



DEFENDERS

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ISRAEL'S MILITARY AGGRESSION AGAINST IRAN: HUMANITARIAN IMPACT, LEGAL VIOLATIONS, AND ASSESSMENTS FROM INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS



Israel's Military Aggression
Against Iran: Humanitarian
Impact, Legal Violations, and
Assessments from International
Experts

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Contents

- 5 Introduction
- 7 Geopolitics, Law, and Power: A Conversation with Amedeo Avondet
- 13 Power, Resistance, and the Global South: A Conversation with Bruno Beaklini on the U.S.–Israeli Aggression Against Iran
- 17 Media Narratives and the Erasure of International Law
- 23 Twelve Days of Aggression and Global Silence: A Conversation with Peter Ford on Violations of the UN Charter
- 27 Reclaiming Peace in a World at War: A Conversation with David Swanson
- 31 The Weaponization of Silence: Voices of Conscience Amid the Ruins
- 37 Israel’s military aggression against Iran
- 41 Faith, Conscience, and Conflict: Reflections from Philip Hopkins on Ethics in a Time of War
- 47 From Gaza to Tehran: Helena Cobban on the Legacy of Empire and the Crisis of International Law

Introduction

On 13 June 2025, Israel launched a large-scale, coordinated military assault against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Over the course of twelve consecutive days, the Israeli Air Force—operating with full logistical, military, and intelligence backing from the United States—conducted extensive aerial bombardments across multiple provinces. Verified data from the Iranian Ministry of Health, the Iranian Red Crescent Society, and independent humanitarian organizations confirm the devastating human toll: 1,064 civilians killed, including 132 women (two of them pregnant) and 47 children, 5,750 injured alongside the deaths of journalists, medical personnel, and Red Crescent paramedics. The attacks damaged or destroyed over 9,000 homes, reduced hundreds to rubble, and targeted hospitals, clinics, ambulances, water systems, pharmaceutical production facilities, and even the headquarters of the Iranian Red Crescent Society. These were not isolated battlefield errors, but systematic strikes against civilian life, infrastructure, and essential services, designed to inflict maximum disruption and suffering.

From a legal perspective, the assault constitutes a multi-layered breach of international law, particularly the most fundamental principles of international humanitarian law. Israel's actions violated the UN Charter's Article 2(4), which prohibits the threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence of any state. The justification advanced under Article 51—claiming a right of self-defense—finds no credible basis in law, as preemptive strikes under false allegations against a sovereign state are explicitly prohibited. Under the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, Israel's conduct breached the principle of distinction (Article 48, Additional Protocol I) by failing to differentiate between military objectives and civilian objects, and violated the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks (Article 51). The targeted destruction of hospitals, clinics, and marked medical transports contravened Articles 18–22 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Attacks on water infrastructure and the Kimidarou Pharmaceutical Factory violated Article 54 of Additional Protocol I, which forbids destruction of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. Moreover, false evacuation warnings designed to induce mass panic violated Article

51(2) of Additional Protocol I, prohibiting acts aimed at terrorizing civilians. Taken together, these acts amount to grave breaches and war crimes under international law.

In response to this unprecedented escalation and in fulfillment of its mandate to document, analyze, and advocate against violations of human rights and humanitarian law, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) has conducted a series of exclusive interviews with distinguished international experts. These conversations seek to gather informed legal, political, and ethical perspectives on the illegality of the aggression, the systemic nature of Israel's violations, and the urgent need for accountability.

The interviewees include:

Peter Ford – Veteran diplomat and former UK Ambassador to Syria

Helena Cobban – Senior analyst on West Asian affairs and Director of the Just World Educational Foundation

Professor Joseph O. Boyd-Barrett – Eminent scholar of global communications and media discourse on war

Dr. Bruno Beaklini – Geopolitical scholar, author, and analyst of the Global South

Dr. Philip Hopkins – Professor of Religious Studies and researcher on Iran–West relations

David Swanson – Peace activist, author, and Executive Director of World BEYOND War

Dr. Raúl Rodríguez – Director of the Center for U.S. and Hemispheric Studies, University of Havana

Amedeo Avondet – Journalist and founder of the political organization Italia Unita

Robert Fantina – American–Canadian journalist and human rights activist

These interviews reflect the independent views of the experts and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence.

Geopolitics, Law, and Power: A Conversation with Amedeo Avondet



Amedeo Avondet is the founder of Italia Unita, a political organization launched on May 13, 2022, which seeks to restore Italian national sovereignty through withdrawal from the European Union and NATO. He has served as a parliamentary assistant at the European Parliament, managed communications for a regional councilor, collaborated with various news outlets, and currently works as a correspondent for the RRN news agency. In this interview with the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), Avondet offers an uncompromising analysis of Israel’s June 2025 attacks on Iran, the legal and political dynamics behind them, and the structural obstacles to accountability within the international system. He addresses the entrenched Western alignment with Israel, the erosion of the United Nations’ authority, and the need for alternative alliances to counter Euro-Atlantic hegemony. The views expressed in this interview are those of the interviewee and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)

1- In light of Israel’s attacks on Iran starting 13 June 2025, which have resulted in the deaths of 1,100 people—including 126 women and 41 children—and more than 5,700 injuries, how would you evaluate these actions under international law, especially in relation to Article 2(4) of the UN Charter which prohibits the use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another state? Israel and the United States have invoked a controversial interpretation of Article 51 on self-defense to justify their actions. What is your assessment of this justification?

As I have reiterated on multiple occasions during televised interviews in my capacity as a legal expert, the Charter of the United Nations and international

law do not permit, nor do they justify, any form of preemptive attack against sovereign states recognized by the international community. There exists no geopolitical, legal, or military rationale that could legitimize Israel's conduct in the current context. The root of the so-called Twelve-Day War lies solely in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's desire to preserve his emergency powers. One must not overlook the significant internal difficulties the Israeli Prime Minister is facing, stemming from his personal legal troubles within Israel itself. Netanyahu is currently on trial for corruption, fraud, and breach of trust in three distinct legal cases—known respectively as Case 1000, Case 2000, and Case 4000. Naturally, the presumption of innocence applies until a final ruling is issued, but it is equally evident that the current emergency government in Israel is sustained more by the systematic creation of external enemies than by any genuine internal consensus. This is a historical pattern frequently observed in political and military affairs, and to which Israel is by no means an exception. The recent attacks on Syria are but a further demonstration of this dynamic.

2- Israel has deliberately targeted critical civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, water facilities, and the Kimidarou pharmaceutical factory in Tehran. It has also issued vague evacuation warnings for a city of over 10 million residents, causing widespread panic and displacement. What strategic or political objectives do you believe Israel was pursuing with these actions?

The acts committed by Israel are, without any shadow of doubt, egregious war crimes that merit the severest moral and political condemnation. Regrettably, from a strictly legal and pragmatic standpoint, if a State has not ratified relevant conventions or treaties, there are virtually no effective instruments of enforcement or intervention available to the international community. The only exception would lie with the United Nations Security Council, where, due to the United States' veto power, the situation will remain frozen in a state of impunity. Israel will therefore remain completely unpunished and free to act—at least in this world. God, however, sees everything and takes note. That, I believe, is the only certainty one can affirm.

3- The killing of 13 Iranian civilian nuclear scientists and their families, alongside paramedics and Red Crescent medical staff, has been described by several observers as both extrajudicial execution and a grave breach of international humanitarian law. In your view, what role can the International Criminal Court or other legal mechanisms play in addressing such violations, and what are the realistic pathways to ensure accountability?

While I unequivocally condemn the targeted killings of Iranian nuclear scientists, along with the deliberate attacks on medical and humanitarian personnel affiliated with the Red Crescent, I do not believe the International Criminal Court (ICC) can play any substantive role in holding Israel accountable for its violations of the law of armed conflict or international humanitarian law. Legally speaking, Israel cannot be deemed in violation of treaties to which it

has never consented. The State of Israel has never ratified the Rome Statute, which means that the ICC lacks any jurisdiction over Israeli political or military decision-making. Any attempt to assert such jurisdiction would constitute a breach of Israeli sovereignty and would set an extremely dangerous precedent.

At the same time, if we shift from a legal to a geopolitical and military lens, it must once again be acknowledged that *realpolitik* has always operated on the principle of “diplomacy through force”— a principle as brutal as it is historically ubiquitous. Consider, for instance, the famous Melian Dialogue in Book V of Thucydides’ History of the Peloponnesian War, or, more recently, the characteristically arrogant foreign policy practiced by Anglo-Saxon powers over the last two centuries.

Judges will not save Palestinians, Iranians, or Arabs. Only reciprocal force, applied with strategic intelligence and determination, can forestall long-term Israeli strategic dominance. Any project not grounded in the hard foundations of blood and strength risks becoming nothing more than an idle intellectual affectation, destined to crumble upon first contact with a ruthless and unforgiving reality.

4- Given the consistent support of Western governments for Israel, despite decades of documented human rights violations and UN condemnations, what explains this persistent political alignment? In your view, what are the structural or ideological factors that sustain this Western consensus in favor of Israel, even in the face of atrocities?

There are three principal reasons for the persistent alignment of Western governments with Israel. First, Europe continues to grapple with a deep-seated historical guilt vis-à-vis the Jewish people. Centuries of ghettoization, pogroms, and systemic violence culminating in the Holocaust have left European governments morally exposed to instrumental accusations of antisemitism, whether from Zionist organizations or from the Israeli government itself.

Second, Jewish communities wield considerable economic influence in most Western countries and beyond. In the United States, for example, one in three millionaires is of Jewish origin or faith. Third, the Israeli intelligence services, pro-Israel networks, and Zionist-aligned institutions have demonstrated exceptional capacity in establishing political and economic lobbying mechanisms capable of directly or indirectly influencing many political decision-makers. The case of AIPAC in the United States stands as a paradigmatic example. Moreover, the psychological and informational warfare waged systematically through compromised or manipulated media has proven highly effective in rationalizing the irrational and justifying the unjustifiable.

5- How do you assess the response or lack thereof by the UN Security Council in this context? To what extent does its inaction impact the legitimacy of the international legal order and the

UN's credibility as a guardian of international peace and security?

The UN Security Council's veto system renders any collective international response effectively impossible. In an increasingly multipolar world marked by escalating tensions between rival blocs, the United Nations' mandate is being steadily eroded, reducing its function to a largely ceremonial role. In the years to come, only one rule will prevail: the rule of the strong—both economically and, above all, militarily.

6- Israel has repeatedly violated international law in Gaza, Lebanon, and now Iran. What legal, diplomatic, or even grassroots mechanisms do you believe can effectively promote accountability and prevent impunity?

The states targeted by Israel should urgently strengthen their bilateral and multilateral agreements, particularly in defense and economic cooperation. Emulating a NATO-style framework would mark a strategic and operational turning point. A mutual defense clause, joint training operations, systems integration, collaborative development of advanced military technologies, and the resulting reductions in research and production costs would considerably enhance the strategic posture of all states resisting Euro-Atlantic hegemony. In this regard, the existing partnerships between Russia and several other nations have already yielded mutually beneficial outcomes, unequivocally demonstrating the necessity of pursuing this path.

7- As someone deeply familiar with Italian political dynamics, how have major political parties and the current Italian government responded to this conflict? Do you observe any shift in public or parliamentary discourse in Italy regarding Israel's actions, particularly in the aftermath of the attacks on Iran?

In no way whatsoever. Since 1943, Italy has effectively been a country of limited sovereignty. The presence of U.S. military bases and significant NATO personnel on Italian territory prevents any genuine shift in national policy. Although numerous public demonstrations have taken place, the will of the Italian people is irrelevant when set against the dictates of Washington. The only real prospect for change would be the unification of these protest movements into a single political force committed to restoring national independence and sovereignty.

8- In your view, what viable legal or institutional mechanisms currently exist within the UN system—such as the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, or regional human rights courts—to ensure accountability for sustained and systematic violations of international law, such as Israel's recent attacks on Iran? What reforms would be necessary to make these mechanisms more effective?

Unless and until an international police force, operating under a UN mandate and with jurisdiction over all member states, is established—a proposal that remains entirely utopian—there will be no means of prosecuting heads of state or officials responsible for war crimes, unless the governing regime in question suffers a complete military, political, and economic collapse. The Nuremberg Trials against the Nazis in 1945–46 remain the most emblematic precedent.

9- Considering the coordinated nature of the military strikes by Israel and the United States against Iranian nuclear sites, is there a credible basis in international law for initiating proceedings against the U.S. for complicity in unlawful uses of force? How could jurisdictional or admissibility challenges be addressed at forums like the International Court of Justice or other tribunals?

There exists no realistic possibility of prosecuting the United States—or its political and military officials—unless it were to undergo a catastrophic collapse on multiple fronts. Any judge or official, whether from the United Nations or another international legal institution, who attempts to bring legal proceedings against the United States would immediately be sanctioned—or eliminated. The United States is a nuclear, military, and economic superpower. It does not recognize the Rome Statute and therefore assigns no authority to the International Criminal Court within its domestic legal framework. Even in the unlikely event of a conviction by the ICC, such a decision would have absolutely no practical consequences for U.S. authorities. The Court simply has no jurisdiction over states that do not recognize its authority.

10- Given the recent nomination of Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize despite his outspoken support for Israeli policies, including during episodes of mass civilian targeting in Gaza and now Iran, what does this reveal about the politicization of peace narratives? In your view, how can international norms be protected against such contradictions?

Barack Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize after launching far more military interventions than Donald Trump. One need only recall the intervention in Libya, which remains a catastrophe for both the Libyan people and the Italian population, the latter still suffering from intense migratory pressure as a direct consequence of reckless U.S. policies enacted under administrations preceding Trump. The most viable course of action would be to completely abandon Western-controlled institutions and establish alternative ones in concert with friendly nations or aligned blocs. The creation of a “BRICS Peace Prize,” for example, could offer a compelling and credible counterweight.

11- Israeli officials have publicly expressed pride in targeting Palestinian civilians¹—even those queuing for humanitarian aid in Gaza²—suggesting

1. <https://law4palestine.org/law-for-palestine-releases-database-with-500-instances-of-israeli-incitement-to-genocide-continuously-updated/>

2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0rvxjnv71o>

a deliberate strategy of collective punishment. How does such rhetoric function ideologically to normalize war crimes, and what legal classification do these acts fall under in the framework of international criminal law?

These are, unequivocally, war crimes and must be prosecuted by every available means. However, as previously stated, from a strictly legal standpoint, no realistic means currently exist to impose judicial punishment. Consequently, extrajudicial executions may become the only possible form of retaliation—though this brings with it the risk that justice devolves into vengeance. In the end, only God can judge whether descending to the level of the perpetrators represents the highest form of justice, or whether extending mercy to demonic and malevolent souls is the path to be followed. I leave that decision to readers, in accordance with their individual faiths.

Power, Resistance, and the Global South: A Conversation with Bruno Beaklini on the U.S.–Israeli Aggression Against Iran



Bruno Beaklini, a political analyst and professor of international relations, emphasizes that Israel’s military attacks on Iran in June 2025 misuse Article 51 of the UN Charter in a way reminiscent of Nazi Germany’s invasions. He highlights how the weakness of international institutions in confronting this scorched-earth policy exposes the deep hypocrisy and double standards within international law. In a world where the international order claims to be rooted in law, yet the instruments of power remain in the hands of the same dominant actors, the role of the Global South in redefining balances of power has never been more critical. The global reactions to the joint U.S.–Israeli military assault on Iran in June 2025 reflect this gradual shift in alignments—shifts emerging not through ineffective institutions, but through new coalitions, transnational solidarity, and reimagined strategies for survival and development in the face of imperial warfare.

Bruno Beaklini, a political analyst, professor of international relations, and Arab-Brazilian journalist, is a prominent voice in this evolving discourse. A committed libertarian socialist, Beaklini engages in both theoretical and grassroots platforms, drawing on anti-colonial traditions and a deep understanding of the Middle East. His commentaries are featured across Latin American, Spanish, and Arabic media, where he connects global geopolitics with local resistance narratives.

In this exclusive interview with the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), Beaklini analyzes the recent aggression against Iran

through the lenses of scorched-earth policy, the failures of international institutions, and the strategic imperative of South–South cooperation. With clarity and historical depth, he draws connections from the fascist invasions of the 20th century to today’s asymmetric wars—and envisions pathways for collective justice and deterrence rooted in the shared interests of the Global South.

The full transcript of this important exchange follows:

1- In light of the Israeli military attacks on Iran beginning 13 June 2025, which have led to the death of over 1,100 civilians and thousands of injuries, how do you assess these actions under international law, especially Article 2(4) of the UN Charter which prohibits the use of force against the sovereignty of another state? How do you view the invocation of Article 51 by Israel and the U.S. as a justification?

Israel and the US invoke Article 51 in the 12-Day War against Iran in a manner very similar to that of Nazi Germany’s first invasions of Austria, Bohemia, and Poland. This is a mixture of alleged “regional threat” and imperial arrogance, considering that existential risk is a constant concern for the colonial entity composed of imported populations. Unfortunately, international law, always weakened by the global power system still under Western hegemony, finds itself demoralized by such hypocrisy and double standards.

2- From a security and defense policy perspective, what does Israel’s pattern of targeting civilian infrastructure—such as hospitals, ambulances, water systems, and pharmaceutical production—suggest about its strategic doctrine and military objectives in this conflict?

The central idea of both Israel and the US is scorched earth. The United States applied this doctrine in Vietnam and Central America. At the same time, they are betting on regime change with a kind of permanent social destruction, as they did in Indonesia in the 1960s – with the overthrow of Sukarno in 1967 in Indonesia and the subsequent devastation of the infrastructure in Iraq, resulting in more than a million deaths in both campaigns. Israel adopts this same principle of provoking a defeat in society and in the relationship between rulers and ruled, government and citizens. In this case, in the war of aggression against Iran in June 2025, they failed to achieve their objectives.

3- Given your background in international political economy and Global South analysis, how do you interpret the systemic alignment of major Western powers with Israeli militarism? To what extent does this reflect structural inequalities and asymmetries in the international system, particularly in relation to multilateral institutions?

Israel is the only country in the world that can afford to wage a war without repayment. Not even the United States has this capacity, considering that it

is at least obliged to generate more public debt, hence the need to ensure that the world's reserve currency is the dollar. The Zionist regime was resupplied mid-war, receiving 12 F-35s within five days of aggression against Iran. This inequality also manifests itself in international institutions, making any hypocritical rhetoric from the United States merely dangerous propaganda.

4- How do you evaluate the response—or lack thereof—by the UN Security Council to the Israeli aggression, in light of its mandate to maintain international peace and security? What reforms or alternative frameworks might better serve the interests of states in the Global South?

The UN Security Council is completely demoralized, especially due to the United States' veto power, shielding Israel from paying for its ongoing crimes and perpetuating genocide and apartheid. The only "way out" is to replicate NATO's mutual protection agreement, but within the Global South. A good initiative could replicate this mutual protection framework within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's security area. This would be an example of how to prevent the US, Israel, and NATO from exercising their monopoly on force.

5- The extrajudicial killings of Iranian scientists, medics, and rescue workers by Israeli forces have been condemned by various international observers. What mechanisms of transnational justice or international accountability—beyond the often-paralyzed ICC—do you believe are feasible or necessary in such cases?

Unfortunately, I consider myself a skeptic regarding international instruments of law and justice. Nor is it intellectually responsible to advocate for justice by one's own efforts. But it is a fact that the ICC doesn't work, has no enforcement power, and is constantly being demoralized. It would be necessary to agree on a new international legal agreement, at least among the blocs, and also reorganize the Interpol system and similar mechanisms.

6- How do you assess the role of arms trade and defense-industrial relations between Israel and Western countries—especially the U.S., Germany, and the UK—in perpetuating impunity and fueling aggressive wars? Should these relationships be redefined under international arms control norms?

It may seem repetitive, but international law has no power to impose itself on defense matters. It's not like IATA – the International Commercial Shipping Association – or even international maritime trade agreements. If the defense industry and trade were regulated, the United States and its allies would inevitably lose a factor in projecting power in the face of the advanced Asian industrial economy. Ideally, states convicted of crimes against humanity, apartheid, and genocide, such as Israel today and supremacist South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, would never be able to trade with other nations, much less in sensitive trade, defense, or security matters. But these idealizations of

international norms are also the result of a new balance in the planet's balance of power. Perhaps with the advancement of the Asian and Eurasian economies, we could reach this level of legality within a decade.

7- As an academic and public intellectual from Latin America, how do you view the solidarity landscape within the Global South regarding Palestine, Iran, and the struggle against militarized imperialism? What steps should be taken to enhance independent geopolitical agency among Southern nations?

At this point, I believe we could make further progress. Latin American civil societies are already very supportive of Palestine, and Iran's image is improving. But it still falls short of its real potential, considering that we have millions of Arab descendants in Latin America, forming considerable communities in Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, in addition to the Arab and Palestinian presence in Central America. The presence of Iranian media in our countries is growing, but it is still incipient in the face of Zionist and pro-US hegemony. This presence in social relations may even imply a new foreign policy framework, and for this, in addition to import and export trade, two movements are necessary: powerful cultural institutions with significant participation and funding (seeking the training of bilingual or trilingual intellectuals); the greater dissemination of Arabic and Persian languages (similar to Chinese initiatives); and, in parallel, the creation of binational companies (joint ventures) in areas of technological advancement. Iran specializes in satellite production, and Brazil, for example, despite having an industrial park and centers of excellence in the aerospace sector, still lacks satellites. This could be a shared interest that impacts joint development.

Media Narratives and the Erasure of International Law



An exclusive interview was conducted with Professor Joseph Oliver Boyd-Barratt, in which he discusses the role of mainstream media in biased coverage and support of Western policies in the Israel-Iran conflict, calling this a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter. He emphasizes the illegality of Israeli and American attacks and warns that by ignoring the facts, the media helps normalize widespread crimes against the people of Palestine and Iran. The key point he raises is the urgent need to reform international institutions and enforce deterrent measures to hold perpetrators accountable for these crimes.

Between June 13 and June 24, 2025, Israel—with direct support from the United States—launched a sustained twelve-day military campaign against the Islamic Republic of Iran. This unprecedented act of aggression resulted in the deaths of more than 1,100 civilians, including 132 women and 47 children, and left over 5,700 injured. Civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, residential buildings, water and energy systems, pharmaceutical facilities, and Red Crescent ambulances were deliberately targeted. The attacks represented one of the gravest violations of international humanitarian law in recent memory.

Meanwhile, this military campaign stood in stark contradiction to the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly Article 2(4), which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

To analyze how global media institutions have framed this attack and to explore the broader implications for international justice, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) conducted an interview with Professor Joseph Oliver Boyd-Barrett, a distinguished scholar of media, empire, and international communication.

Professor Boyd-Barrett is a leading authority on media and global power

structures, with decades of research on international communications, war reporting, and news agencies. His publications include influential works such as “Media Imperialism”, “The Globalization of News”, “Le Trafic Des Nouvelles”, and “Contra-Flow in Global News”. He has served as North American Editor of Global Media and Communication and held advisory roles on several major academic journals in media studies

The full interview text is available below:

1- In light of Israel’s recent military aggression against Iran—resulting in the death of over 1,100 civilians and the destruction of non-military infrastructure—how do you assess the role of mainstream media in framing this conflict? To what extent have media outlets contributed to legitimizing or concealing violations of international law?

As a communication and media expert, and as one who has examined media coverage of US-Iranian-Israeli relations over a number of years I have long formed the conclusion that mainstream media coverage in the US frames the conflict almost entirely in ways that are favorable to US foreign policy interests. The single most egregious example of this is how mainstream media routinely give US spokesmen the credit for being serious whenever they charge Iran and Iranian uranium enrichment as constituting a form of nuclear “threat” to the region, ignoring the facts that Iran has never had a nuclear weapon, that there is very good evidence that Iranian leadership is opposed to possession and use of nuclear weapons, that Iran was an early signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and that almost without exception it has ever since (up to last month) permitted IAEA entry for the purposes of routine inspections, and that it is perfectly legal for Iran to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes to any level of enrichment; WHEREAS neighboring Israel possesses what are believed to be in excess of 100-200 nuclear warheads, that Israel acquired its weaponry illegally, that US aid to Israel is therefore illegal, that Israel has never signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, that Israel’s nuclear weapons facilities are never subject to external inspection.

2- Israeli and U.S. officials have invoked Article 51 of the UN Charter to justify the attacks. However, critics argue this interpretation circumvents Article 2(4) and the prohibition of force against sovereign states. From your perspective, how does this legal narrative intersect with Western political messaging and media discourse?

The attacks by the US and Israel are utterly illegal. They are based on the demonstrably false premise that Iran, not having a single nuclear weapon, IS a nuclear “threat,” whereas Israel, with 100-200 nuclear warheads somehow is NOT a threat, a false premise that was further and deceitfully buttressed by the IAEA itself declaring, on the basis of extremely questionable evidence, with reference to a dispute resolved over a decade ago, that Iran was “out of

compliance.” The intensity of IAEA and western intelligence surveillance of Iran’s nuclear capability is such that it would be impossible for Iran to have developed a nuclear weapon without this being known to the international community. The US and Israeli attacks constitute a major war crime, made even worse by the fact that Iran and the US were engaged in peace negotiations at the time.

3- In recent years—particularly during the recent attacks on Gaza—Israeli officials have openly endorsed genocidal intent against civilians, even boasting about killing children waiting in line for humanitarian aid. From the perspective of ideology and media representation, what function does such discourse serve in normalizing atrocity? And how should the international community respond to this level of moral degradation in the official rhetorics?

The Israeli genocide is possibly the greatest evil our world has experienced since the Nazi holocaust. Mainstream media in the West have always been protective of Israel despite copious evidence that its relationship to the Palestinian people is at best a relationship of colonizer and colonized and that within the territory of Israel the State practices apartheid, which is illegal. These media have woken up to the reality of genocide far, far too late, and this is inexcusable. I recognize that the UNGA and the UNSC and their various agencies have taken measures - so far almost completely ineffective - to serve justice to the Palestinian people. The UN must provide far more robust material support, by coercive means, if necessary, to protect the people of Palestine, and to aggressively investigate the failings of its own agencies, as in the case of concerns about direct complicity between members of the IAEA, the occupying power in Palestine and its superpower enabler, the USA.

4- Israel’s deliberate destruction of hospitals, water systems, pharmaceutical facilities, and Red Crescent rescue vehicles in Tehran follows a pattern witnessed in Gaza. Strategically and communicatively, what objectives are served by targeting humanitarian infrastructure, and how are such acts presented or obscured in global media narratives?

The served objectives relate to a Zionist agenda for the expansion of Israel into the territories of its neighbors including Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Egypt. To this end, Israel has long opposed and decimated the ranks of Hezbollah militia in Lebanon and Syria and Hamas in Gaza, that have also supported Iran and received support from Iran (which nonetheless has no executive power over them). Israeli objectives also relate to a struggle by Israel for regional supremacy over other regional contenders, most especially Iran. Saudi Arabia has expressed a desire for normalization with Israel and has largely been a proxy of the US, at least until the emergence of the BRICS powers. Turkey is a NATO country that may protest Israeli war crimes but continues to supply Azeri oil to Israel through its energy hubs, and that,

like Israel, has a positive relationship with Azerbaijan, and has aided Israel by seeking the breakup of Syria, and continues to attempt to straddle totally conflicting interests to its own great discredit. The US has largely supported Israeli objectives seeing in its proxy an instrument with which it can sustain imperial power in the world's single most important center of energy supplies, in part with a view to containing the influence of China that depends to a significant but not overwhelming degree on Iranian energy products.

5- How do you interpret the systemic use of starvation and deprivation—particularly in Gaza, where over 90% of the population now suffers from acute food insecurity—as a weapon of war? In your view, what practical mechanisms exist within the UN system (e.g., the Human Rights Council, ICC, ICJ) to hold Israel or its allies accountable for sustained breaches of international humanitarian and criminal law? What are the current limitations and possible reform paths?

All “practical” measures appear to have been tried. The UN must mobilize coercive power in circumstances such as these.

6- Considering the United States’ role as a co-belligerent in these attacks—through intelligence sharing, joint targeting, and weapons supply—is there any legal basis for holding the U.S. internationally accountable for complicity in unlawful uses of force? What precedent or legal pathways exist to address such forms of state collaboration?

Power trumps legality. The only ways forward are the development of multipolarity, the reform of the UN structures, and the reassertion of UN authority over the “rules-based” order.

7- Some narratives now frame figures like Donald Trump—whose policies enabled mass violence and impunity—as potential nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize. How do you assess this contradiction, especially in light of Trump’s support for Israeli military campaigns and his role in dismantling international legal norms?

This is a farce that deserves no further comment.

8- Finally, the U.S. government increasingly avoids using standard international legal terminology, opting instead for phrases like “rules-based international order” while ignoring binding international obligations. How do you interpret this shift in discourse, and what consequences does it have for the authority and effectiveness of international law?

The foreign policy of the US government since the collapse of the Soviet Union has been to assert US dominance over the security architecture of the entire planet. This policy has come under extreme pressure, principally from the time of China’s accession to the WTO in 2001 and China’s rapid economic

growth surpassing that of the USA in terms of purchasing power parity, some years ago, but also from the rejection by Russian President Vladimir Putin of the subservient neo-liberal policies imposed on Russia by the West under the presidency of Boris Yeltsin. The US is fighting back, principally (and currently) along three fronts: a war with Russia over US proxy Ukraine; a war with Iran over US proxy Israel; and, above all, a war with China over US proxy (and still part of China), Taiwan.

Twelve Days of Aggression and Global Silence: A Conversation with Peter Ford on Violations of the UN Charter



This is an exclusive interview conducted by the Organization for the Defense of Victims of Violence, titled “Twelve Days of Aggression and Global Silence: A Conversation with Peter Ford on Violations of the UN Charter”. Between June 13 and June 24, 2025, the world witnessed a grave escalation of violence as Israel, with direct and sustained support from the United States, launched a coordinated and deliberate military campaign against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Over the course of 12 harrowing days, waves of airstrikes targeted not only military infrastructure, but also critical civilian sites across Tehran and several other cities. Hospitals, residential buildings, water systems, pharmaceutical facilities, media offices, and even Red Crescent ambulances came under relentless bombardment. The consequences of this aggression have been catastrophic. More than 1,100 civilians lost their lives, among them 132 women and 47 children. Over 5,700 individuals were wounded. The strikes triggered widespread displacement, panic, and infrastructure collapse in urban centers, representing one of the most severe breaches of international law in recent history.

On July 20, 2025, eleven UN Special Rapporteurs issued a joint statement unequivocally condemning the attacks as an “act of armed aggression”, a “clear violation of the UN Charter”, and a “grave breach of peremptory norms of international law.” The statement highlighted that the attacks on nuclear and energy infrastructure, civilian neighborhoods, and humanitarian facilities amounted to a flagrant violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which

prohibits any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

In response to these alarming developments and in line with its ongoing efforts to document and expose violations of international law, the Organization for Defense of Victims of Violence (ODVV) held a detailed written interview with Ambassador Peter William Ford, a veteran British diplomat, and long-standing expert on West Asian affairs.

Ambassador Ford studied at the University of Oxford and served with the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in diplomatic posts across London, Beirut, Cairo, Riyadh, Singapore, and Paris. He was appointed as the British Ambassador to Bahrain and subsequently to Syria (1999–2003). From 2006 to 2015, he served as Representative of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, based in Jordan, engaging directly with humanitarian and political dimensions of the Palestine refugee crisis.

Currently, Ambassador Ford advises the Bahrain Royal Charity Organization and provides expert counsel to members of the British Parliament on Syrian affairs. He is a frequent contributor to international media.

To benefit from Ambassador Ford's insights and extensive experience, the Organization for the Defense of Victims of Violence conducted this interview, the full text of which is provided below:

1- In light of Israel's attacks on Iran starting 13 June 2025, resulting in 1,100 deaths—including 126 women and 41 children—and 5,750 injuries, how would you evaluate these actions under international law, particularly Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which prohibits the use of force against a state's sovereignty? Israel and the United States have cited a self-styled interpretation of Article 51 on self-defense to justify these attacks. What is your perspective on this?

No serious statesman or analyst would accept the US/Israeli attempted legal justification. Article 51 is clear that only an imminent attack can justify an aggression, and neither the US nor Israel have provided evidence of any such imminent attack. Indeed, all the indications were that Israel had been intending to attack Iran for a long time, and that Iran's posture was defensive. The illegality of Israel's unprovoked attack could hardly have been more flagrant.

2- By deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, water facilities, and the Kimiadarou pharmaceutical factory, and issuing vague evacuation warnings for a city of over 10 million people, causing widespread panic and displacement, what objectives was Israel pursuing?

Israel scarcely attempted to hide its intention to sow panic among the population, in the hope of fomenting unrest leading to regime change. The word ‘terrorism;’ is greatly over-used but if we are going to use it then the Israeli threats and attacks on civilian targets constituted a textbook example of state terrorism. Bearing in mind that Israel has been using these same tactics with highly visible effect in Gaza, the intention to spread terror was blatant.

3- The killing of 13 civilian nuclear scientists and their families, alongside medical personnel and Red Crescent paramedics, has been described as extrajudicial executions. What actions can the International Criminal Court or other international bodies take to address these grave human rights violations?

In a perfect world the International Criminal Court would be investigating these killings, upon request of the injured party, namely the Islamic Republic. The ICC has investigated comparable crimes in the Gaza context. In the world in which we live, however, it has proven all too easy for Israel, operating under US protection, to flout and to denigrate investigations by the ICC in the case of Gaza, and the same would no doubt be true in the case of Iran.

Reference to the nuclear scientists prompts me to make an observation about Iran’s alleged development of a nuclear weapons capability. One conclusion which we can draw from the 12 Day War is that Israel’s own possession of a nuclear weapon capability - not admitted but known to exist - failed to deter Iran’s counter-attacks, which came close to inflicting existential damage on Israel. Why then would Iran want to develop a nuclear capability which far from guaranteeing it immunity from attack would in fact make attack more likely?

4- Given the support of certain Western governments for Israel and the inaction of the UN Security Council, how does this impact the credibility of the international legal order and the UN’s ability to maintain global peace and security?

The response or rather lack of response from the Security Council sadly underlined the already diminished credibility of that body. A blatant unprovoked attack on a Member State went completely without condemnation, let alone stronger action. The process by which the US with its veto power protects Israel from the consequences of its actions has been developing over many years, mainly in relation to Palestinians, but protection after Israel’s launching of a war against another state takes this process to a deplorable new level.

5- Considering Israel’s pattern of violating international law in regions such as Gaza and Lebanon, what legal and diplomatic mechanisms would you propose to ensure accountability and prevent impunity?

A. In the face of abuse of power by the US and other Western powers in order

to circumvent international law it is tempting to throw up one's hands and say there are no legal or diplomatic remedies. The system is undoubtedly rigged in favor of the powerful. Despair, however, gives bad counsel. The fact that the Western powers still try hypocritically to exploit the UN and other international instances rather than relying on raw power indicates that there must still be hope that the system is worth trying to save. As Oscar Wilde wrote "Hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue". Despite everything the UN remains in a sense a court of world opinion and the Western powers hate to be found guilty in that court. Even when a nugatory outcome is guaranteed it is still useful for the Security Council to hold deliberations in which the Western powers can be pilloried if not punished.

In due course, with the development of the Global South and BRICS a new world order seems certain to emerge. Major changes in international institutions are likely to come about as part of that process. In the long term this is the path which must be followed to ensure accountability and prevent impunity.

In the meanwhile, states like the Islamic Republic have no choice but to build up their defenses to deter aggressions.

Reclaiming Peace in a World at War: A Conversation with David Swanson



In this interview, David Swanson, Executive Director of World BEYOND War, argues that Israel’s 2025 attacks on Iran blatantly violate international law, describing the defensive justification under Article 51 of the UN Charter as “at the top end of the dishonesty scale.” He emphasizes the urgent need for grassroots, nonviolent activism to challenge Western complicity and demand accountability for war crimes. As global headlines shift rapidly from one crisis to another, the very structures designed to uphold peace and international legality are increasingly revealed as fragile, politicized, or absent. Amid this unraveling, voices of conscience—grounded in moral clarity and historical awareness—remain essential. One such voice is that of David Swanson, who has long challenged the normalization of militarism and the erosion of legal accountability in international relations.

Swanson is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of World BEYOND War, a global network committed to the abolition of warfare in all its forms. Based in Virginia, he also serves as Campaign Coordinator for RootsAction.org and hosts Talk World Radio, where he engages leading scholars and activists on issues of war and peace. A recipient of the 2018 Peace Prize from the U.S. Peace Memorial Foundation, Swanson’s work spans journalism, advocacy, and education, with a sustained focus on nonviolence, international law, and grassroots mobilization.

In the aftermath of Israel’s twelve-day aerial assault on Iran in June 2025—carried out with full U.S. support and resulting in widespread civilian harm and destruction—international concern over the erosion of legal norms and unchecked aggression has reached new heights. In this interview with the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), David Swanson

offers a candid reflection on the breakdown of international legal standards, the complicity of Western powers, and the urgent need for bottom-up resistance to reclaim justice. His responses challenge dominant narratives of “defense” and “deterrence,” calling instead for a renewed global ethic rooted in civil courage, solidarity, and peace.

The full transcript of this important exchange follows:

1- Israel’s military attacks on Iran since 13 June 2025 have resulted in over 1,100 civilian deaths and nearly 6,000 injuries. These attacks have been justified under a unilateral interpretation of Article 51 of the UN Charter. In your view, how do these actions stand under international law, particularly in light of Article 2(4) and the prohibition on the use of force against sovereign states?

The creation of Article 51 was a predictable disastrous opening for war that severely weakened the total ban on war that had existed in the Kellogg-Briand Pact. No side of any war ever fails to claim it is acting defensively. Arguably, none of these claims is fully justified, because alternative means of defense can be superior to war (unarmed civilian defense, diplomacy, the rule of law, etc.), but some claims are more blatantly dishonest than others. The claim that Israel (or the United States) is acting defensively in bombing another country such as Iran is at the top end of the dishonesty scale. If any warmaking is NOT defensive it is bombing a distant country.

2- In your October 2024 article “The Israeli Government Must Be Stopped,” you warned of the looming danger of a wider regional war involving Iran, triggered by Israel and supported by Western powers. Given the current reality, how do you assess the role of Western governments and weapons suppliers in enabling this escalation? What responsibility do they bear under international law and moral accountability?

The UN Charter says “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.” Those who do not are behaving criminally.

3- The recent Israeli strikes have deliberately targeted civilian infrastructure—including hospitals, water facilities, and a pharmaceutical factory—causing mass displacement and panic. From the perspective of strategic objectives and international humanitarian law (IHL), how do you interpret this pattern of attacks? What do they reveal about Israel’s military and political aims?

Israeli government officials are openly genocidal in their remarks. No commentary from others can make that any worse. The notion that the International Court of Justice needs months or years to find guilt of genocide

in Gaza is absurd.

4- As someone deeply involved in peace movements and campaigns for demilitarization, what forms of grassroots mobilization and public pressure do you believe are most urgently needed now to prevent further escalation and demand accountability? Are there lessons to be drawn from past anti-war efforts that can guide current actions?

Public pressure has helped prevent a major U.S. assault on Syria in 2015 and on Iran numerous times. We need solidarity across borders, principled activism apart from political parties, and all the tools of nonviolent activism urgently employed.

5- Israel's extrajudicial killings of Iranian scientists, medical personnel, and rescue workers have raised serious questions about impunity. What practical steps should international institutions like the ICC or UN Human Rights Council take to uphold justice? If formal mechanisms remain blocked, what role can civil society and transnational advocacy networks play in filling this accountability gap?

There is an arrest warrant for Netanyahu. The problem is that national governments allow him to visit their nations and not be arrested. Just before he left the United States last week to return to Israel, he flew from Washington to my town of Charlottesville to visit the slave plantation of Thomas Jefferson. But nobody knew about it until he had come and gone. We need to do a better job of tracking the world's worst indicted criminals so that they can be arrested.

The Weaponization of Silence: Voices of Conscience Amid the Ruins



In an exclusive interview with the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, Robert Fantina strongly condemns Israel’s 2025 attacks on Iran as clear violations of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, rejecting Israel and the U.S.’s misuse of Article 51 for justification. He highlights the deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure as part of a broader strategy of intimidation and oppression, rooted in settler-colonialism and systemic injustice. Fantina calls for global civil society to intensify solidarity and activism to hold perpetrators accountable and expose the intertwining of power, propaganda, and impunity that sustains these crimes.

In mid-June 2025, Israel—with full logistical, military, and intelligence backing from the United States—launched a twelve-day aerial operation against Iran, ostensibly targeting military sites. However, the strikes also hit vital civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, water and energy systems, pharmaceutical facilities, and Red Crescent ambulances, in Tehran and several other cities. Hospitals, water systems, ambulances, pharmaceutical plants, residential towers, and media offices were all struck in a campaign widely condemned as a flagrant breach of international law. The toll: over 1,100 civilian deaths, including 132 women and 47 children, and more than 5,700 injuries.

The international legal and humanitarian implications of such violence—compounded by the persistent silence or complicity of Western powers—raise urgent questions about the enforcement of global norms and the accountability of dominant actors. To engage with these questions, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) held an exclusive interview with Robert Fantina, a committed voice for global justice and a long-standing critic of militarism, propaganda, and Western double standards.

Robert Fantina is a journalist and activist who currently serves on the boards of

Canadian Voices for Palestinian Rights and Canadians for Justice in Kashmir, and writes regularly for CounterPunch, Global Research, and other platforms. His books include “Occupied Palestine: Israel, the U.S. and International Law”, “Empire, Racism and Genocide: A History of U.S. Foreign Policy”, and “Propaganda, Lies and False Flags: How the U.S. Justifies Its Wars”. Through both his journalism and activism, Mr. Fantina advocates for an international order grounded in law, dignity, and truth.

Below is the full text of the interview for your consideration:

1- In light of Israel’s military attacks on Iran since 13 June 2025—which have resulted in over 1,100 civilian deaths, including 126 women and 41 children, and more than 5,700 injuries—how do you assess the legality of these actions under international law, particularly Article 2(4) of the UN Charter? What is your view on Israel and the U.S. invoking Article 51 to justify these strikes?

The attack on Iran clearly violated Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which forbids the use of force against any sovereign nation. Israel and the U.S. consider themselves above the law, as has been demonstrated repeatedly for decades. They attacked Iran – a sovereign nation – that posed no threat to them.

Article 51 does not come into play in this situation in terms of Israel and the United States. That article describes the rights of self-defense in the event of an armed attack. So while the Iranian government was justified in retaliating, based on the rights enshrined in Article 51, the U.S. and Israel were not.

The United States will use any excuse and justification – valid or not, and usually not – to attack any nation it sees as an ‘enemy’. Iran hasn’t demonstrated any threat to the U.S. or Israel, although both those nations have threatened, and now attacked, Iran.

2- The targeting of civilian infrastructure—including hospitals, water systems, ambulances, and a pharmaceutical facility—has led to mass displacement in Tehran. What strategic goals do you believe Israel was pursuing, and how do such tactics reflect broader trends in its military doctrine?

The Israel government and its chief sponsor, the United States, have no interest in human rights or international law. The U.S. launched its so-called ‘war on terrorism’ decades ago, but from the start it has been a war of terrorism, not on terrorism. Israel and the U.S. do not only seek military victory over Iran, the same way they are seeking far more in Palestine. They want to intimidate the residents of those countries to the point that they will be willing to submit to whatever cruelties and indignities Israel and the U.S. choose to inflict, and history shows that those cruelties and indignities have no limits. The U.S. and Israel refuse to learn that the people of Palestine, Iran, Lebanon, Syria and

Yemen will not be defeated.

3- The assassination of 13 Iranian civilian scientists and their families, along with Red Crescent medical personnel, has been widely condemned as extrajudicial killings. What role can international mechanisms such as the ICC or the UN Human Rights Council play in addressing such violations?

Government leaders in Israel and the U.S. and the soldiers who do their bidding, must be held accountable. The UN Human Rights Council is mainly a monitoring and recommending body, but its recommendations can be used by the International Criminal Court to hold international criminals accountable. The U.S. government continues to do all that it can to restrict the ICC, but that body continues its work regardless of the impediments created by the U.S. Additionally, the International Court of Justice must be more pro-active in issuing warrants for U.S. and Israel government leaders who were involved in the attacks on Iran.

4- Given your academic work on settler colonialism and the dehumanization of racialized populations, how do you interpret the ongoing Israeli violence in Palestine through this lens? What patterns of state domination and systemic injustice do you see emerging from the occupation and blockade?

What is happening today in Palestine - both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank - is settler-colonialism at its most brutal manifestation. Genocide can be seen as the ultimate step in settler-colonialism. We are seeing desperate people being starved and then offered some limited food, and when they seek to obtain that food, they are mercilessly shot and killed. A dear friend of mine died this way just last week. The Israel and U.S. governments are purposely arranging these atrocities: first, by preventing any food from entering the Gaza Strip for several months causing severe hunger; second, by establishing a 'food distribution' program that is limited and selective, and that has been condemned by all reputable human-rights organization in the world; third, once these desperate, starving people hear of a 'food distribution' sight opening in their proximity, the flock to it and, as they approach, they are shot to death. It is difficult to imagine a more premediated or brutal cruelty.

5- You have written extensively on the manipulation of narratives in Western media and politics. Why do you think so many Western policymakers continue to support Israel despite decades of documented human rights violations and international condemnation? What does this reveal about the interplay between power, propaganda, and legal accountability?

The U.S. is, of course, Israel's main sponsor and the reason it commits war crimes and crimes against humanity with impunity. In the U.S., lobby groups

donate large sums of money to candidates for elective office. One of the most powerful of these lobby groups is the combined pro-Israel lobbies. These organizations donate tens of millions of dollars to the election and re-election campaigns of U.S. officials who will do their bidding. These officials are anxious to retain their positions of power and prestige, and therefore accept the ‘donations’ and then, when in office, introduce legislation that is written by the lobbyists. Human rights and international law are a distant second on their priority lists, if they appear on those lists at all.

So here we see a clear interplay between power – the desire for elected officials to maintain their positions at any costs; propaganda – the legislation introduced, written by pro-Israel lobbyists that focus on their Zionist views while ignoring international law and human rights, and legal accountability which is swept aside to allow the campaign donations to continue to flow.

6- As an analyst of social movements, what forms of civil society resistance and international solidarity do you believe are most effective today in countering Israeli state violence and impunity—particularly in the context of Palestine, Iran, and the broader Global South?

It was reported today that an Israeli cruise ship was prevented from docking at a scheduled port in Greece because of peaceful pro-Palestinian protesters. Ships arriving on the west coast of the United States delivering goods from Israel have been delayed in being unloaded because of protests there. University encampments and other forms of protest around the world caught the attention of academic leaders, some of whom simply threatened or punished the protesters, but some of whom listened to them and made changes. Unions and religious organizations have voted to divest from Israeli investments. The boycott, divest and sanction movement continues to grow.

As the global reputation of Israel continues to degrade due to its ongoing genocide, its actions against other countries, including Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen must be associated with that genocide. They are all part of the same violent, illegal methods that are common for both Israel and the United States.

People globally must demand adherence to international law by their leaders. People in countries that have any semblance of fair voting procedures must assure that the officials they elect will stand for human rights and international law, and are committed to prosecuting those that violate them.

7- Finally, what steps can independent scholars, journalists, and human rights advocates take to document, expose, and challenge the normalization of aggression and double standards in international legal enforcement—especially regarding Israel?

We must continue to document the atrocities, and work to assure that the

side of justice is heard. This is not always the case, especially in the context of Palestine and Israel. A recent study by Enouri, et al. is instructive. In comparing "...221 articles published between October 7, 2023, to October 7, 2024, they found that 'Pro-Gaza stances represented two-thirds of the reviewed papers. Pro-Gaza papers were published in more impacted journals and exhibited better altmetrics. While pro-Gaza authors were affiliated with various international institutions, pro-Israel authors were mainly affiliated with Israeli Institutions'". This indicates a high degree of credibility and international respect for pro-Palestine journalists, far more than for those that support Israel. This kind of information must be made public. If scholarly papers supporting Palestine have far more credibility than those supporting Israel, the so-called mainstream media and current politicians must be made aware of this, and those politicians who continue to support Israel in order to obtain campaign contributions, must be removed from office.

Scholars and journalists who support Palestine must not cease speaking for justice, human rights and full compliance with international law.

Israel's military aggression against Iran



An exclusive interview conducted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence with Dr. Raúl Rodríguez on Israel's military aggression against Iran. Raúl Rodríguez is a professor/researcher and currently Director of the Center for Hemispheric and United States Studies at the University of Havana. Mr. Rodríguez holds a M.A. degree in 20th Century History and International Relations and a Ph.D. in History from the School of History and Social Sciences at the University of Havana and a degree in English from the Higher Institute of Foreign Languages. At the University of Havana, he teaches introductory and postgraduate courses on U.S. history, and he has co-authored syllabi and taught courses (in English) on Cuban history and the history of U.S.-Cuban relations to U.S. undergraduate students and graduate students from Harvard University, University of North Carolina, American University, Tulane University, University of Alabama and Webster University on semester programs at the University of Havana since 2004.

1- In light of Israel's attacks on Iran starting 13 June 2025, which have resulted in the deaths of 1,100 people—including 126 women and 41 children—and more than 5,700 injuries, how would you evaluate these actions under international law, especially in relation to Article 2(4) of the UN Charter which prohibits the use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another state? Israel and the United States have invoked a controversial interpretation of Article 51 on self-defense to justify their actions. What is your assessment of this justification?

There is no question that that both the U.S. and the Israeli Government violated the U.N charter, which calls for all U.N. member states to refrain from the threat or the use of force against other member states. It did so, with utmost disregard for international law. Israel had bombed nuclear reactors before—

in Iraq in 1981 and in Syria in 2007—but the Iranian blitzkrieg attack was much more sophisticated and diverse in targets that either Iraq's or Syria's. The Zionist Government has a long history of violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbor states in the name of self-defense with the economic, military and diplomatic support of the United States. The Israeli attack on Iran targeted the country's top military leaders and nuclear scientists as well as infrastructure and even civilian objectives. The Israeli Strategy failed as Iran's military command structure is intricate and multi-layered and it became evident that Israel cannot sustain a war effort without the United States.

There is no way to invoke self-defense, as there is no evidence of Iranian hostile military action against the territorial integrity neither of Israel nor against any of its neighbors. The Iranian government emphasizes as one of the tenets of its foreign policy. The fact that Iran condemns the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the continued atrocities carried out by the Israeli army in occupied Palestine for decades and supports those who resist it cannot be construed as an actual threat that warrants the targeted assassination of Iranian Military officials and scientists. Additionally, there is no credible evidence to suggest that Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapons program.

2- Israel has deliberately targeted critical civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, water facilities, and pharmaceutical factory in Tehran. It has also issued vague evacuation warnings for a city of over 10 million residents, causing widespread panic and displacement. What strategic or political objectives do you believe Israel was pursuing with these actions?

In my opinion the Israeli army targeted critical civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, water facilities, and pharmaceutical factories in Tehran in order to test the soundness Iranian infrastructure, the actual political cohesion of the Iranian population and the levels of support for the Iranian government. Let's not forget that the Israeli PM himself called for the Iranians to act against its government and used some of its own intelligence assets inside Iran to generate chaos and uncertainty. Knowing they could not sustain a long campaign against Iran the objective was to stun the Iranian population. Their objective was fragmenting Iran into a divided nation with a failed government and a destabilized society, as the U.S. and Israel have done in Libya and Syria for example. It was the opposite, the prevailing sense of patriotism in Iran, was reinforced by the attack, as national unity opposed external attempts to destabilize the country.

3- Given the consistent support of Western governments for Israel, despite decades of documented human rights violations and UN condemnations, what explains this persistent political alignment? In your view, what are the structural or ideological factors that sustain this Western consensus in favor of Israel, even in the face of atrocities?

Western governments provide weapons to Israel to continue its genocidal attacks against the Palestinian people. They are directly involved in the asymmetric war in Palestine and are the enablers of the ongoing genocide against the Palestinians. The west has created and supported several of the strongest armies in the world against a small group of resistance movements against a settler colonial state created and installed geographically by the UK first and U.S. mostly after the second world war.

The first reason is therefore the colonial legacy. Most Western countries that have had colonialist policies during the last several centuries promoted the formation of Israel as one of their colonial projects at the end of the 19th century and during the first half of the 20th century. After the Second World War, these powers, especially the Anglo-Saxon alliance UK-US established Israel as one of the most effective instruments of Western colonialism in the Middle East and West Asia.

Another reason is that Western governments, especially the United States are largely dependent on pro-Israeli power circles. Most observers of U.S politics know that pro-Israeli lobbies, who are known as the main kingmakers in the U.S. political system, have dominated the U.S. electoral system for decades now.

It is also important to point about that the U.S. military Industrial complex obtains big profits from the provision of military equipment for Israel and other allies in the region, so U.S. “tech” giants and military corporations make big profit from supporting Israel and reshaping the region to their hegemonic interests.

Last but not least, western mainstream media platforms are controlled by a few corporations that cover up the crimes of the Israeli government. The mainstream Western media outlets frame all developments from a Zionist perspective, usually portraying Israel as the victim that is surrounded by hostile neighbors.

4- How do you assess the response or lack thereof by the UN Security Council in this context? To what extent does its inaction impact the legitimacy of the international legal order and the UN’s credibility as a guardian of international peace and security?

The response of the United Nations security council is questionable to say the least, while this is not new. Its lack of decisive action to stop the continued aggression of the State of Israel against its neighbors and the ruthless occupation of Palestine undermines the legitimacy of the U.N body. The U.S. has vetoed resolutions critical of Israel more than any other Security Council member. It has vetoed dozens of Security Council resolutions in since 1945 and slightly over half of its vetoes have been used on resolutions critical of

Israel. Of the vetoed resolutions, most have pertained to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories or the country's treatment of the Palestinian people. Therefore, the UN's credibility as a guardian of International peace and security is significantly damaged.

5- Israel has repeatedly violated international law in Gaza, Lebanon, and now Iran. What legal, diplomatic, or even grassroots mechanisms do you believe can effectively promote accountability and prevent impunity?

I think that a reorganization of the U.N Security Council is absolutely necessary. The veto power of the winners of the second world war and China is unsustainable if the world seeks to avoid double standard and selective behavior by the world most powerful. A more inclusive security council with more members, no permanent members and therefore no veto power by one of them would definitely contribute to a more democratic United Nations Organization.

Also, the promotion of regional alliances in terms of political consultation and joint action is very important, not only at the state level, but also it is necessary to seek interconnection between civil society organizations, think tanks and scholars in order to build sound arguments against manipulation and double standards.

6- As someone familiar with global political dynamics, how have nations aligned against perceived U.S. and Israeli hegemony responded to the conflict involving Israel's actions, particularly in the aftermath of the attacks on Iran? What role do these nations play in addressing this issue, and what forms of support or actions can they undertake to counter such actions?

Most non-western nation in the Global South openly opposed Israel actions against Iran and the ongoing genocide in Gaza. In Latin America, Cuba and Venezuela stood out in condemning the attacks on Iran as they are countries that also face U.S. aggression. The main action by the nations that opposed U.S. aggressive hegemony and the actions of its main ally, Israel, is to continue to strengthen bilateral or multilateral alliances that built of each one's strength.

Nations that promote a counter hegemonic foreign policy must use every available international forum and alternative media platform to expose the flagrant violations of international law by the western governments, especially the U.S. and their continued unabashed support for the Zionist regime in Israel.

Faith, Conscience, and Conflict: Reflections from Philip Hopkins on Ethics in a Time of War



In the aftermath of unprecedented military strikes between Israel and Iran, many global voices have sought moral clarity amid the chaos of conflict and contested narratives. Dr. Philip Hopkins—a historian of religion and culture with a deep academic and personal connection to Iran—offers a faith-based perspective rooted in scripture, compassion, and justice. In this interview with the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), Hopkins reflects on the ethical implications of targeting civilians, the moral responsibilities of governments and faith communities, and the role of spiritual conviction in confronting suffering and injustice. His responses draw from biblical teachings, personal experience, and a commitment to prayerful engagement with global affairs.

While Dr. Hopkins’s views offer a unique religious and cultural lens, the perspectives expressed in this interview do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence.

The full transcript of this important exchange follows:

1- As someone with deep knowledge of religious traditions and moral teachings, how would you evaluate the recent Israeli airstrikes on civilian targets in Iran, including hospitals, and cultural centers, in terms of basic ethical and spiritual values?

The war between Iran and Israel caught most people off guard including myself. I love Iran and the Iranian people. The homes of some of my former students were damaged by airstrikes and some of their children injured, so I am emotional about the strikes. It makes me feel really sad that my students got

hurt. I pray for them. Part of any just war is to avoid civilians and distinguish them from combatants. The only ‘crimes’ my friends committed were being poor and therefore having to live in industrial areas.

2- In your view, how should faith communities around the world—especially Christian and interfaith institutions—respond to such acts of violence, particularly when they target not only lives but also sacred spaces such as mosques, churches, and humanitarian infrastructure?

I do not feel comfortable speaking about other faiths, but for Christians, Romans 13 is a main text used when addressing submission to government. Using Romans 13 as his base, retired American pastor John Piper explains that God selects all regimes, including administrations that are evil. Piper uses Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12.15, Nebuchadnezzar in Jeremiah 27.6, and Pilate in John 19.10 as examples. In each case, the Lord was the one who put and kept the ruler in power even though they were evil. It does not make sense to me for God to allow evil rulers to stay in power, but God always knows best, and God did not ask my opinion.

Jesus Christ himself in Matthew 5.38-48 states that one should love and pray for their enemies. That does not mean the Bible does not provide exceptions and support the breaking of laws. In dealing with greater Iran itself, the Bible gives several examples.

1. Daniel praying to God after an official governmental edict that stated one could only pray to the king (Daniel 6.6-10).
2. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego not bowing to an idol (Daniel 3.9-18).
3. Queen Esther approaching the king without permission to save her people (Esther 3-5).
4. The Maji not obeying King Herod and telling him where the baby Jesus was located (Matthew 2.1-12).

The biblical citations mentioned above are examples of peaceful and non-violent actions. The seriousness, magnitude, and degree of the offense combined with the ability for transparent and real change should be considered before any acts are committed. Christians should desire justice to be accomplished as much as possible in a non-violent and peaceful manner. Christians who speak the truths of Scripture in the spirit of Jesus Christ, understand the nuances of different viewpoints, and act justly with sympathy when discussing them can allow for issues to be addressed in a truthful, peaceful, and accurate manner.

3- Shifting focus from Iran to Palestine: The use of starvation as a weapon of war—particularly in Gaza, where over 90% of the population now suffers from acute food insecurity—has reached horrifying levels. Israeli officials have even publicly boasted about killing civilians, including

children, while they waited in line for humanitarian food aid. How do you assess the ethical and theological implications of such policies, especially in light of foundational religious teachings on the sanctity of life and the obligation to protect the vulnerable?

Hamas has Israeli captives. They are civilians. Hamas should not have attacked civilians. Hamas should release them. However, there is no excuse to starve the Palestinian population to get the Israelis back, even if the Palestinians are sympathetic to Hamas. Christians should never support repaying a wrong with another wrong. Outside of maybe Atheism or Nihilism, starvation of a population crosses all religious theological and ethical barriers. The Bible prohibits punishing children for the sins of the parents. The Palestinians Israel is starving did not attack Israel or take Israelis captive. Starvation of a population is never a solution.

4- Given your scholarly focus on the cultural interface between Iran and the West, how do you interpret the silence—or even complicity—of many Western governments and media institutions in the face of Israeli attacks on Iran? What does this reveal about the moral credibility of Western engagement with human rights?

Very few people in the United States believe the traditional media anymore. People are listening more to longer form media like podcasts. The question why is for another day. Perhaps I am cynical, but I do not believe the moral agency of the West is much different than the moral agency of the East. There seems to be silence in the East and in the West. The questions that I believe should be asked are, “Where does moral credibility arise?” “Does it come from the state or a power greater than the state, like God?” If it only comes from the state, that is going to be a problem as there are many states with many opinions, and those opinions change with different leaders. If it comes from God, then what God? We all believe in a type of God; some believe God is the state, some believe it is a human leader. Others believe God is outside the state. Leaders in the West and East need a moral authority outside themselves: they need Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ provides the moral clarity.

Since the lack of moral clarity seems like a global phenomenon within government and there is fear that Iran will gain a nuclear weapon, if I were the Iranian Government I would try to quench that fear somehow. I think there are three ways this could be done. First, I think full diplomatic relations between the United States and Iran should be restored so that more dialogue can occur and trust can be earned. Second, I think all parties should revisit what former President Mohammad Khatami proposed during his tenure as president of Iran, especially with the nuclear issue but other issues as well. Now that 20 years has gone by, it seems there was wisdom to what he stated. Third, the Iranian government should be more open towards Christianity. This would show their moral superiority over secular nations in the West who have

increasingly attacked the Christian faith.

Regarding human rights, I do not like the term. Everything we have is from God. If it were not for Christ dying and raising to life again for all those who confess their sins and put their faith in him, we all would deserve death and hell. Anything besides death and hell is grace. We all fall short of God's glory. This includes governments and how they treat people. I think it is fine for countries to criticize other countries, but not to admit their own failures seems hypocritical. Countries should first worry about their own records on how they treat the people in their care and begin to rectify wrongs. For all its flaws, the United States is open about its own past failures and is trying to make amends. The way governments treat people goes back to the moral clarity issue or lack thereof. It also leads to the answer to your next question.

5- Israel's systematic targeting of Iranian civilian scientists and medical responders echoes the long history of violence against the innocent in the name of national security. In your view, how can societies of faith and conscience reclaim moral agency in holding perpetrators accountable?

While I am not sure all the scientists who have been targeted are civilian, the greater point that innocents have been killed is something to address. What concerns me most is not whether or not Iran has nuclear capacity – that debate has gone back and forth in Iran since the time of the Shah, and early on in the Islamic Republic its leaders were not so keen on being nuclear – what concerns me is that the United States is not a society of faith as traditionally understood: the United States is a secular nation with a Christianized background, soon to become a post-Christian society. I believe for there to be moral clarity; there needs to be spiritual awakening in the United States and across the world. Moral clarity only comes when there is an absolute standard followed – a plumb line – a guideline outside of oneself, outside of pragmatism, outside of pragmatics, outside of financial or political gain. I believe this standard is found in the clear teachings of the Bible exemplified through the life of Jesus Christ.

6- As a historian of modern Iran and its encounters with Western religious actors, do you see any relevant lessons from past patterns of intervention and resistance that may shed light on the current conflict?

Prior to World War II, the United States was not as involved in Iran's affairs as other countries – in certain ways Americans were appealing to Iranians as Iranians considered them impartial outsiders, friends of the Iranians who did not meddle in internal affairs. Most American governmental involvement prior to this time came as a result of American missionary requests. Combined with cultural superiority becoming an important doctrine in Western ideology, Western Christians joined it with an eschatological belief of Christ's return. Missionaries believed their responsibility was to share the gospel and help

inaugurate Christ's kingdom on earth, which led them to build Western schools and hospitals and 'improve' (Westernise and modernise) Iranian society, as well as proclaim the gospel. The advancement of the 'social gospel' among some more theologically liberal missionaries of the 1960s and 1970s, with its focus on the betterment of life, sometimes over the 'evangelical gospel', with its emphasis on spiritual conversion, only added to this idea. (As an aside, this is one reason why the Iranian educational system is like the American system over the European one. American missionary Samuel Jordan who spent 40 years in Iran focused on education is considered by some as the father of Iran's modern day educational system.) The Iranian elite, in return, absorbed the idea of progress into a nationalism that imagined the American Government, in part because of the missionaries' activity, supporting a transformation of Iran into a freer society. Kamyar Ghaneabassiri notes:

[The Christian missionaries] labored in Persia to improve the educational, medical, and social conditions of the country, and so earned the affection and admiration of Persians for Americans and, in turn, for the United States. The image of the United States which they [the missionaries] created both explicitly . . . and implicitly . . . fostered the belief among Persians that America was sympathetic to their national aspirations for freedom and independence.

For all the flaws of the Pahlavi government, by the end of its tenure, there were only around 500 Muslims in Iran who converted to Christianity. Now Iran has one of the fastest-growing Christian populations in the world. If I were the Islamic Republic of Iran, I would open the doors to Western Christian missionaries and Christianity. It would: 1) lead to greater trust from Western countries and more dialogue 2) perhaps lessen the spread of Christianity in Iran. Now, I do not want the latter, but that is not the question you asked.

7- In recent years, Western narratives have increasingly replaced the language of international law with vague references to a “rules-based international order.” From your perspective, what are the risks of such discursive shifts for global ethics and genuine justice?

This is not just Western narratives. It is Eastern narratives, too. In an increasingly globalized society, the lines between West and East are blurred and therefore terms “Western” and “Eastern” are becoming irrelevant. The more important question is where are these narratives coming from? Why are the shifts happening? I believe this is because there is no moral clarity. Secularism determining moral absolutes is a proven failure. The uniqueness and distinctiveness the Lord has given all ethnicities from all nations allows us to learn and grow from interaction with one another, especially as technology advances and the world thus becomes smaller. If the United Nations could capitalize on this and show the beauty and unity of diversity of cultures perhaps that could help and there could be more worldwide alignment.

8- Finally, some political narratives in the West have floated the idea of nominating figures like Donald Trump—despite his support for Israeli military campaigns and dismantling of international legal norms—for the Nobel Peace Prize. How do you assess the implications of such discourse on the credibility of international law and moral accountability?

The Bible calls me to pray for leaders in government whether I support them or not. I pray for President Trump as he is my president, just like I prayed for Presidents Biden, Obama, Bush (both of them), and Clinton, and I did not vote for all of them and did not agree with all their policies. (I was not a Christian when Reagan, Carter, Ford or Nixon were presidents.) I pray for the leadership in Iran and Israel, too. I pray God opens President Trump’s eyes and causes him to fall more in love with God through Jesus Christ. I pray, if President Trump has not already, that he becomes a Christian; that he believes in Jesus Christ being 100% man and 100% God, that Christ was born of a virgin, came to earth and lived a sinless life, died on the cross, was buried, and three days later rose from the dead to pay the penalty of sin for all those that seek repentance and place their faith in Christ. I also pray that if President Trump is a Christian that he prays to God, reads his Bible daily, and deepens his walk with Christ through going to church, being around Christians, and Scripture meditation. I pray God gives him wisdom to lead justly and righteously with love and sympathy. He is one of the most important and powerful people in the world. Regarding whether or not President Trump should receive the Noble Peace Price – if he can bring peace to the Middle East, especially peace between Israel and Iran, I think it is something that should be considered.

From Gaza to Tehran: Helena Cobban on the Legacy of Empire and the Crisis of International Law



ODVV Exclusive Interview: Helena Cobban notes, the Israeli cross-border aggression against Iran should not be seen as an isolated act of war, but rather a continuation of centuries-old settler-colonial projects rooted in coercion, racial supremacy, and geopolitical domination. In the aftermath of the October 7 attacks and the ensuing catastrophic military campaign by Israel in Gaza—which left tens of thousands of Palestinians dead and entire neighborhoods in ruins—the international community failed to hold the aggressors accountable or halt the violence. Emboldened by this impunity, Israel escalated its regional operations, launching a devastating military assault on the Islamic Republic of Iran between June 13 and June 24, 2025. While the physical damage stretched from Tehran to Isfahan, targeting nuclear facilities, hospitals, humanitarian infrastructure, and media offices, the political and legal implications resonated far beyond.

As Helena Cobban notes, the Israeli cross-border aggression against Iran should not be seen as an isolated act of war, but rather a continuation of centuries-old settler-colonial projects rooted in coercion, racial supremacy, and geopolitical domination. Her analytical framing situates Israel within the historical context of Western empire-building, emphasizing how violence and impunity remain central tools of maintaining control over non-Western societies.

Cobban, a British-American scholar and author of seven books, has reported on the region since the 1970s. After moving to the United States in 1982, she has consistently contributed to international understanding of the Palestinian struggle, post-war accountability, and the broader legacy of colonial violence. A

committed member of the Quaker religious community, her writings emphasize the ethical dimensions of global politics and the need for nonviolent paths to justice. She has been the Executive Director of the Just World Educational Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in the United States. She continues to share her analysis on her long-standing blog, Just World News, and serves as a Senior Fellow at the Center for International Policy in Washington, D.C.

In light of her extensive expertise and longstanding commitment to ethical international engagement, the Organization for the Defense of Victims of Violence (ODVV) conducted an interview with Ms. Cobban to examine the legal, strategic, and historical dimensions of the June 2025 Israeli aggression against Iran.

The full transcript of the interview is provided below:

1- In light of Israel’s military aggression against Iran—beginning on June 13, 2025, and resulting in the deaths of over 1,100 civilians and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure—how do you interpret this attack through the lens of settler-colonial continuity and the regional strategy of destabilization? What historical or ideological patterns do you see being replicated in this new front?

A few years ago, I started a project to look systematically at the origins of the phenomenon by which a handful of “White”, West-European-originated states came to dominate the entire global system-- that, even though the peoples of majority «White» states then as now constituted only around 10% - 12% of humankind. The «White» states were able to achieve their world domination by imposing their always violent, settler-colonial projects on non-»White» peoples and communities on all the world’s continents. Violence, the deliberate use of cruelty against non-»White» peoples, and also crucially the ability to «get away from» the consequences of their actions lay at the heart of those transoceanic, settler-colonial projects.

The five main “White”, transoceanic empires of the modern historical era were emerging nation-states that were all perched on the western (Atlantic) coast of Europe. In chronological order, they were: the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English/British, and French empires. What allowed the architects of these projects to build their empires were their command of sturdy, long-distance ships and strong navigational techniques (often learned from Muslim navigators); their command of advanced naval gunnery and the techniques of using it; and the ability they thereby gained to speedily “escape”, physically, from suffering the ire or retribution of their victims. That was unlike the many land-based empires throughout history, whose masters always, after the end of battles, had to find a way to coexist with neighbors on the same land-mass, whether those neighbors had been fully subjugated or not. In that context, the commanders of the sea-based “White” empires very frequently felt they

could-- indeed, should-- use extreme and exemplary violence and cruelty as a way to punish the Indigenes they encountered.

Israel is quintessentially a settler-colonial project, though an intriguingly late-born one. It has always been deeply embedded within the sinews of “White” empire. Since before 1948 its leaders have acted on the bases of: maintaining technological superiority; their ability to “get away from” encountering any pushback from its victims (in both geographic and geopolitical terms); and an often active desire to deliberately use cruelty to discipline or punish the Indigenes of West Asia. In their own rhetoric, they tend to focus on goals like “re-establishing the ‘credibility’ of Israeli deterrence”, which is a way of connecting with broader modern (and mainly Western) discourse of “deterrence” in the sphere of defense policy. But actually, their actions against Iran over the past year and especially in June 2025, like their actions against their immediate neighbors in West Asia, hark back much more strongly to the kinds of punishment campaign that the Spanish conquistadores (and later, the Anglo-based settlers in North America) enacted against Native people of the Americas, or the French launched against Algerians, or the British against Afghans or Chinese, the Americans in Vietnam, and so on...

2- As someone who has studied post-war justice mechanisms, how do you assess the current institutional capacity of bodies such as the UN Human Rights Council or the International Criminal Court to address ongoing violations in Iran and Palestine? What reforms or realignments might be needed for these bodies to fulfill their mandates in an era of great power impunity?

Since the UN Human Rights Council is a body of the UN, its effectiveness is tightly hobbled by the geopolitical (im-)balance under which the broader UN operates. Many of its Special Rapporteurs have, over the years, done an important job of documenting many gross violations of essential human-rights principles. But that documentation will remain little more than words on paper unless and until the broader decision-making bodies within the UN-- at this point, primarily, the Security Council-- takes serious action to end the gross rights violations as well as, crucially, the conflicts that have provided the environment within which they are committed.

As for the ICC, this is a treaty body whose jurisdiction is limited to the territories of states that are party to it (which Palestine is, though Israel-- like the USA and many other states, including Iran-- is not.) In the 1990s, I’d been a big supporter of a body that, like this one, held the promise of being able to hold accountable national leaders responsible for the commission of gross atrocities in various contexts. Over time and through my own research I came to the conclusion that the ICC fell far short of that ideal. It was mainly a European project to try to punish certain leaders in-- mainly-- Africa of whom the Europeans did not approve. It is true that the ICC has issued indictments

against PM Netanyahu and his former defense minister; but those indictments have had zero impact on the continued support that the USA and most European governments themselves have continued to give to Netanyahu's policies and projects in Gaza and elsewhere. I think it's probably not worth the trouble of discussing how to reform the ICC. The billions of Euros that go into its budget-- most of which flows to very highly paid lawyers from majority-"White" countries- would be much better spent supporting the repair of the many countries in Africa and elsewhere in the Global South that have been ravaged by European wars and colonialism.

3- Given your longstanding commitment to nonviolent resistance and your deep knowledge of Palestinian history, what potential do you see for building cross-border movements of solidarity in response to Israeli aggression in both Palestine and Iran? Can the experiences of civil society in the Global South offer models for ethical internationalism in this context?

Yes, there is a strong potential for continuing to build cross-border movements of solidarity in response to Israeli aggression in both Palestine and Iran. But this potential is far too often stymied-- especially within West Asia itself-- by the actions of governments that feel deeply threatened by such movements, and whose leaders consider themselves almost totally reliant on Western backing. I think it requires a combination of both governmental and non-governmental action at the global level to shift this reality. For example, Chinese diplomacy (along with some other very significant factors) has managed to shift the alignment of many/most GCC countries away from the knee-jerk hostility to Iran they displayed a decade ago.

My hope is that smart, ethical, and coordinated actions at the levels of formal diplomacy, economic actions, and civil-society activism may continue to curtail the "freedom of cruel, coercive action" that Israel has enjoyed in the region for so long and can start to roll back Israel's horrifying violent regional project. But I fear this may not happen in time to save the lives of most of Gaza's people.

4- Israeli and U.S. officials have invoked Article 51 of the UN Charter to justify the attacks on Iran. However, many legal scholars argue this interpretation circumvents Article 2(4) and the core principles of state sovereignty. In your view, how does this legal manipulation intersect with Western media narratives and the broader discourse of "rules-based order"?

Israel's claim to have been acting in "self-defense" against Iran under, presumably, Article 51, is complete nonsense. Israel's many networks of powerful supporters in the West routinely invoke its "right of self-defense" to justify each and every one of its violent and coercive actions, though it is

almost certain that the majority of citizens of Western countries-- like nearly everyone else around the world-- understands every well that the Israeli claims of “self-defense” are hogwash.

At the global level, there was a time when the U.S. government, under Pres. Biden, would repeatedly claim strong fealty to the concept of a “rules-based order.” (Though Biden and his people never really spelled out which “rules” they wanted to act by. Their protestations of support for the RBO always had a rote quality.) Under Pres. Trump, Washington has undergone a significant shift. He and his people exhibit outright contempt for the UN and for any suggestion that the USA should abide by any body of supranational rules whatsoever. Of course, this gives yet more permission for the lawbreakers of Tel Aviv to flout all of international law.

5- Israel has systematically destroyed hospitals, water systems, pharmaceutical factories, and humanitarian aid vehicles in Tehran—mirroring tactics previously used in Gaza. What communicative or strategic logic lies behind targeting humanitarian infrastructure? How has the global media environment contributed to normalizing such practices?

The main logic that seems have informed all of Israel’s deliberate targeting of non-military targets, including those that are expressly protected under international humanitarian law like hospitals, emergency service responders, and so on, seems to have been not only to inflict harm that affects entire communities but also to publicly demonstrate its willingness to commit cruel and grossly violative acts, the broad impunity with which it does so, and its readiness/willingness to continue to commit such acts in the future on perhaps an even broader, more cruel, and more harmful scale. This has been especially true of its actions against the relatively small and extremely vulnerable population of Gaza, but can also be seen in its actions against some of these kinds of “targets” in Iran. (In both contexts, it is important to remember that in IHL the same protections that are accorded to non-military personnel are also accorded to military people who are clearly not on duty-- for example, when they are visiting their families-- and who are thus noncombatants.)

One major example of the communicative function of Israel’s violence was given by the former Israeli security-affairs official Chuck Freilich when he told an Al-Jazeera documentary-maker in 2024 that though it was difficult to see some of the destruction the Israelis had inflicted in Gaza, still there was some “hope” that when the Gaza Palestinians continued to see the extent of that destruction they might change their allegiances and turn against the Resistance.

As for the role of global media, it is true that the big corporate media outlets in the “West” have worked to obfuscate and hide the realities of what Israel

was doing in Gaza-- and to make almost no mention of the anti-humanitarian aspects of Israel's actions against Iran. In reporting the situation in Gaza, for example, they refer to "the food crisis in Gaza", or just "casualties" there, without spelling out that it is Israel that has inflicted that situation.

However, at the global level those legacy "Western" media outlets certainly no longer enjoy the near-monopoly on news reporting that they once enjoyed; and even within Western nations, those outlets' once-dominant role is challenged from many sides including from the emergence of newer media platforms that are much more ready to actively challenge Israel's official narrative. Polling data within the USA and other Western nations now indicates a severe drop in the support that Israel (along with, presumably, most of its key narratives) enjoys in these countries.

This is, of course, a very welcome shift, though it is very, very long overdue. But the challenge remains to be able to unite and organize the newly energized constituencies that are critical and questioning of Zionism, or even actively opposed to it, into a political force that is capable of shifting government policy. That is why I think we need a concerted effort by all the popular movement and governments worldwide that are prepared to work together to bring a speedy and definitive end to all of Israel's cruel scofflawry in Gaza and elsewhere throughout West Asia, and to restore to the United Nations the lead role that the peoples of the world want and need it to have in the restoration of all the rights of the Palestinian people and the other peoples of the region.

