

The statement below, signed by Vassar College faculty members, was originally acquired from the public link [HERE](#).

**AMCHA Initiative Note:** The [Palestine & Praxis](#) open letter (referenced as “Scholars for Palestinian Freedom”) endorsed in the statement below includes a commitment to academic BDS, which, if put into effect, would restrict the educational opportunities and academic freedom of students and faculty who want to study about or in Israel.

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## **Letter to the Editor: Vassar Community Members’ Statement of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

**By GUEST CONTRIBUTOR**

Posted on [May 25, 2021](#) in [Opinions](#)

*The following is a letter submitted by a group of professors, and among the signatories are professors, alumni and students. The Miscellany News welcomes a variety of opinions, and articles and letters that appear in the opinions section do not necessarily reflect the views of the paper. If you would like to submit a letter to our opinions section please email [misc@vassar.edu](mailto:misc@vassar.edu).*

As members of the Vassar community and people of conscience, we denounce the ongoing attacks on Palestinians by the Israeli armed forces. We especially condemn the recent extensive bombardment and killing of over 200 people and injuring of thousands more in Gaza, an open air prison of two million inhabitants, mostly descended from refugees expelled from other parts of Palestine. This intensification of violence follows the displacement of the residents of Sheikh Jarrah and the attack on worshippers in Al-Aqsa mosque during Ramadan. We situate these flashpoints in the broader context of the Nakba, Israel’s ethnic cleansing, dispossession, containment, and expulsion of Palestinians since 1948. Tragically, all we can hope for in the current ceasefire is a return to the unacceptable status quo ante, or a slowdown in home demolitions and killings.

We affirm that the Palestinian struggle is an indigenous resistance movement confronting settler colonialism, apartheid, and ethnic cleansing, and stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people. This is not a symmetrical battle. Israel is one of the most heavily militarized states in the world and receives \$3.8 billion in military aid annually from the United States. As we write, the US Congress is considering a \$735 million arms sale to the Israeli regime. In the past decade alone, US aid has not

only underwritten the dispossession, jailing, torture, maiming, and killing of thousands of Palestinian men, women, and children throughout the region, but also the creation of an acute humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

We agree with [Human Rights Watch](#), the Israeli human rights organization [B'tselem](#), and the [United Nations](#), which have all described Israel's systemic discrimination and violence against Palestinians as apartheid, a recognized crime against humanity. In the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, and within Israel, Palestinians resist daily humiliation and violence from the Israeli military, settler militias, and lynch mobs. We salute their bravery and steadfastness.

We recognize that peace can only be achieved with justice in Palestine/Israel. It is not possible under conditions of military occupation, blockade, discrimination, dispossession, and the enduring direct, structural, and cultural violence inflicted upon Palestinians.

We reject what the so-called peace process has become: an instrument of continued land grabs and state violence, propagating the fiction of a "two-sided conflict" and the perpetual postponement of a just solution.

We support the Palestinian right to return, the end of the occupation, and the right of all inhabitants of Israel/Palestine to live in dignity, safety and freedom. We stand with Palestinians, their Jewish Israeli allies, and all those around the world fighting for this noble goal.

We see the movement against racism, police brutality, and mass incarceration in the United States and the Palestinian struggle against apartheid as interconnected. We agree with [The Movement for Black Lives'](#) declaration that "The fight for Palestinian rights and dignity is integral to the fight for human rights everywhere."

We know that educators who teach and speak about Palestine do so at great risk in a climate of censorship. We stand with the statement issued by [Scholars for Palestinian Freedom](#). We also join our colleagues at [Yale](#), [Princeton](#), the [Universities of Illinois Chicago](#) and [Urbana-Champaign](#), [Universities of California Santa Cruz](#), [Berkeley](#), and [Davis](#), [Harvard](#), [CUNY](#), and [Gender Studies Departments](#) around the country to express our solidarity with Palestinians.

All members of the Vassar community are invited to sign [here](#). Below is a current list as of June 8, 2021.

In solidarity,

Ismail Rashid, History

Joshua Schreier, History and Jewish Studies

Maria Hantzopoulos, Education

Katherine Hite, Political Science

Diane Harriford, Sociology

Eva Woods Peiró, Hispanic Studies

Patricia-Pia Célérier, French and Francophone Studies

Joseph Nevins, Geography

Sam Okoth Opondo, Political Science and Africana Studies

Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, Hispanic Studies

Hiram Perez, Women, Feminist, and Queer Studies

Mario Cesareo, Hispanic Studies

Claire Sagan, Political Science

Erin McCloskey, Education

George Ciccariello-Maher, Political Science

Kirsten Wesselhoeft, Religion

David Tavárez, Anthropology and LALS

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Susan Hiner, French and Francophone Studies

Paulina Bren, International Studies

Barbara Olsen, Greek and Roman Studies

Kirsten Menking, Earth Science

John Andrews, Sociology

Pinar Batur, Sociology

Giovanna Borradori, Media Studies

Candice Lowe Swift, Anthropology, Africana Studies, International Studies

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Annie Brancky, French and Francophone Studies

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Gabrielle Cody, Drama

Wendy Graham, English

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Mia Mask, Film  
Jonathon Kahn, Religion  
Tom Ellman, Computer Science  
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Denise A. Walen, Drama  
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