

## **Episode 35: 360 Degree Perspective on the Human Rights Situation since October 7**

**Guest:** Dr. Agnès Callamard – Secretary General, Amnesty International / Dr. Julia Duchrow – Secretary General, Amnesty International Germany

**Hosts:** Alexandria, Mert, Yusuf

**Bio:** Dr. Agnès Callamard is a globally recognized human rights expert and the current Secretary General of Amnesty International. She previously served as UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, where she led the landmark investigation into the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Callamard also directed the Columbia University Global Freedom of Expression initiative and is one of the most influential voices on international law and accountability today.

Dr. Julia Duchrow is Secretary General of Amnesty International Germany and a legal scholar with deep expertise in human rights advocacy. She formerly headed Amnesty Germany's Policy and Advocacy division and served as Head of Human Rights and Peace at *Brot für die Welt*. Duchrow has represented Germany on the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency board and advised the German Foreign Office on civilian crisis prevention. She is a leading German voice on human rights, civil liberties, and Germany's role in international justice.

### **In this Episode:**

In this wide-ranging conversation, recorded on July 14, 2025, hosts Yusuf, Alexandria, and Mert sit down with Dr. Agnès Callamard and Dr. Julia Duchrow to assess the human rights landscape in Israel/Palestine and its global reverberations since October 7 in a 360 degree perspective. The discussion opens with the catastrophic situation in Gaza, where Callamard analyzes the scale of humanitarian suffering through the lens of international humanitarian and human rights law, and highlights the obligations of all actors to protect civilians. The guests address Hamas's October 7 attacks, including acts of mass violence and hostage-taking, and consider how international law frames both accountability for perpetrators and the responsibilities of the global community. The conversation then moves to the West Bank and Israel, where rising violence, is examined alongside the impact on Palestinian and Israeli civilians. Turning to Europe and the U.S., Callamard and Duchrow critique growing restrictions on pro-Palestinian speech and protests, as well as the misuse of antisemitism concerns to justify authoritarian policies that threaten free expression, academic freedom, and democratic values. They also reflect on the alarming global rise in both antisemitism and racism. The episode further explores the wider regional context, including the Iran–Israel war and its civilian toll, as well as the troubling attacks on international legal institutions such as the International Criminal Court. The guests warn of the dangers posed by political leaders who undermine the independence of international justice in favor of short-term interests. Finally, both

Callamard and Duchrow reflect on the role of civil society and international law upholding universal human rights.

#### **Links:**

**Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights 2025** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Germany 2024:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/germany/report-germany/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Iran 2024:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories 2024:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/israel-and-the-occupied-palestinian-territory/report-israel-and-the-occupied-palestinian-territory/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Lebanon 2024:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/lebanon/report-lebanon/#:~:text=Lebanon%202024,on%20civilians%20and%20civilian%20objects.> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Palestine 2024:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/palestine-state-of/report-palestine-state-of/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Syria 2024:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/syria/report-syria/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**USA 2024:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/americas/united-states/report-united-states/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Yemen 2024:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/yemen/report-yemen/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**On Apartheid:** Amnesty International's 2022 report, *Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)), was widely criticized in Germany, especially for extending the legal allegation of apartheid to Israel proper. Another essential point of criticism was its retrospective analysis that gives "the impression that all measures to institutionalize the described system were deliberately and intentionally implemented from the founding of the state onward. This largely obscures the conflict dynamics that repeatedly contributed to worsening the situation and prevented alternative developments. Neither the debates within the

Jewish-Israeli majority society and political class over partitioning the land nor the intra-Palestinian divisions receive sufficient attention." (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik)

### **Exemplary critical voices:**

Meron Mendel: <https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2022-02/amnesty-international-israel-apartheidstaat> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

Critical assessment by Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik: <https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2022A13/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

For a detailed explanation of all legally relevant terms of international law and the current state of international jurisprudence we recommend listening to our Legal Anchor episode with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Claus Kreß. He is a Co-Author of the Rome Statute, Special Advisor to the International Criminal Court and Judge at the International Court of Justice in the parallel Gambia v Myanmar case. We also recommend to listen to the episode with Prof. Dr. Eyal Benvenisti (Tel Aviv University/Yale Law School), another leading expert of international law, especially the laws of occupation, who also discusses the genocide and apartheid claims. Regarding the situation in the West Bank, we also recommend our episode with Michael Sfard, Israel's leading human rights lawyer.

### **On the illegality of the Occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories:**

Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal status of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (July 19, 2024):

„261. (...) The sustained abuse by Israel of its position as an occupying Power, through annexation and an assertion of permanent control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory and continued frustration of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, violates fundamental principles of international law and **renders Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory unlawful**. 262. This illegality relates to the entirety of the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel in 1967. This is the territorial unit across which Israel has imposed policies and practices to fragment and frustrate the ability of the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination, and over large swathes of which it has extended Israeli sovereignty in violation of international law. The entirety of the Occupied Palestinian Territory is also the territory in relation to which the Palestinian people should be able to exercise its right to self-determination, the integrity of which must be respected.“

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

## On the illegality of settlements:

**IVth. Geneva Convention (1949), Article 49 (6):** "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." [https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.33\\_GC-IV-EN.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

## Conclusion of the ICJ Advisory Opinion on Israel's discriminatory legislation and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territories:

„(...) Accordingly, the Court is of the view that the régime of comprehensive restrictions imposed by Israel on Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory constitutes **systemic discrimination** based on, *inter alia*, race, religion or ethnic origin, in violation of Articles 2, paragraph 1, and 26 of the ICCPR, Article 2, paragraph 2, of the ICESCR, and Article 2 of CERD. 224. **A number of participants have argued that Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory amount to segregation or apartheid, in breach of Article 3 of CERD. 225. Article 3 of CERD provides as follows: "States Parties particularly condemn racial segregation and *apartheid* and undertake to prevent, prohibit and eradicate all practices of this nature in territories under their jurisdiction."** This provision refers to two particularly severe forms of racial discrimination: racial segregation and apartheid. 229. The Court observes that Israel's legislation and measures impose and serve to maintain a near-complete separation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem between the settler and Palestinian communities. **For this reason, the Court considers that Israel's legislation and measures constitute a breach of Article 3 of CERD.**" <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**ICERD Artikel 3:** [https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1969/03/19690312%2008-49%20AM/Ch\\_IV\\_2p.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1969/03/19690312%2008-49%20AM/Ch_IV_2p.pdf) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

## Separate ICJ Opinions:

**Judge Nolte (Germany):** <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-08-en.pdf> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Judge Tladi (South Africa):** <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-14-en.pdf> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Declaration of Presiding Judge Salam:** <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-01-en.pdf> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Human Rights Watch:** <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**B'Tselem:** <https://www.btselem.org/topic/apartheid> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Yesh Din:** [https://www.yesh-din.org/en/the-occupation-of-the-west-bank-and-the-crime-of-apartheid-legal-opinion/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.yesh-din.org/en/the-occupation-of-the-west-bank-and-the-crime-of-apartheid-legal-opinion/?utm_source=chatgpt.com) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

The petition ***The Elephant in the Room (August 2023)***, which speaks of apartheid in the West Bank, was signed by over 2400 (Jewish) scholars, clergy and public figures including leading Israeli historian **Benny Morris, Dan Diner and Saul Friedländer**.

Dan Diner explained the reasons for his signature. He emphasized that he did not primarily identify with the text, “whose content and tone I don’t really approve of.” Instead, he describes as the “real text” behind his decision to join this petition, the “ocean of signatures”: “It’s because the petition is a collective cry – a cry that should reawaken the invisible elephant that is the Arab population, the Palestinians, to a political life within the current protest movement in Israel. We must not forget that the so-called ‘judicial reform’ was essentially launched to eliminate the last legal obstacles standing in the way of the transformation of the State of Israel into a place where Jewish fundamentalism can flourish. In the final analysis, this reform is as much about the Arab population of Israel within the 1948 borders as it is about the desire to have a free hand for the colonisation, annexation and, in the event of conflict, expulsion of the Palestinians from the territories occupied since 1967.” <https://k-larevue.com/en/apartheid-an-elephant-painted-red/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

### **On genocide:**

#### **UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide:**

[https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.1\\_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

**Provisional Measures of the ICJ (South Africa v Israel) from January 26, 2024:** <https://icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

**Public Statement by International Law Experts on Oct 7 as potential Genocide:** [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd4IrsDRg3HbJqoAf0BI Ae7BHJuzpQB\\_Le27Iureq9vpCoBkw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd4IrsDRg3HbJqoAf0BI Ae7BHJuzpQB_Le27Iureq9vpCoBkw/viewform) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

World-leading Holocaust and Genocide scholar **Omer Bartov (Brown University)** describes October 7 as an „act of genocidal violence“ and Gaza as a „genocide“: <https://www.zeit.de/2025/25/omer-bartov-benjamin-netanjahu-nahostkonflikt-kritiker-instrumentalisierung-holocaust/komplettansicht> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025) <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/15/opinion/israel-gaza-holocaust-genocide-palestinians.html> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

Renowned international law scholar **Philippe Sands (University College London)**, in conversation with Ezra Klein, argued that according to Raphael Lemkin's original definition, both the events of October 7 and the situation in Gaza could be described as genocides. He is, however, more skeptical when it comes to the much narrower legal definition under the Genocide Convention because of the challenges of proving specific intent (*dolus specialis*) as it has to be the *only* plausible explanation for „patterns of conduct“ suggesting the „destruction of a group as such in whole or in part“. <https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000010328913/when-is-it-genocide.html> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Martin Shaw**, who the Washington Post calls „the leading sociological expert on genocide“ describes October 7 as a „genocidal massacre“ and Israel's response as an „asymmetrical counter-genocide“. As „ Hamas also knew that its mass atrocity against Israeli civilians would cause a huge, destructive response“, this „certainly makes the genocide a 'co-production', but Israel has the prime, direct responsibility.“ The term „genocidal massacre“ refers to Leo Kuper's concept of „a limited, local expression of what the Genocide Convention calls genocide 'in part'“. <https://jpr.winchesteruniversitypress.org/articles/164/files/6765c472d1841.pdf> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025) / <https://newlinesmag.com/spotlight/the-uses-and-abuses-of-the-term-genocide-in-gaza/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Resolution of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS):** <https://genocidescholars.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/IAGS-Resolution-on-Gaza-FINAL.pdf> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Criticism of the proceedings leading to the resolution by former board member Sara E. Brown:** <https://shorturl.at/1q4Zb> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Petition of Scholars against the Resolution:** <https://shorturl.at/W9qLd> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

**IAGS Board's reaction:** <https://shorturl.at/a6fWa> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

**Report of the UN Human Rights' Counsel's Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel:** <https://shorturl.at/ld5o8> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

**Independent UN Experts:** [https://www.un.org/unispal/document/un-experts-statement-07may25/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.un.org/unispal/document/un-experts-statement-07may25/?utm_source=chatgpt.com) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

**Amnesty International:** [https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/?utm_source=chatgpt.com) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Human Rights Watch:** [https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/19/israels-crime-extermination-acts-genocide-gaza?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/19/israels-crime-extermination-acts-genocide-gaza?utm_source=chatgpt.com) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

**Doctors Without Borders:** [https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/gaza-death-trap-msf-report-exposes-israels-campaign-total-destruction?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/gaza-death-trap-msf-report-exposes-israels-campaign-total-destruction?utm_source=chatgpt.com) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

**B'Tselem:** [https://www.btselem.org/press\\_releases/20250728\\_our\\_genocide?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20250728_our_genocide?utm_source=chatgpt.com) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

**Physicians for Human Rights:** [https://www.phr.org.il/en/genocide-in-gaza-eng/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.phr.org.il/en/genocide-in-gaza-eng/?utm_source=chatgpt.com) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

Harvard Caps Poll of October 19, 2023: *62% of 18-24 year olds answered that October 7 „attacks on Jews were genocidal in nature“, but 51% of them answered they were „justified by Palestinian grievances.“ (p. 43).* [https://harvardharrispoll.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/HHP\\_Oct23\\_KeyResults.pdf](https://harvardharrispoll.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/HHP_Oct23_KeyResults.pdf) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025).

***Please also check our other episodes to explore multiple perspectives.***

**Dedication:**

*We dedicate this Podcast to all victims and survivors of October 7, the hostages and their families, to all innocent civilians killed and injured in Gaza and their grieving families and friends. To our dear guests Udi Goren, Khalil Sayegh, Sima and Mai who shared their losses so powerfully with us. To their families: Tal's wife Ella Haimi, their children Nir, Einav, Udi and Lotan, who never got the chance to meet his father. To Khalil Sayegh's mother and siblings, to Mai's and Sima's family, to her mother Bushra.*

*To the blessed memory of: Tal Haimi, Lara Sayegh, Jeris Sayegh, Mahmoud, Danny Darlington and Haim Perry.*

**Disclaimer:**

In each episode of this podcast, the invited guests speak on their own behalf. They share their experiences, assessments, and expert perspectives. These contributions are central to the multiperspectivity of the project but do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial team or producers.