



## Is the collapse of the Israeli state coming? Dr. Shir Hever

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**Zain Raza (ZR):** Thank you for tuning in today, and welcome back to another episode of The Source. I'm your host Zain Raza. Today I'll be talking to independent journalist, economist and author Doctor Shir Hever on the latest situation in Israel and Gaza. Dr. Shir Hever is the military embargo coordinator of the Boycott National Committee of the BDS movement. Before I start this interview, I would like to remind you to subscribe to our YouTube channel, as well as our alternative channels on Rumble and Telegram and our podcast called Podbean. Also, if you're watching our videos regularly, make sure to support us with a standing order. We don't take any money from corporations and governments and don't even allow advertisements. We only depend on you, on our viewers, to continue our independent and critical journalism. To find out how you can join our social media channels as well as how you can donate, just click on the description of this video below. We thank you for your support. Doctor Shir Hever, welcome back to the show.

**Shir Hever (SH):** Thanks for having me, Zain.

**ZR:** Let me start this interview with a recap of the situation in Israel and Gaza for our viewers. Israel's war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip continues, and in one month it will be the first anniversary. It is estimated that around 40,800 civilians have been killed by the Israeli military offensive in Gaza so far. Some estimates, for example from the human rights group Euromonitor, even put the death toll beyond 100,000, claiming that the current figure does not include the missing, as well as bodies still buried under the rubble. Tensions with Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah militia are at an all time high since Israel assassinated Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, as well as Hezbollah's top commander Fuad Shukur in Beirut, both in July. Missiles are being exchanged between Israel and Hezbollah on a daily basis, while a retaliatory strike by Iran is still being anticipated. At the end of August Israel launched what it calls a large-scale anti-terror operation in the West Bank in the areas of Jenin and Tulkarm. Israel Foreign Minister Israel Katz declared that the operation was aimed at, quote, "thwarting the Islamic Iranian terror infrastructure", unquote, and claimed that Iran was trying to establish an eastern front against Israel. Before I proceed with further developments, let us stick to this military operation. Can you provide our viewers some

context to Jenin and Tulkarm, and thereafter address why Israel decided to expand its military operation into these areas?

**SH:** I think that the main reason is very domestic. The Israeli public knows that there is no military objective, no strategic benefits that they can gain from this, even though they are, of course, messianic leaders in Israel and fascist groups that are saying that the entire West Bank will be cleansed of its Palestinian indigenous population and colonized with the Jewish settlers. And this is not a realistic course of action. This is not what most Israelis think is possible. However, more and more that we hear about the negotiations for a ceasefire and for an exchange of prisoners between Israel and Hamas, is creating a lot of pressure within Israel when people are made aware that the reason that there is no ceasefire is that Netanyahu is sabotaging the ceasefire. And he's sabotaging that for his own personal political reasons. And every escalation that we see, including the assassinations that you mentioned, including the massive invasion, an unprecedented level of brutality that we see in Jenin and Tulkarm, and with hundreds, thousands of heavily armored Israeli soldiers marching like stormtroopers into these cities, these are all more and more diversions that Netanyahu and his government are heaping one up on the other in order to prevent a cease fire, in order to prevent an end to this genocide, because when that happens, there will be a political collapse in Israel and their political careers will be over.

**ZR:** I would like to focus on the internal developments that perhaps reveal the internal fractions developing within the Israeli state. A few days ago, the Israeli army recovered the bodies of six hostages in a tunnel in Rafah, who they claim were shot by Hamas just before the army arrived, according to forensic evidence. This sparked large protest across Israel, attended by at least 500,000 people calling on the Israeli government to accept a hostage deal with Hamas. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ruled out any agreement on the grounds that Hamas do not seek an agreement themselves. According to CNN, Netanyahu also stated that Israel will never leave the Philadelphi corridor, which Hamas considers crucial for an agreement. Israeli newspaper Haaretz also reported that Israeli officials fear that the government's refusal to set up a state commission of inquiry on October 7th attacks could lead to the International Criminal Court in The Hague to issue arrest warrants for Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Garland. And just recently, an Israeli general named Yitzhak Brik, who served in the Yom Kippur War and was awarded the Medal of Courage, wrote an op-ed in Haaretz that stated that Israel would collapse within a year if the war of attrition against Hamas and Hezbollah continues. As someone who follows Israeli media and society closely, can you comment on these internal contradictions and pressures, as well as any other factors that I may have missed, that are developing within the Israeli state that may lead to its demise?

**SH:** Your question is very loaded. There are a lot of terms that you're using. For example, when you talk about forensic evidence, let's always remind our viewers that Israel has been lying systematically, and we cannot trust any kind of evidence that is coming from the Israeli side and hasn't been verified by a third party. So that needs to be said. Now, having said that, we also have to understand that it's not really about what the facts are, but it's about what the

Israelis believe to be the facts. Because this is the process that we see within Israeli society. Absolutely, a process of collapse, a loss of faith. In the first months, there were a lot of reports in the Israeli media trying to say it's not true that so many Israelis are leaving, this is just propaganda to undermine the national morale. Now you don't see those claims anymore, because it's clear. People see that their neighbors are missing. They see that you cannot get a doctor's appointment because so many doctors have left the country. They see that companies are closing down one after the other, especially in the high tech sector, which is the backbone of the Israeli economy. And people are taking their money out, their savings if they can, which caused the very strange fluctuations in the Israeli stock exchange, because all the Israeli pension funds and insurance companies are investing the money of their customers, not in the Israeli economy, but are sending it abroad. And this causes very big shifts in the Israeli currency exchange. A lot of things are indications of a very deep catastrophe. The Israeli minister of finance, Bezalel Smotrich, is denying all of this and basically says God will rescue Israel from its calamity. So those Israelis who don't believe that God is going to intervene directly, and that's the vast majority of Israelis, they are panicking. They're panicking, and they are going on mass strikes and mass demonstrations. But actually these mass strikes and demonstrations are not an indication of a movement, a political movement with clear goals, but in many ways, it's an indication of the public saying they don't believe the government anymore. So they may go as a kind of symbolic act to say, yes, we did our due diligence and we went on a demonstration, but then they go home and they pack their things. And this is what we're really seeing; that people have lost hope for a future, for their economy. I think the economic indicators are what really is happening here, much more significant to the future of the state of Israel and the Zionist project than the military development and the fact of how many soldiers are being killed. The fact that these hostages, these six hostages, were killed was significant because it was clear to the public, I think for the first time, people were saying it openly and without any reservations, that Netanyahu had no intention of rescuing these people. He made a gamble. The gamble had very little chances of success. And it doesn't bother him in the least that Israeli citizens are being killed. And the conclusion from this is the government doesn't care for the life of its own citizens. So it's not that Israelis started to think about Palestinians as human beings that their lives need to be respected. Unfortunately, this is not the case. There is no respect for Palestinian lives. And we certainly see this in the West Bank with the expansion of Israeli military operations. And I think the main reason the Israeli military is not bombing, carpet bombing the West Bank as it is Gaza, is because of all the settlements. They don't want to hurt the Jewish Israeli settlers. But it's not out of care for the Palestinian lives. So when people say, well, the government doesn't care for its Israeli citizens, you hear what Ran Erez, the chairman of the teachers union of Israel said. He said: "If this is what happens, if this is what the government does to protect its own citizens, I don't see how this state is going to survive, and I don't want my children to become refugees". And having said that, he called for a general strike. And if you take all the schools on strike, that also means that the parents can not go to work, so basically stopping the entire economy, and the strike didn't succeed. It didn't succeed because the courts ruled that this was a political strike and an illegal strike. All strikes are political. Let's be very clear about this, of course. And there have been many political strikes in the history of Israel and in the history of every country in the world. But the court made this decision

because the court has been packed by far right pro-government, yes-men, that were appointed by the Netanyahu government. There's already been a judiciary overhaul, which was agenda item number one for this government when it was elected, and sworn in in January 2023. And I do want to say something about the article you mentioned by Yitzhak Brik. So Brigadier General Yitzhak Brik is a very interesting person. And I've been following him for many years. He was the commander of my father in the war of 1973. And it's true that you mentioned the war of 1973, which the Israelis call the Yom Kippur War, but this is not the official name of the war. It's the October War. It was a war in which Israel was taken by surprise, almost defeated, and the only reason that it was not defeated is that the United States intervened with massive military assistance, as it is now. And it was a surprise attack. And so this is a generation of people who were deeply traumatized and disillusioned from this myth, as if the Zionists are somehow better than anyone else and are able to defeat the Arabs because the Arabs are not as sophisticated, not as smart, not as courageous, as the Zionists. So Brik is one of those people who were disillusioned. And the one important thing about him is that he, until very recently, was the oldest soldier in the Israeli military, basically the last soldier who still remembers the war of 1973. All the people around him were younger and never served in that war. And so he kept saying for many years that the Israeli military is weak, rotting from within, that there isn't the right kind of equipment, not the right kind of training, the soldiers are spoiled, the soldiers don't are not willing to take any risks, and he was shut down all the time by people who said, you're just spreading panic for no reason. He became a celebrity after October 7th because he's the one who predicted what was going to happen. And after he became a celebrity, he was invited again and again to speak in the Israeli media. He became a regular guest on television. And he kept saying, this is going to become even worse. And Israel has no way of defeating Hamas in a war. This is not going to happen. And once again, the people kept silencing him. So even though they've seen what happened on October 7th, they kept silencing him. So this article that he wrote right now is just another in a series of many articles. And he's not writing this because he cares about Palestinians or because he's not a Zionist. He is as racist as any of the other generals in the Israeli military. But he has a perspective to understand that without any shred of humility, the Israeli project and the Zionist project are about to end. And indeed, there is no shred of humility. Nobody's listening to him.

**ZR:** You stated that Netanyahu is pursuing all of these wars and military operations due to domestic reasons. There's also another perspective, that they're trying to establish Greater Israel, that the far right within his coalition is aiming for that and the West Bank is just an expansion of that thinking. So what do you make of that? Is this government also trying to pursue the Greater Israel? You see, all the time these figures like Smotrich or Netanyahu, appearing with maps where the West Bank essentially doesn't exist. How do you view this?

**SH:** We have to look at the internal contradictions within the Israeli government. The Israeli government is not a monolithic bloc. There is a very strong divide between the messianic religious right, Bezalel Smotrich, Itamar Ben-Gvir, on the one hand, and the minister of defense, Yoav Gallant, on the other hand, who is a very different kind of person. Gallant is in many ways a psychopath, I think, because there is no number of human lives that he wouldn't

sacrifice in order to get strategic victory. But he's not counting on divine intervention. He's thinking in terms of military rationality and how much ammunition he needs and so on. So Gallant is saying we need to act in rational paths. For example, trying to undermine the strategic force of Hezbollah and Hamas and things like that. And even if it means committing genocide in Gaza, it was him, who said on October 9th that Palestinians are human animals and will not receive food and water and medicine, which was broadcasting his genocidal intent. While Ben-Gvir and Smotrich speak a completely different language. They also have genocidal intents, but they're not talking about supply lines and ammunition and things like that. They're saying that Palestinians don't have souls. They're talking about spiritual genocide. And they have this idea of a Greater Israel and when somebody asks them, how are you going to achieve this? Do you have enough soldiers? Are you willing to make concessions with other countries in order to buy more weapons from Europe, for example, or from countries that are currently imposing very sanctions on Israel? They say no; no compromises whatsoever. God will be on our side. And because you have Gallant who said, we need 15,000 more soldiers. And that means the ultra-Orthodox Jews have to be recruited to the military, and they won't. They don't want to. And it's not going to happen. But he's calling for that and undermining the stability of the coalition. So Netanyahu wants to fire him. So you see that Netanyahu is neither-nor in these two camps because he's very cynical, very manipulative, and he's willing to use both sides against each other. But it's not about Greater Israel. It's about what kind of Greater Israel we're talking about. Is it a kingdom based on biblical values? And it's horrifying just to imagine what that means; that Smotrich and Ben-Gvir imagining, with the coming of the Messiah and things like that. Or is it an empire built on artillery shells and missiles and warplanes on the ruins of every city in the region, which is something that Yoav Gallant is imagining.

**ZR:** I know it's very difficult to accurately foresee, but hypothetically speaking, what would the collapse of the Israeli state look like? And will its allies, the US and Germany even allow that, especially considering that Germany considers Israel's protection as its Staatsräson reason, or in other words, reason of state?

**SH:** I think the conversations in Germany have become absurd. Germany is not a serious actor. They're making these empty statements, but they're not attached to reality. So they lost the ability to influence what's happening. When you say if countries will allow or not allow, Germany is not going to do anything. We know that already. But the United States is doing a lot to try to prevent the collapse of Israel by sending more and more weapons, and by sending diplomatic support and putting pressure against the International Criminal Court, for example, pressure against any international body that is trying to stop the genocide. So the United States is playing an active role. The question is, how far will the United States go? And we've seen that the United States was willing to shed a lot of money and a lot of blood for its wars in Vietnam, in Korea, in Afghanistan, in Iraq. And all of these wars ended when there was a moment within internal political dynamics in the United States where they said: No more. And it was actually during Biden's presidency that the puppet regime in Afghanistan collapsed. And does it matter that the United States still doesn't like the Taliban and they didn't want this to happen? It doesn't matter because they were not willing to go on

another 17 years of war in Afghanistan and send thousands of soldiers to die. They didn't have the political will to do it anymore. And I think we are very close to that moment also regarding Israel. The United States may have very anti-Palestinian politics. We see this so clearly with the two candidates. Trump using the word Palestinian as a slur, where he called Biden a Palestinian. And Kamala Harris denying Palestinians the right to speak at the DNC. So the anti-Palestinian racism in the United States is out of control. But does that mean that they're going to save Israel from itself? Well, they are doing it now, but for how long? And if the Israelis are no longer willing to do it and so many Israelis are leaving, how long will the United States keep playing this game? But you started your question by asking, what will it look after? And I think this very much depends on what we do. And that's the reason that I'm talking to you, because I think that there is an international outrage. Not enough in the West, not enough in Europe, certainly not enough in Germany, but there is outrage at the genocide and at the complicity of the West with the genocide. And by putting pressure and by stopping the weapons, we can actually change the course of events. And we have to remind people that Palestinians are human beings and they have human rights and that the murderers who are killing them every day have to be taken accountable. And not only them, but also the people who enable it, including if these people happen to be in the German government.

**ZR:** I want to revisit a report that hardly made any headlines in German media that we talked together about in April of this year, called: German Arms Exports to Israel. Published by a German non profit organization called Forensis. The report detailed the extent of Germany's military support for Israel. I would like to highlight this report once more before I end this interview, given our channel has grown a lot since we conducted that interview, and some viewers may have missed it. Can you evaluate this report and also address the problems that Germany may face in terms of international legal institutions, if it continues to arm and support Israel?

**SH:** This is one of the most important documents that were written on the arms trade altogether. There is another very important report which is bigger than just Germany by the AFC, the American Friends Service Committee, which lists all the companies that are profiting from the genocide and in what ways. And of course the German companies are there, but also the American companies, French, Italian and so on. But the German situation is changing so fast that there's already been an update to the report by Forensis Architecture, after the German response to the charges made by Nicaragua in the ICJ, more information came to light, which forensis Architecture were able to analyze and also expose the lies and disinformation and misdirections that Germany is trying to use in defending itself. Very interestingly, Germany has almost stopped completely the export of war weapons. This is a category that Germany invented: war weapons. So, let's not get overexcited, that Germany decided that one category of weapons that they invented, they're not going to sell anymore. But it is similar in many ways to what we see from the UK, that they now canceled export permits for 30 weapons, but they're keeping export permits for other weapons. But it is certainly a momentum that we see, a growing momentum for the military embargo. And Germany is now focusing on selling the kinds of weapons that are less obviously war weapons. So, for example, not the ammunition, but yes, the engines for tanks. But there is

still more work to be done. And there's a lot of hiding, a lot of lying going on. And so the researchers are working very hard. We are now following a ship called the MV Catherine, which is a ship owned by a German company carrying explosives from Vietnam to Israel. And it's going now around Africa because it cannot go through the Red sea carrying weapons to Israel. And Namibia has just declared that the ship will not be allowed to dock because it's carrying weapons to Israel. Namibia is respecting international law. Germany does not. And the argument that they're making is that, well, it's not weapons, it's explosives that are items that could be made into weapons. So obviously they are illegal and they cannot be sent to Israel. And now there's going to be a campaign in Germany to stop that ship. And the company that owns that ship is going to get into a lot of trouble. And of course, this information will go also to the court case, to the ICJ against Germany for enabling genocide. So you see that this is an ongoing campaign. But one interesting thing I wanted to say is that because of these campaigns, because of this protest and outrage and the decision of Germany to reduce the number of war weapons that they are selling, Germany is no longer the second biggest supplier of weapons to Israel after the United States. Now the second biggest supplier is Serbia. And that's a very interesting point, because Serbia is one of the few countries, alongside Germany, that refused to recognize the genocide happening in Gaza. And very much like Germany, it is a state which also conducted a genocide of its own. And Israel is refusing to recognize the genocide committed by Serbia. And as this diplomatic exchange of denials of genocide is happening, Serbia is willing to send a lot of ammunition to Israel through a team of air force, on large cargo planes. So this is another development, and it has to do also with the change in Germany.

**ZR:** Dr. Shir Hever, independent economist, author and journalist, it's always interesting talking to you. Thank you so much for your time today.

**SH:** Thank you, Zain.

**ZR:** And thank you for tuning in today. Please don't forget to join our alternative channels on Rumble and Telegram, as well as a podcast called Podbean. YouTube, which is owned by Google, can shadowban and censor us at any time. Big giants just Meta and Google, if you've been following our channel, have been found suppressing alternative and critical voices to the mainstream media. Hence, if the day ever comes that our channel on YouTube is banned, we won't be able to even reach you with an announcement. So ensure to click on the description of this video below and join all of our channels today. I thank you for your support and for tuning in today. I'm your host Zain Raza. See you next time.

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