



Palestinians around the world are marking Nakba Day, 78 years after their forced mass displacement led to the establishment of the Jewish-majority state of Israel. Decades later, Palestinians still face widespread oppression and violence from the Israeli state as it continues its expansionary project. “Israel tried, since 1948 until today, to destroy us as a people, as a group, and they failed at it.

Our people are still there, resilient,” says Palestinian writer Muhammad Shehada, who was born in Gaza and now lives in Denmark. Shehada discusses the ongoing process of the Nakba, including its latest intensification after October 7, 2023. “Now this veneer of civility has fallen off. The mask was taken off. And now it’s a matter of national pride in Israel to brag about annihilating Palestinians.”

Shehada also describes current conditions in Gaza — still under Israeli blockade and occupation — and what he calls the “disarmament trap” of unfairly weighted negotiations designed to strip Palestinians of political autonomy. “The 'realistic' proposal that Israel is putting on the table is surrender, capitulate, become fully defenseless, weaponless, and entrust the very army that carried out a genocide against you to be merciful towards you once you are an easier target than you ever were before.”

Finally, he responds to the Israeli government’s recent threat to file a defamation lawsuit against The New York Times, after the paper published a column by longtime opinion writer Nicholas Kristof about systemic sexual abuse against Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons. “It’s the newspaper of record. It’ll be spread and disseminated widely to an American audience,” says Shehada about the allegations levied in Kristof’s piece. “So we see, basically, https://www.democracynow.org/2026/5/15/muhammad_shehada_nakba_day_gaza_palestinians_an_israeli_panic_attack_in_return.”

Transcript

This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.

AMY GOODMAN: Today, Palestinians in Gaza and around the world are commemorating what

Palestinians refer to as Nakba Day. Nakba means “the catastrophe” in Arabic. It was 78 years ago that some 750,000 Palestinians were violently displaced and dispossessed from hundreds of towns and villages in Palestine, thousands more killed, during the creation of the state of Israel. In Gaza, Palestinians marked the grim anniversary amidst reports that Israel dramatically increased its attacks on Gaza during April, despite a U.S-brokered ceasefire last October. In the occupied West Bank, UNICEF, the United Nations Children Fund, said Israeli soldiers and settlers have killed 70 Palestinian children since early last year, amounting to around one child killed per week. Another 850 children were injured by Israeli attacks during this past year.

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