



# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL BOOK CLUB



## READ

*One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This*

BY OMAR EL AKKAD

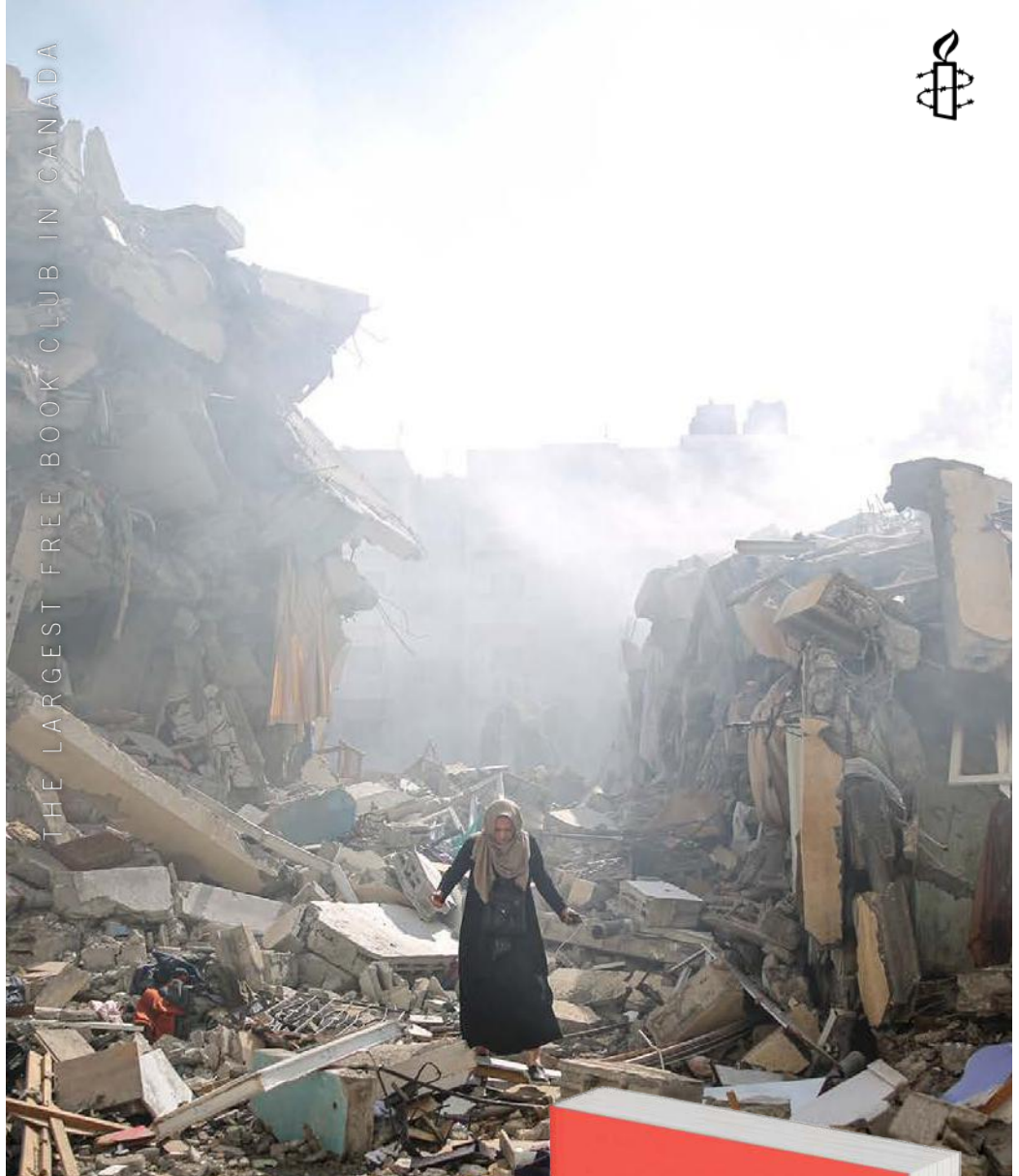
## LEARN

Complicity enables injustice.  
Speaking out matters.

## TAKE ACTION

Help end the genocide in Gaza  
and stop arms sales to Israel

THE LARGEST FREE BOOK CLUB IN CANADA



*“One day, when it’s safe, when there’s no personal downside to calling a thing what it is, when it’s too late to hold anyone accountable, everyone will have always been against this.”*

– OMAR EL AKKAD

This book is for all the people who want something better than what the West has served up. This is the book for our time.

# DISCUSSION GUIDE MAY/JUNE 2025

Photo above by Mustafa Hassona/Anadolu via Getty Images

AMNESTY.CA/BOOKCLUB

# A COMMUNITY THAT *READS, LEARNS & ACTS* TOGETHER



## *Pacinthe Mattar*

HOST, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL BOOK CLUB

Do you remember reading your first ‘real’ book? I do. It was Charlotte’s Web by E.B. White. Through its pages, 7-year-old me grew to love a livestock pig named Wilbur and his friend the barn spider, Charlotte. It was one of my earliest lessons in the power of a good story and how it can create curiosity, care, and compassion.

As a journalist, I’ve long been drawn to writers, words, language, narrative and stories. The power they hold, particularly in this moment, is immense. I cannot think of a better time to speak to some of this time’s most powerful writers, storytellers and memorializers as the host of Amnesty Book Club 2025.

As a member of this book club, you are such an important part of the Amnesty community. The first part of working towards a better world is to read about it, understand it, and get the information you need to take action towards improving it. We’ve designed this guide to help you and our more than 13,000-strong community of readers delve into some of the biggest issues through some of the most memorable and powerful stories of our time.

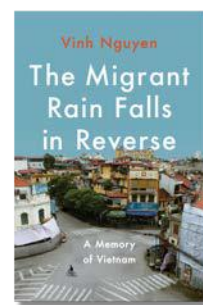
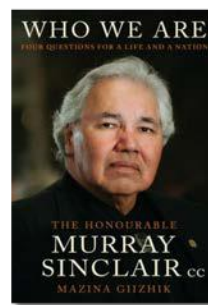
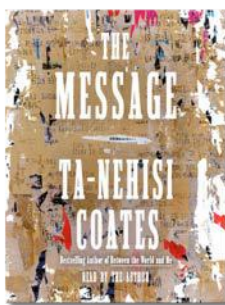
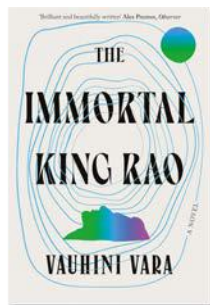
Bearing witness is at the core of my work as a journalist. I hope you’ll join me and our incredible authors as we refuse to look away from the chaos of this time. Instead, let’s learn together what’s possible when we act in hope and solidarity.

## *Pacinthe Mattar*

JOURNALIST, WRITER,  
PRODUCER &  
JOURNALISM EDUCATOR

*Photo by Enzo Rodriguez*

**UPCOMING**  
TITLES IN  
**2025**



# THE **BOOK**

## ***One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This***

BY OMAR EL AKKAD

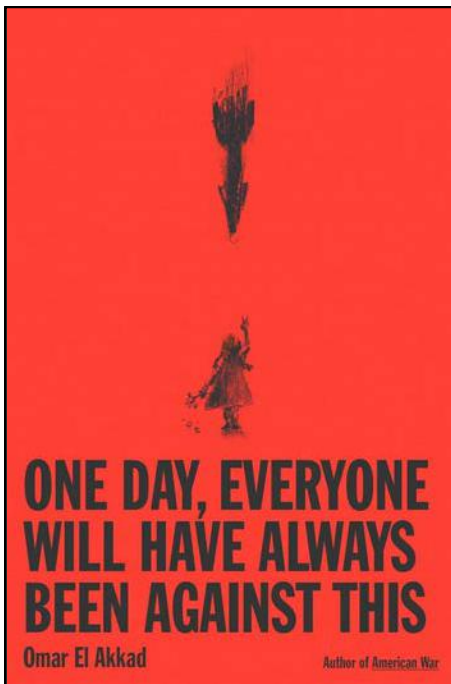
THE KNOPF DOUBLEDAY PUBLISHING GROUP

Back in October 2023, just three weeks into Israel’s bombardment of Gaza, acclaimed author and journalist Omar El Akkad tweeted something that stopped me in my tracks, and felt so instantly true: ‘One day, when it’s safe, when there’s no personal downside to calling a thing what it is, when it’s too late to hold anyone accountable, everyone will have always been against this.’ That tweet has been seen over 10 million times—it touched a nerve for anyone watching in horror as Israel’s military campaign decimated Gaza.

Like so many of us, El Akkad once believed in the West’s promise—that it stood for justice and freedom. But after a decade-long career reporting on everything from the War on Terror, Ferguson, climate disasters, and now Gaza, he’s done pretending.

This book is his raw, furious, grieving realization that the West was never built for everyone. That some people—Arabs, Muslims, immigrants, whoever’s outside the circle of privilege, and crucially, Palestinians—were never meant to be seen as fully human. *One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This* is El Akkad’s nonfiction debut, and it’s unlike anything he’s written before: part memoir, part indictment, part brokenhearted love letter to what could’ve been.

This isn’t just his story—it’s the story of this moment. It’s the same rupture happening in living rooms, on campuses, and in protests across North America. If you’ve ever looked at the world and thought, there has to be something better than this, there has to be someone as deeply disturbed and opposed to this as I am—this book is for you.



### ***Omar El Akkad***

EGYPTIAN-CANADIAN  
NOVELIST & JOURNALIST

Omar El Akkad is an author and journalist. He was born in Egypt, grew up in Qatar, moved to Canada as a teenager and now lives in the United States. He is a two-time winner of both the Pacific Northwest Booksellers’ Award and the Oregon Book Award. His books have been translated into 13 languages. The BBC named his debut novel, *American War*, one of 100 novels that shaped our world.

## ***Learn more!***

**Omar El Akkad on CBC’s *Frontburner*:**



**[Omar El Akkad on Gaza, and ‘Breaking Up’ with the West](#)**



**[Omar El Akkad on Gaza, and ‘Breaking Up’ with the West](#)**

Sources: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch (HRW), UNHCR, UNRWA, and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).





# A TIME OF

# GENOCIDE IN GAZA



A child standing inside a damaged building, stares at the Al-Faruq mosque, levelled by Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on a foggy day. Photo by MOHAMMED ABED / AFP via Getty Images

## Root Causes

The devastation began long before. The Israeli occupation of Palestine has its roots in the events of 1948, known to Palestinians as the Nakba, or "catastrophe." During this period, over 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their homes, and more than 500 villages were depopulated or destroyed.

The aftermath of the Nakba left many Palestinians stateless. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) estimates that approximately 5.8 million Palestinian refugees are currently registered across the Middle East, living in conditions that many argue amount to ongoing displacement and dispossession.

## Attacks on Medical, Humanitarian Workers and Journalists

Israel's military aggression has severely impacted healthcare infrastructure and humanitarian efforts. Hospitals and clinics have been targeted in airstrikes, and Palestinian medical personnel have been abducted and placed in Israeli detention, where **at least three** have died despite pleas for their protection from the United Nations. The UNRWA reports its operations have been disrupted, and aid deliveries have been blocked, leaving many without essential services. The war has been particularly deadly for journalists. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), at least 176 journalists and media workers, the majority of them Palestinian, have been killed since October 2023, making it the deadliest period for journalists worldwide since 1992. Many were deliberately targeted, despite wearing press vests.

Since Hamas's attacks on October 7th, 2023, and the ensuing Israeli military onslaught, over 51,000 Palestinians have been killed, including more than 11,000 children, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health.

The United Nations estimates that approximately 90% of Gaza's population has been displaced, with many seeking refuge in overcrowded shelters. The blockade and ongoing conflict have led to severe food shortages, clean water, and medical supplies, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian crisis.

**"The atrocity crimes committed on October 7, 2023, by Hamas and other armed groups against Israelis and victims of other nationalities, including deliberate mass killings and hostage-taking, can never justify Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza."**

**Agnès Callamard**

SECRETARY GENERAL OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



Children stand amidst the rubble of a building hit by an Israeli air strike in Deir al-Balah in the centre of the Gaza Strip. Photo by MOHAMMED ABED / AFP via Getty Images



*Palestinians sit around a bonfire amid destroyed buildings in the Bueij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. Photo by EYAD BABA/AFP via Getty Images*



*An aerial view of buildings destroyed by Israeli air strikes in the Jabalia camp for Palestinian refugees in Gaza City. Photo by YAHYA HASSOUNA/AFP via Getty Images*

## Gaza Genocide Report Summary

Amnesty International has issued a damning verdict: Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. In a sweeping new report, **“You Feel Like You Are Subhuman: Israel’s Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza,”** Amnesty meticulously documented mass killings, the deliberate blockade of food and aid, and the wholesale destruction of civilian infrastructure—actions that meet the legal threshold for genocide under international law. The findings accuse Israeli forces of systematically dismantling Palestinian life in Gaza while the world watches. Amnesty’s report on the genocide in Gaza captures details of forced displacement, indiscriminate bombings, and what it calls a “starvation campaign”—all pointing to an intent to destroy a people.

“Amnesty International’s report demonstrates that Israel has carried out acts prohibited under the Genocide Convention, with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza. These acts include killings, causing serious bodily or mental harm and deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction. Month after month, Israel has treated Palestinians in Gaza as a subhuman group unworthy of human rights and dignity, demonstrating its intent to physically destroy them,” said Agnès Callamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International.



***“Here in Deir al-Balah, it’s like an apocalypse... You have to protect your children from insects from the heat, and there is no clean water and no toilets, all while the bombing never stops. You feel like you are subhuman here.”***

***Mohammed***

DISPLACED FORMER RESIDENT OF GAZA CITY

The report directly challenges global powers—especially the U.S. and European nations—demanding immediate arms embargoes, sanctions, and ICC prosecutions. It also warns those who fail to act against those who continue supplying weapons or diplomatic cover risk complicity. Amnesty’s report on the ongoing atrocities should serve as an urgent call to stop the ongoing genocide.

## ***Amnesty’s Call to Action***

***Amnesty International calls for an immediate arms embargo on all parties involved in the conflict. Continued arms sales contribute to violence and violations of international humanitarian law. The United Nations has also expressed concern over the use of humanitarian aid as a weapon of war, urging the ICJ to assess Israel’s legal obligations to facilitate aid deliveries.***







# DISCUSSION

# QUESTIONS

Displaced Palestinians take the coastal Rashid road to return to Gaza City as they pass through Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip. Photo by AFP via Getty Images

1. This is Omar El Akkad's first book of nonfiction, a mix of memoir, reporting, and criticism. What power does this real-world documentation have compared to fiction?
2. One of the earliest scenes in the book describes a girl in Gaza being rescued from the rubble. What images or scenes first grabbed your attention about the war? What role did on-the-ground reporting from Palestinians play in your understanding of the war versus mainstream media coverage?
3. Omar El Akkad aims at the weakness of language and how it's been used to sanitize and minimize Israel's devastation of Gaza. What power does language hold to describe and document, but also to evade and silence?
4. What impact does learning about Omar El Akkad's journalistic experiences, his family history of fleeing Egypt, and other personal windows into his life have on your experience reading?
5. What reaction did you have to the tweet the title is drawn from, "One day, when it's safe, when there's no personal downside to calling a thing what it is, when it's too late to hold anyone accountable, everyone will have always been against this"?
6. Compare and contrast the kind of censorship Omar describes in his childhood in the Middle East versus the censorship he is taking aim at in Western institutions' silence on Gaza. How are they the same? How are they different?
7. El Akkad critiques how the West often supports resistance movements only after they've been neutralized or historicized. What does this say about how societies shape memory and justice? Can you think of other examples, historical or current, where this applies?
8. The book emphasizes bearing witness and telling the truth even when it's politically inconvenient. What role do you think individuals and institutions (including the media) play in upholding—or undermining—human rights?
9. What impact has reading this book had on you? Has it made you speak out, take action? Why or why not?

## Take action!

Here are 3 ways to take action with Amnesty International:



[End Gaza Genocide](#)



[Stop Arms Sales](#)



[Stop Mass Deportations](#)



[Stop the Deportation and Release Mahmoud Khalil](#)

## Learn more!

Additional resources:



[Read Amnesty's Full Gaza Genocide Report](#)



[Read Amnesty's Gaza Report Summary](#)



[Donate to Defend Truth and Accountability in Gaza](#)



[Deconstructing Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians](#)

