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Waiting for the Jerusalem Coffee House press conference to start. We'll hear from defendant Abulrahim Harara for the first time since the DOJ brought a lawsuit against him and his coffee house, after very political appearing actions against the coffee shop

There's quite a bit of press here. Hopefully they can manage to be respectful, but as a reporter, I can objectively say there should be doubts about that.



About to start.

Abdulrahim Harara is speaking first, he's flanked by reps from his legal team, UCB Prof and advocate, Hatem Bazian, Monadel Herزالah, who sued the US govt over its support of Israel, and members of IJAN and JVP, and NLG

Harara: Over the past two years we've faced...organized repression, I thank the community

for solidarity. I really want to thank my community." He gets a round of applause..."I do have some critiques how the genocide has been covered by especially local press..."

Harara:and our voices have been sidelined...narrative that has been chosen is one of ignoring and silencing genocide, and I can't help but question the ethics...I hope what happens today is that you will all reflect" great and necessary comment to the press

Harara points out Healthcare Workers for Palestine at the back table, and he asks reporters to engage with them....Harara notes there won't be Q&A, encouraging public to leave comments with the table set up for that purpose

Harara: I struggle to find the words today...I bear witness to decades of islamophobia and militarism imposed on Palestinians...for generations they have experienced oppression...the role in mainstream media in masking the genocidal intent have forced the world into complicity

Harara: "I see the charred remains of my people...for over 600 days Gaza has endured unfathomable suffering." Harara says he remains committed to justice "this power that we hold and reclamation of narrative is precisely why we have been targetted"

AJ with IJAN now speaking: "I've always felt safe and welcome at Jerusalem Coffee House..." she says that this lawsuit is an outgrowth of attacks against pro-Palestine advocacy..."notes provocateurs have been trying to provoke incidents at Palestine owned business

AJ: Though the Star of David is called the Jewish star, there are many Jews who no longer identify with the star after it has been used to harm Palestinians; she notes use by IDF to brand Palestinians as torture

AJ: star has become a symbol of zionism and support for genocide, not Judaism

AJ: notes IJAN demands, end the siege on gaza and let all aid in, sanction Israel, end genocide and support rebuilding of Gaza on Palestinian terms

Monadel: "we believe that our Palestinian community is being targeted, including Harara. He says Harara "is a kind, respectful, and hard-working young man..." he serves with kindness, professionalism and respect.

Monadel: "what took place was a clear act of provocation...we are aware of similar incidents that have taken place in the US, designed to bait business people into a reaction to whitewash an extremist, racist policy"

Monadel: [the suit] is not about justice, it was a trap...everyone who knows Abdulrahim knows the truth and that we will not stay silent

Monadel: we reject attempts to destroy the truth, we stand with Abdulrahim, not just because who he is, but what he represents, commitment to dignity, to treating people right...

Monadel notes that there is a growing number of Jewish community supporting Palestinians. He says that this is also about protecting community from false claims...we are here to say loudly to Abdulrahim, "we've got your back"

Glenn Kanton one of the lawyers reping JCH. "it warms my heart the community turnout here...this cafe, this hub of Oakland community is under such a vile attack under the auspices of antisemitism"

Kanton says he takes antisemitism very seriously, but the problem here is that the claim of antisemitism is being used to attack people using this business to fight the marginalization of all people

Kanton: "particularly sad and ironic...a DOJ that is doing everything it can to dismantle the civil rights protection...they are trying to undo consent decrees to stop discrimination, and police violence..."

Kanton calls back to Cointelpro, "it's telling that the govt has chosen to attack this space, this space having classes for Muslim women, organizing space...the beauty of this community showing up today, and I'm proud to be part of this community"

Kanton: "I hope that we can expose this for what it is, a hypocritical attack on our community"

Walter Riley: "I've been part of fighting govt oppression...and I find myself proud to be part of this community...part of the family for struggle for justice...what we see is a campaign by forces to undermine this community...because he's bringing together this community"

Riley: "We see at this moment that many more people...are understanding that they are being a part of genocide...as people raise the symbol of struggle, they find that they are under attack"

Riley: "as an attorney I am representing the cafe, but as individual I am a part of this struggle"

Apologies, I am finding Riley hard to hear, and he's not amplified.

Riley: I am proud to stand with community and people coming to this cafe, opposing the oppression..." Riley says the attempt won't divide the community

Hatem Bazian: "let me begin by saying, Free Palestine..." Bazian says that what Abdulrahim has faced is stalking and harassment during genocide..."the weaponization of antisemitism to cover for genocide is something that we have to stand against "

Bazian: "today we find all of us facing attacks in order to silence our collective voice....no one here supports bigotry, including islamophobia and antisemitism...you have to stand against both simultaneously, and being for Free Palestine is a way to defeat antisemitism"

Bazian: "right now in Gaza 377K have been killed...this is from the Harvard data...we have crossed the threshold of 10% of population, there's a 100K children facing starvation..."

Bazian: "entire families wiped out, hospitals bombed, this is not politics, this is a genocide unfolding in real time...and instead of reckoning with that, we see an attempt to dismantle civil rights and constitutional protections...its time to support JCH and end genocide"

Bazian: "the freedom of Palestinians is connected to the Jews...we have to stand against antisemitism by calling for a Free Palestine"

Rabbi Katz from JVP: "Judaism teaches us that each person is a universe unto themselves...the images of Palestinians starving remind us of Jews starving in Nazi ghettos..." Katz says many orgs have called it a genocide.

Katz: "but is the govt concerned with the genocide and starvation, no, they're concerned with a community coffee house" that is a place for unity and common values of human dignity and love"

Katz says that Jews are taught to build community founded in values of love, care, kindness and generosity, justice and peace...JCH is doing just that

Katz: "standing in solidarity with Palestinians here and in Palestine is the most Jewish thing we can do...when the govt tries to silence Palestinian voices, we stand with them...because those efforts are ways to dehumanize them and Judaism recognizes the humanity in all"

Noting that there are also dozens of community members here supporting Harara. The room is full

Katz: I stand with JCH because my humanity is bound in theirs and it is the only right thing to do

In lieu of Q&A, there's going to be community comments

Iman: Yemeni American, grandmother came here in the 70s...she goes through many acts of violence from zionists, notes that JCH is one of the only places for organizing [respect, I am not going to be able to do justice, but bear with me, please]

Speaker from Healthcare Workers for Palestine: "we decry this fascist retaliation from the DOJ...takes focus away from real harm" HWP also mounting a divestment campaign against TEVA [also at heart of labor issues at Highland]

Peter: long time Oakland resident descended from Jewish peoples who died in holocaust...he says that he's become friends with Abdulrahim and there's no antisemitism going on at coffeehouse; antsemitism and anitzionism are not the same thing

Speaker says that their EMT license is being attacked because of their work on Palestine...the govt is not doing anything to stop genocide, but they are attacking the good people at JCH.

"this is not a genocide, this is a holocaust and we must do everything we can to stop it"

Notes the direct murders of health workers, assassinations...shame on the media for not covering any of this

Speaker: I see him serve people with love...if you've come to attack him, he's going to

serve you...to our US govt, you are wasting our resources, and we will fight until you are out of the admin...this community will not stop

Speaker is a child of immigrants, "we had to come to AmeriKKa to escape the crimes of AmeriKKKa in the rest of the world...

Speaker is a homeless advocate, and mentions Sycamore eviction...they are disabled elders, women and children on streets when there are abandoned buildings everywhere

Harara notes that the oppression is part of the same ecosystem of oppression...just because you don't experience what's happening in Gaza, doesn't mean you aren't experiencing oppression from same source

speaker was raised a Zionist, and just recently started unlearning and disengaging from "indoctrination...its an ideology of indoctrination...and what i've learned cannot exist without white supremacy"

Speaker says that the ideology is intentionally racist...a Jewish supremacist ideology..."we know Judaism is a thousand years old...it is a living spiritual tradition. Zionism is an imperial project from white Jews from Europe who were permitted to create an ethnostate"

"I am asking my Jewish brothers and sisters to learn...read 100 Years War on Palestine...please learn the truth, open your minds, open your hearts, we will not be free until all of us are free, Free Palestine"

Presser is over

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