

“A Shared Future After the Genocide in Gaza”, Dr. Hassan Jabareen, Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, 6 August, 2025

Introduction

Good afternoon, and good morning to Hassan, who is joining us from New York. We're deeply grateful to you for waking up so early, and we apologize for the early call. This is our daily “Eyes on Gaza” gathering, and like us, many of you probably need some words of encouragement. We thought there was no one better to provide that than Hassan Jabareen, the founder and director of Adalah-The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel. His name is tied to many groundbreaking Supreme Court rulings, but beyond that he is also a source of optimism and energy that is impossible to ignore. So, Hassan, the floor is yours—eight minutes, and then we will open the discussion to questions.

Lecture

Hello everyone. Good morning from New York, and good afternoon to Haifa. I want to speak about October 7, about the war, and about whether—and how—it may reshape relations between Jews and Arabs inside Israel. At first glance, it's easy to say the impact will be negative. We see the state of Israel moving in a deeply racist direction. Palestinians will not forget what they have endured—acts of destruction unprecedented in their collective memory. If Palestinians cannot forget, and Jews continue shifting toward the racist, far-right, then relations will deteriorate. There will be no shared future in Israel, and the war will simply continue by other means. But I want to offer a different perspective. It is clear that we are in the middle of a formative moment. This war is not just another military operation—it is a defining historical event, comparable to 1948 and 1967. If we want to understand the conflict through its wars, we must ask: what did the three great turning points—1948, 1967, and October 7—actually have done? Only by examining them together do we get the full picture.

The philosopher Jacques Derrida noted that some events defy description and can only be named by their date—like September 11. They resist conceptualization. October 7 falls into that category, alongside 1948 and 1967. For Jewish Israelis, October 7 has no precedent in their collective memory except the Holocaust. Not 1948, not 1967, not 1973, not 1982 (the Lebanon War), not terrorist attacks—none compare. For Palestinians, it is equally unprecedented. The Nakba can no longer be regarded as the defining catastrophe. Many Palestinians today say: what we are living through is worse, not a “second Nakba,” not a continuation, but something more radical, more devastating. Even in the long sweep of Palestinian history—before the Crusades—no destruction of this scale was experienced. So what does it mean when both peoples see this moment as unmatched trauma? The common expectation is estrangement, more hostility, endless conflict. I think differently.

In 1948, Jews celebrated independence, the most triumphant moment of Zionism, while Palestinians endured their greatest tragedy. In 1967, Israel won its most decisive military victory of the century, while the Arab states suffered their most crushing defeat, the defeat of the century. Both events could be understood as victory for one side, disaster for the other. October 7 is different. It cannot be framed as victory or defeat, as celebration or catastrophe alone. No one—neither Israelis nor Palestinians—claims it as triumph. Palestinians may frame it as resistance, even armed resistance or terrorism – but they do not call it victory. Nor do they see themselves in total defeat. The same is true for Israelis. Both sides experienced devastation, but neither seeks its repetition. On this point, at least, there is consensus: the trauma must not recur.

The conclusions are sobering. Israelis have realized that even an unarmed people—Palestinians—can inflict immense pain. Palestinians have realized Israel has the capacity to devastate them, perhaps even destroy them. And yet both sides also recognize the limits: each can cause deep suffering, but neither can erase the other. Israelis are still here. Palestinians are still here. Each formative war has raised its own central question: In 1948, for Jews, the question was the creation of a Jewish state. For Palestinians, it was the right of return. In 1967, the question became settlements versus two states solution. What question arises from October 7? I believe it is the following: not how to defeat or kill each other, but how to live together.

That is the only rational path forward. And I already see signs pointing that way. Among Arab citizens of Israel, there is growing talk of strengthening partnership with Jews. Among Jews—despite racism, despite Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, despite discriminatory laws passed since October 7—I also see a strong current in favour of partnership. I have witnessed gatherings where halls were filled with Jews and Arabs together, finding hope in each other. And perhaps that is the only real source of hope left for both peoples. After the trauma of October 7, if there is to be hope at all, it lies in that single question: how to live together.