Matzliach: Thank you for staying with us, and we want to greet MK Haneen Zoabi. You are arriving at our studios after the storm you have evoked this week – one should say, *yet another* storm you have evoked this week. Let's watch together a brief run-down of recent events, and then we'll continue the conversation

[Video clips with voice over from M:] MK Haneen Zoabi did this week what she does best: provocative statements. Once again she has generated mayhem – but this time, apparently, she has gone a little too far.

[Zoabi in recorded interview, Hebrew transliteration on screen:] Does it seem strange to you that people under Occupation, does it seem strange to you that they kidnap?

[recorded interviewer:] So you see, according to you they are not terrorists?

[Z recorded:] They are not terrorists.

[M recorded:] More than 5 years in the Knesset, but her parliamentary output can be summarized in one line, maybe a line and a half. On the other hand, she succeeds in infuriating the average Israeli time and time again.

[video from 2010 flotilla]

[M voiceover:] The first time was on the [Mavi] Marmara, when she was on board the ship and blamed Israel for killing innocents…

[Z recorded 2010] The first activist who was murdered, he was murdered before the first soldier was even on the ship!

[Channel 2 military correspondent Roni Daniel, recorded:] That's a lie, that's a lie.

[M voiceover, with scenes of 2010 post-Marmara Knesset assault on Zoabi:] Then came the skirmishes with MKs on the Knesset floor...

[MK Miri Regev, addressing MK Zoabi in Arabic from the Knesset podium:] Go to Gaza, you traitor [switching to Hebrew:], Traitor!

[M voiceover]...since then, the confrontations became routine.

[continued clips from the very same Knesset session, with ex-MK Michaeli rushing the podium to physically assault MK Zoabi as she speaks, Knesset chair recorded:] MK Michaeli! [to ushers] get her off stage.

[clip from later that session, chair to Zoabi in a far more hostile tone:] You are abusing democracy. If you raise a hand... get her out of here immediately!

[1:40, M voiceover again:] This accumulation of events has led to a failed attempt to ban her from running for the Knesset. [Clips from Israel's partisan Election Committee's decision to personally ban Zoabi from running to the 2013 general elections; a decision overturned by the courts].

But the real public blow was dealt to her at home [clips of Zoabi's failed 2013 attempt to run for mayor of Nazareth]. Now there is competition on the Right, which will lead the renewed initiative to throw Zoabi out of the Knesset. It is unclear whether it will succeed, but it is certain that the next provocation is already on the way.

[Return to studio]

M: Hello to you, MK Haneen Zoabi.

Z: This is also infuriating, your introductory segment. Hello, Rina.

M: Soon you will be able to correct whatever you think needs correction, but I thought perhaps you want to take advantage of this stage in order to apologize, or retract, things you said on that interview to Tel Aviv Radio 102.

Z: I am sorry that there is not a strong enough struggle opposing the Occupation, and it grieves me that people neglect to discuss your reality, don't discuss [… M interrupts] you want me to answer, right? This is what we agreed upon.

M: Go ahead, go ahead, but I wanted to understand whether you are saying, that people need to do more than kidnap children.

Z: No no no, struggle within the boundaries of human morality, Rina. My positions were not born yesterday, and were not born following recent events. I am in the Knesset 5 years already, and whoever listens to me knows that I support a just struggle, struggle within the limits of international law. For example, the Occupation. Not only do people not listen to Haneen Zoabi's position; no one sees the Occupation at all. No one sees the context, only 3 kidnapped, I don't know, 3 missing youth. But 2 Palestinian youth who were killed today – you didn't talk about them at all. And in the newscast just preceding this show, no one mentioned these two killed Palestinian youth. The blood of the missing Jewish youth, is worth more than the Palestinian blood. To me, they are both equal...

M [interrupting]: Ok, let's make an agreement. I will listen to you, but you also need to listen to the questions. You said that there is a need for a more intensive struggle.

Z: I didn't say more intensive, enough with the distortion. I said that there is a context of Occupation that must be ended, and struggled against, a popular struggle.

M: I am asking you. Does kidnapping three 16-year-old youth, not soldiers, on their way home, is this inside the boundaries of your legitimate struggle?

Z: Now. In that first interview, I said that I disagree with the kidnapping. Do you know that I said that?

M: You said that they are not terrorists?

Z: Wait, do you know – to this very moment - that I said that [I disagree with the kidnapping]?

M: Yes I do, I listened to the entire interview.

Z: So why doesn't anyone mention that? They are not terrorists because...

M: I want you to address... you also said they are not terrorists

Z: I disagree with the kidnapping... they are not terrorists because I look at the macro level. First of all, this is a hypothetical question. I don't know them. I don't know whether this is a kidnapping operation and neither do you. Netanyahu, and Israel's military, are not busy getting to these youth. They are busy invading, and arresting, and killing Palestinians. You know what? I don't think the Israeli attention is focused on these kids. Why at this desk, no one talks about negotiations...

M: MK Zoabi, I want to ask you something. Do you really think that these soldiers, [correcting] these kids, are just wandering around somewhere, and Palestinians didn't kidnap them? And the military is not looking for them? Do you really think these things, or are you just saying this to provoke people because you enjoy it? I'm asking. The Israeli military is not looking for these youngsters?

Z: Believe me, I don't enjoy this victim role and having to explain myself. I think that the real goal of the military in this operation, is to beat up on the Hamas.

M: But... I'm trying to understand you... [trying to interrupt]

Z: That's what your Prime Minister is saying!

M: I don't understand your logic! The entire operation only started after the kidnapping.

Z: Incorrect. It was already said, that there had been invasion plans, Rina, I listen to the news just like you, so please at least be serious... it was already said, that there had been invasion plans before the kidnapping. In addition...

M: But you speak Hebrew pretty well, but you don't understand the difference between plans being ready – that no one had implemented – they were implemented only after the kidnapping. You don't understand the difference between these two things?

Z: They were implemented, and this is not the strategy to get to the kids. I think, that each day that passes by, the chances of finding the kids are getting worse! And I think, that invading education facilities, invading radio stations, invading charity organizations, it is not doing(?) anything, it's just strengthening Israeli terrorism. I'm saying, if they want to extricate the youngsters, they need to start a dialogue.

M: So you're saying there's Israeli terrorism, but there's no Palestinian terrorism! Answer me, there's no Palestinian terrorism?!

Z: The overall context of Israeli action is that of Occupation and terrorism. The overall context of Palestinian action is a legitimate struggle against Occupation, and the problem is...

M: Including the kidnapping of kids?

Z: I don't agree with the kidnapping of kids! You... I don't want to get angry. I will say what I want to say. I don't agree with the kidnapping. I think,...

M: I want to play for you, the words of someone whom I don't think you'll doubt his concern for the interests of the Palestinian people, and his attempts to do good by his people and establish a state.

[Mahmoud Abbas recording, based on Hebrew transliteration:] In truth, whoever did this [kidnapping] wants to destroy us. Towards him, we will have a different talk and a different position – whoever might it be behind this operation.

Z: You don't know our positions at all. I think that we, our political criticism of the Palestinian Authority is longstanding [literally “ancient”]. Now, the strategic goal of Abu Mazen and the PA, is to strengthen their rule. My struggle as a Palestinian, is ending the Occupation, that's a different goal...

M: So, Abu Mazen is a collaborator?

Z: We don't agree with the way of Abu Mazen! The goal of this Israeli military action, is to destroy the Palestinian reconciliation government.

M: I'm asking you now about Abu Mazen. He doesn't care for the Palestinian people?

Z: We don't agree politically with Abu Mazen! I agree more with the goal in Israel now, which is to return the youth back home, to enter dialogue with whoever organized this operation, to release the Palestinian prisoners who are also kidnapped into the Israeli jails...

M: Why are you evading from answering me what you think of Abu Mazen?

Z: I am not evading! I disagree with his opinion!

M: You don't think he cares for the Palestinians?

Z: No! I disagree with the position and strategy – if he has a strategy – of Abu Mazen. I reject the security cooperation. It is a betrayal of the Palestinian people, this security cooperation. I think Abu Mazen has reached the stage of not only security cooperation, but also political cooperation. I think we should declare the end of Oslo. Negotiation without a popular struggle, within the limits of international law, such negotiations will never end the Occupation, without a popular struggle, without a struggle against the Occupation. I think that...

M: Are you saying that Abu Mazen is traitor to his people?

Z: Now Rina, this is ridiculous what you're saying.

M: I'm saying what you said just now!

Z: I will say what I want to say. You – say your own words. We don't agree politically! When I want to use the word “traitor”, I will use it. You journalists, you play gotcha with the MK's, “Do you condemn? Do you not condemn?” - how about first you, condemn Israeli terrorism, whoever asks me “Is this [kidnapping] terrorism?”... Please let me finish sentences... should first condemn Israeli terrorism...

M: You said that already... that there's no Palestinian terrorism, but there is Israeli terrorism...

Z: You must understand. There is a total lack of willingness to understand. Why does this sentence count as provocation? Because people don't talk enough. About context. The international law – great. [Israeli] self-righteousness...

M: Let me tell you why. You live in this state. Mothers in this state – you are a citizen of this state. Mothers in this state, their kids were taken from their way home. And you have – NO – empathy towards this action, in your eyes it [the kidnapping] is heroic.

Z: I, my empathy, and my actions, so that such events don't recur – are far more than the actions of Netanyahu. My way, my vision, to end the Occupation, is the only way to not repeat terrorism. You want to destroy Hamas? No, you want to destroy any option of struggle. Even the Intifada you count [as terrorism]... throwing stones is terrorism too according to you. You want to talk about mothers? Please, talk about the two mothers of Palestinian kids who were killed today

M: Sure thing!

Z: No, you haven't talked about them!

M: I didn't hear you talk about those [Israeli settler?] mothers!

Z: In the Israeli media no one talks about 360 mothers of Palestinian babies killed during Cast Lead. When have you condemn these killings?

M: I have an answer. You want to hear an answer? So listen. First of all, even if civilians are killed from military action, it is always...

Z: 300 babies...

M: One minute. Never have there been premeditated action by the Israeli military, to harm civilians.

Z: That is not correct.

M: Never. Never.

Z: Read – not Hanin Zoabi – read…

M: And I want to tell you one more thing. Let me talk. Let me move the moment forward.

Z: What about the UN reports?

M: I – let me

Z: They talk about systematic killing.

M: You have got to listen, too.

Z: Because we’re fed up with this discourse!

M: I understand you’re fed up, but you have to listen.

Z: This – this is the discourse that led to the abduction of the boys!

M: And my next question. So I want you to listen.

Z: This is the discourse that led to the abduction of the boys.

M: I want you to listen to what is said not by an Israeli, not by a Jew, what is said by a member of your own party, who spoke very differently than you do. And I ask you: Why could Jamal Zahalke say: “we object to the abduction, to hurting civilians, we hope and pray for the boys to return home safely.” There is a dispute about how to resolve the conflict between ourselves and the Palestinians but there are -

Z: There is no difference at all, Rina

M: - even your friends

Z: Stop the distortions.

M: There is clearly a difference.

Z: Except for the style, except for the personality, there is no difference at all in the political position. Rina, you are a serious woman, you are a serious journalist. Now when you bring me this paragraph and you tell me that there is a difference, when he says “I do not agree”

M: …there is clearly a difference…

Z: What I say is that I do not agree with the abduction.

M: I didn’t hear that you’re praying that the children return safely. I didn’t ever hear you say anything like that.

Z: Maybe I don’t pray for anything? Maybe politics is one matter and praying is a different matter? Maybe I am a political woman I do not express myself in that manner? That’s the distortion, Rina.

M: But do you know what, let’s drop…

Z: …we both…

M: …hear another thing: what is the feeling of the Israeli Jewish citizens in Israel when you – now there are threats against you, you have bodyguards, you are a Knesset Member and you are allowed to speak in all Knesset forums…

Z: Thank you very much; should I thank you for giving me the…

M: …But you enjoy the benefits of the Israeli democracy, which does not exist in most of the Arab countries and you spit at that democracy.

Z: I do not enjoy the benefits of the democracy. I suffer from a racist democracy which seizes my lands and permits me one thing, Rina: the freedom of expression. And freedom of expression is not an indication of democracy, it is an indication of the strength of the State of Israel. It is strong enough to grant me freedom of expression, knowing that my freedom to express myself will change nothing.

M: But you don’t appreciate it.

Z: Look: see the incitement. The very moment that this freedom of expression disputes the red line – that’s when the incitement is started.

M: That’s a democracy that protects itself.

Z: If there is freedom of expression… Ah. There it is. So I want to tell you that a democracy that protects itself still must remain within the bounds of international law. What Israel is doing, in the Gaza Strip, and even inside the Green Line, is a violation of international law. As soon as you do not open – as the State of Israel does not open its news broadcasts with the words “Israel does war crimes” the cycle of blood will continue. The entire responsibility lies with the Netanyahu government.

M: We understood what you said. It is entirely clear.

Z: The only way to put an end to this abduction without injury, Rina, listen to me, the only way to put an end to this abduction – and I do indeed want this abduction to end without injury – is to free Palestinian prisoners that Israel has abducted.

M: You’ve already said this, you’ve said this, and now I want to tell you…

Z: As long as there are Palestinian prisoners who have been abducted…

M: Now I want to ask you if you’ve considered leaving the country, like your political patron did, who left it…

Z: My political patron, whom I admire greatly, who changed the discourse and challenged…

M: Does he still direct you?

Z: No. I’m in touch with him, he does not have to direct me.

M: So have you considered leaving the country, like he did?

Z: Do you know what the most miserable equation is? That the oppressed person should adopt the discourse that the oppressor would like. That’s the most absurd equation.

M: The demand is for a humane discourse.

Z: Thank you. Thank you Rina.

M: But your discourse is not humane.

Z: Thank you, Rina. I think that it is only my discourse that is humane. The one who kills babies and children is the terrorist, settlements are a war crime,

M: Anyone who cannot denounce…

Z: …but you are on my land! You’re not invading [the city of] Netanya. Rina! The army – it is not the Palestinian army – the Palestinian army is not invading Netanya!

M: Do you think the State of Israel has no right to exist?

Z: There is a right to exist and there is a right of self-determination, not existence but self-determination in this country, in my homeland.

M: In your homeland.

Z: And now it is also your homeland, the Israelis. In this country there is a right to self-determination. Greater than the right of existence. But they don’t invade Netanya. They didn’t put Tel Aviv under siege. They didn’t kill 300 babies in Tel Aviv and in Herzliya. 300 students.

M: I ask you – I can’t understand what you’re saying.

Z: What I’m saying is that according to Goldstone, according to the United Nations report…

M: …first of all, that report, they’ve already rescinded it, you’re not up to date.

Z: It’s updated as of this year, a month ago!

M: But I want to ask you…

Z: …just a month ago [???] said that…

M: …the facts, you play with them any way you like…

Z: You don’t want to hear.

M: No. I don’t want to hear you say the same thing, I want to move forward.

Z: You don’t like the truth. You don’t like it, do you? Just recitation, just recite the same discourse.

M: You see that you read from the page – you say that I don’t let you talk – you don’t let me ask. Do you have any kind of conversation with Jewish Israelis? Do you have any contact with them?

Z: I am on the very most primary platform for conversation with the Jewish citizens. I’m in the Knesset.

M: Where no Knesset member has any conversation with you.

Z: The fact that they are racist- the fact that they want me to consent, and not struggle against racism and against oppression – well, I don’t want to talk with them!

M: Our time is already over and I’m already being told to finish up. Don’t you understand the difference between not agreeing ­– and there are also a lot of Israelis who think the conflict with the Palestinians should be resolved, and that maybe the territories should be returned – and your inhuman speech? And your statements that lack any emotion and that are actually inciting? Don’t you understand the difference?

Z: So let me finish without cutting me off. I think that what you did now, in your sentence, is an example of incitement. I talk about international law and you call me a hater. I talk about human rights and returning, bringing out the Palestinian abductees, and you call me inhumane. I acknowledge that we must hold a struggle with humane measures, and you don’t want to acknowledge the suffering of the Palestinians. I think that the person who is not humane here is not me.

M: Thank you very much, Knesset Member Hanin Zoabi.