his military in, besieged the Sabra and Shatilah, and they let in their phalange proxies who butchered for 48 hours, just went from building to building, home to home, butchering people with machetes, with knives, with bullets, raping women, just really like horrific act of genocide. And why would we do that again? Why would any sane people believe anything the United States says after something like that, and then lay down our arms, you know, basically just invite more butchery like that?

DL: So on the political front, there is you know, a person of great esteem continuing to be held in conditions amounting to torture in Israel's dungeons. I'm talking, of course, of Marwan Barghouti. And it was widely reported that in the lead up to the prisoner exchange, the resistance groups repeatedly demanded the release of Barghouti and Israel repeatedly refused. That poll I referred to a moment ago about opposition to the disarmament of Hamas also asked a number of other questions, including what would happen if there were a three-way election involved Marwan Barghouti, the leader of Hamas at the time – this is in May of this year – it was Khaled Mashal and the third candidate being Mahmoud Abbas, and they found that Barghouti would get 50% of the vote, and the Hamas candidate would get, I believe 38, and Mashal would get 11%. Clearly this is a person of considerable stature. I mean, when you think about this level of support for somebody who has not had an opportunity to interact directly with Palestinians living under occupation for over 20 years, there's no kind of campaigning. What do you think the appeal is to so many Palestinian people of Marwan Barghouti?

SA: So first of all, I just wanna point out that of course he's not the only prisoner who's still languishing, or detainee or hostage rather, languishing in Israeli dungeons. There are hundreds of political prisoners still there and there are thousands of Palestinian hostages who have neither been charged nor convicted of any crime. They were just kidnapped from their homes throughout Gaza and the West Bank and they languish in and are being tortured, including Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, and many others. So regarding Marwan Barghouti...

DL: If I may for our audience's benefit, I believe he was a if not the top physician, one of the top physicians at Al Shifa hospital in the Gaza Strip, is that correct?

SA: Yeah, I think he was the director of Nasser hospital [Kamal Adwan Hospital]. There are others there like for example, Dr. Adnan Al-Bursh was the head of orthopedics at the Al Shifa hospital, and he was also kidnapped and reportedly raped to death, tortured and raped to death. And by the way, nearly all of the prisoners, the detained the Palestinian hostages who've been released, have reported horrific rape, rape by dogs, rape with sticks. And the testimonies are shocking. And reportedly Marwan was also beaten. I don't know what's happening with him, but released prisoners say that maltreatment, mistreatment against him has intensified. Ben Gvir is apparently obsessed with him. I mean, we saw that video that he released basically threatening Marwan Barghouti, who's literally in solitary confinement and was in shackles. But Marwan is widely seen as a unifying figure, and he's a member of Fatah.

But all factions, all Palestinian factions, including Hamas, which is more of an Islamist movement than the secular Fatah, support him. So his release would be a significant thing for Palestinian unity. He is one of the few people who is able to reach across all of the aisles, all the political aisles that divide us. He has a way of centering the struggle in a way that – honestly I think nearly all of our leaders can do that, except Abbas clearly. We also have Ahmad Sa'adat who was a leader in the PFLP, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – it's a secular Marxist movement – who is widely revered and beloved by Palestinians across all political persuasions and religious persuasions. So it is not surprising that Israel did not want to release either of them. They didn't want to release any of Hamas's top persons on the list.

DL: And one of the refrains we hear about people like Marwan Barghouti and others, who like him are serving long prison sentences is that, well, these people were terrorists and murderers. You know, many of these convictions were entered. The vast majority of these convictions, not that it matters whether you're talking about military tribunals or domestic courts of Israel, but my understanding is the vast majority of these convictions were entered by the military tribunals. How do you respond when people, who are either uninformed, sitting on the fence, or who are simply Zionists say, well, these people are, you know, they were convicted by a court for committing heinous acts? What's your response to that?

SA: First of all, Israeli military courts are not courts. They're not. It's an apartheid court. It's kind of like they have like a 99.8% conviction rate, first of all. Like it's a joke. It's really a processing plant to warehouse Palestinians who do not bow to Jewish supremacy. Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for being a terrorist. It's the same thing. All of these people, all of these political prisoners are in prison because they refused not only to bow to Jewish supremacy and Jewish supremacist rule in Palestine, but because they inspire others to follow them. They inspire young people. And the way that colonizers deal with that is to, you know, they can't round up every single person as much as they'd like to, as much as they fantasize about that and talk about it. So they take the ones that are unbroken and they take them and they try to break them, or at least they keep them away from others and young people who might be inspired by them. But it's not working. It never worked in other places and it's not gonna work now. It's just a prolonged process of torture, of unbearable really horrific torture that has gone on for far, far too long.

DL: My last question to you, Susan, is after these two plus years, I mean, of course, the horrors go back decades, but we've seen extraordinarily intensified level of horror in occupied Palestine over the last two plus years, as a Palestinian now, having endured all of this for so long, what are your thoughts about the struggle, the overall arc of the struggle? Do you continue to have a strong belief in the destiny of the Palestinian people to achieve their own liberation? Do you feel more hopeful today than you felt at the beginning of this genocidal rampage, less hopeful? What is your overall sort of frame of mind vis-a-vis the overall struggle of the Palestinian people?

SA: I have no doubt that Israel will end, probably in my lifetime. It is utterly unsustainable. The harm that they inflict, not just on Palestinians, but on the whole world, I mean, people

don't know much of what Israel does around the world, throughout Africa, throughout South America, the kinds of death and destruction that they sow in other countries in order to extract resources, especially in places like Congo. And like for example, the pillar of Israel's economy historically was diamonds, polished diamonds. There's no diamond mines in Israel. They were principal actors in the blood diamond industry in Africa, sending weapons and training and money to militias to continue sowing chaos so that they can fly out to these planes back and forth and back and forth of unpolished diamonds. That's just one example; from Congo, from Sierra Leone, Angola, and even South Africa, years ago. So Israel's presence in this world is a cancer. It really is. It has brought so much harm. And Gabor Mate talks about moral injury. I really think it's a profound concept that Israel has inflicted on the whole of humanity when all of us have watched day in and day out the dismemberment of children, the burning alive of children, the burying alive of children, the shredding of children's bodies. The bodies, the dead bodies that litter the roads and are eaten by dogs, and nobody can get to them because Israel is – you know, when we watch this stuff day in and day out, there is a moral injury that has happened to all of us. This is what Israel has done. This is an utterly unsustainable horror that has to end.

If humanity is to have a moral future, if we are to have a future that is dignified and with a moral basis, Israel has to end in its current form. It cannot survive. And I don't think it will. I think humanity is waking up, and I think people in this country, the United States, are beginning to wake up and they're starting to understand the level of control that Israel has exerted on not just American policies, but on public discourse. Their influence and manipulation of the media, of the public discourse, of what people in this country are allowed to know and allowed to see has been near total. And with this exposition now of the genocide, people have awakened to the truth, to a reality that they had never seen and could and never knew. And so what does Israel do? They respond as they always have, which is to exert more control on public information. So you have the purchase of TikTok, the forced purchase of TikTok by Larry Ellison, who is a Zionist, he's a rabid Zionist, who has said his whole purpose is to basically support Israel and change the narrative. He said that. So he and his son own a huge landscape of American media. And then if you look at all the other social media platforms, they're also owned by Zionists. And they also have deals with Israel, basically, on what can be shown and what whatnot. Everybody who is on Meta, for example, knows that real criticism of Zionism, any kind of support of the Palestinian resistance, I mean, you get taken down, your accounts get blocked and removed. So this has been ongoing. They have bought up the airwaves, and now they're investing hundreds of millions of dollars into public relations campaigns to basically alter Western perception of Israel. And one of the things they're doing – it's two-pronged, according to the the leaked documents that have been made public – one of the prongs is to promulgate Islamophobia, basically to ramp up Islamophobic content so that Israel in comparison begins to look good and people understand, well, they had to do it, right? So that's one of the prongs.

The other prong is to push biblical narratives on Christian on churchgoers. There is this whole story that broke about something called geofencing. It's the first time I'd ever heard that term, but basically what that means is that these firms will put a digital fence around

certain areas, especially churches, like mega evangelical churches, and they will bombard those phones with evangelical pro-Zionist content, and then they track those phones, everywhere they go after that. And again, so this is what they do. And I don't know what's going to happen if they will succeed in that. They have been successful in the past. I hope that it will not work. I hope that people are really attuned to this and have woken up.

So time will tell, but ultimately, in the end, Israel does not belong in our region. Our struggle is long. This is another episode in our history of a very long struggle, the end of which we will be victorious, I have no doubt. We are not the Native Americans on a vast continent who were wiped out in the dark. We are a people who are integral to a vast region of people who are just like us, who speak the same language, who are Christians and Muslims just like us, who have the same genetic pool, and those people aren't going away. Israel will not be able to wipe all of them out in the way that the United States wiped out indigenous people or nearly so, they didn't wipe them out. Indigenous people are still here. But Israel will not be able to marginalize us in the same way. I think they imagine that they can. So we're not going to stop. I personally, I mean, I will fight them to my last breath. And I think Palestinians everywhere feel this way. This is a loyalty to our ancestors, it is a loyalty to our history. We are not willing to become amnesiacs who just are dispersed all over the world, don't remember our history, and who will relinquish our heritage. It's not gonna happen.

DL: Well, it's been a great privilege talking to you, Susan. I know you don't have too much more time today, so we'll end it there and I hope that we'll have the opportunity to speak with you again on Reason2Resist.

SA: Thanks, Dimitri. Have a good day.

DL: We're signing off now from Kalamata, Greece, and the Philadelphia area.

END

Thank you for reading this transcript. Please don't forget to donate to support our independent and non-profit journalism:

BANKKONTO:	**PAYPAL:**	**PATREON:**	**BETTERPLACE:**
Kontoinhaber: acTVism München e.V. Bank: GLS Bank IBAN: DE89430609678224073600 BIC: GENODEM1GLS	E-Mail: PayPal@acTVism.org	https://www.patreon.com/acTVism	Link: Click here