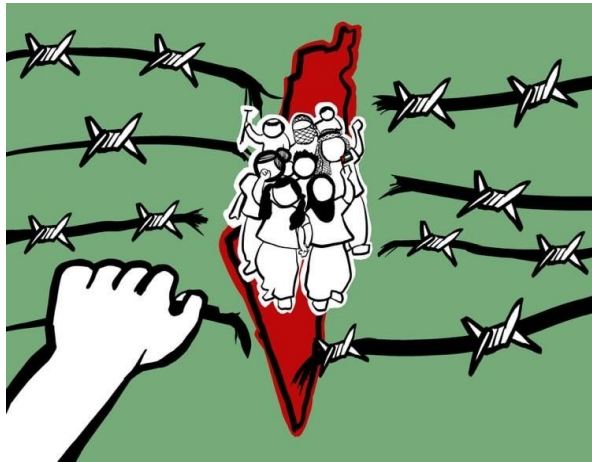


Open Letter from the Institute for the Critical Study of Zionism's
Research Community

October 17, 2023

We call on everyone—including scholars, researchers, organizers, and administrators worldwide—to act now to end Israel's genocidal attack on Gaza.



We, the research community of the Institute for the Critical Study of Zionism (ICSZ), are grieving the many lives lost and fearing the many more to come. As a newly-formed collective of scholars and activists committed to the study of Zionism, its politics and institutions, we call on everyone—scholars, educators, organizers, administrators, the international community—to act now to end Israel's genocidal attack on Gaza, itself an extension of the ongoing Nakba Palestinians have experienced for over 75 years.

As we write this, Israel has just bombed Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza, murdering over 500 sick and grieving Palestinians alongside Palestinian doctors, nurses, and hospital staff. This brings the death toll of Israel's bombing campaign since October 7 to over 3,000, including more than 1,000 children. Following [scholars](#) of genocide, we note that the Israeli War Minister Yoav Gallant has made his intent clear: **"We are imposing a complete siege on Gaza. No electricity, no food, no water, no fuel. Everything is closed. We are fighting human animals, and we will act accordingly."** This dehumanization is meant to justify, in advance, the mass death—by bombing or by slowly ending life-giving sustenance—of 2.3 million Palestinians trapped in Gaza. Thus far, the bombing campaign has destroyed hospitals, targeted first responders, eradicated entire families, leveled neighborhoods, and demolished "safe routes" on which Palestinians were told to flee for their lives. It has been accompanied by Israel's denying Palestinians in Gaza water, medicine, food, electricity, and fuel and destroying water, power, and telecommunications infrastructure. Israel has [bombed the Rafah crossing](#), the sole point of exit from Gaza over land not controlled by Israel, and disrupted the flow of aid to the besieged Palestinians there, while the United States continues to provide [additional military hardware to Israel](#) and prepares U.S. [troops for potential deployment to Israel](#).

We affirm that the root cause of the brutal violence we are witnessing is Israel's 75-year regime of settler-colonialism and apartheid, which itself is built upon and extends a much longer history of European colonialism; Israel is supported and bankrolled by U.S. tax dollars at the rate of \$3.8 billion per year. This most recent attack is the fourth escalation from siege to crushing bombardment in 15 years, perpetrated by one of the world's most powerful militaries against a

vulnerable and captive population, nearly half of whom are under eighteen, and the majority of whom are refugees from successive waves of displacement by Israeli settlement and ethnic cleansing since 1948.

As scholars, organizers, and/or artists, we are committed to justice-centered knowledge production in conjunction with, not separate from, peoples' struggles. Following Scholars for Palestinian Freedom's public [commitment](#), during the last bombing campaign on Gaza in May 2021, to including Palestinian scholarship on Palestine in our work, we reiterate that Palestinian studies as a field is what shapes our writing and cultural production, what contextualizes this moment, and what underscores the need for liberation from Israeli settler-colonialism. During and outside of crises, we remain committed to a citational practice that centers Palestinian archives of displacement and steadfastness. We commit to sharing these archives with students, readers, and the communities we encounter as we bear a direct responsibility to use our platforms to speak out about the ongoing Nakba, condemn the current genocide we are witnessing, and intervene in the clamoring of support for unchecked Israeli state violence.

As educators, we are horrified by the ubiquity of messaging from our university administrations that has expressed empathy for Israeli life, excluding Palestinians and recycling harmful Orientalist, Islamophobic, colonial, and racist tropes about a people under siege. We hold our administrations—and similar messaging by the mainstream U.S. media outlets—responsible for anti-Palestinian violence, including the [recent murder](#) of Wadea Al-Fayoume, a six-year-old Palestinian boy whose landlord, Joseph Czuba, shouted “You Muslims must die!” as he stabbed him to death and critically injured his mother. This rhetoric, too, stokes the violence that protesters, teach-in attendees, and vigil participants in support of Palestinian freedom have experienced on campuses across the United States. Following the [University of California Ethnic Studies Faculty Council](#), we affirm that this rhetorical violence generated by administrative bodies across multiple universities fosters a hostile learning environment for Palestinian, Muslim, and Arab students on our campuses who are reminded in these moments that the university does not protect them and cannot spare a word of care for their families under siege. As educators, following [Birzeit University](#), we too call upon our academic communities to “fulfill their intellectual and academic duty of seeking truth, maintaining a critical distance from state-sponsored propaganda, and to hold the perpetrators of genocide and those complicit with them accountable.”

We issue the following demands:

- 1. As many of us are based in countries that provide unequivocal support for Israel, we call on these governments to demand an immediate ceasefire and an immediate entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza.**

2. **We call on the United Nations to intervene immediately to protect the Palestinian people from genocide. We reject U.S. vetoes that enable and embolden Israel and allow it to escape accountability.**
3. **We call on university administrators to retract all statements that foment anti-Palestinian racism and we call for a collective end to academic complicity in Israel's apartheid regime. We affirm our commitment to hold Israel accountable by supporting the Palestinian-led [campaign](#) to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel until it complies with international law and universal principles of human rights.**
4. **We call for a complete and total end to Israel's apartheid regime, the end of the brutal occupation, freedom and liberation for all Palestinians living under Israel's rule, and the right of return for those in exile. These are the only conditions that will produce justice.**

Signed,
(alphabetical list: please add your name [here](#))

Mariam A., NYU Law

Rami Abdelkarim, Palestinian Youth Movement

Rabab Abdulhadi, Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Studies Program at San Francisco State University

Rev. Fahed AbuAkel, Presbyterian Minister in Atlanta, GA

Dr. Hil Aked

Sahar Al-Najjar, PsyD Candidate, Adler University

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Abdel Aziz Al Bawab

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M. Muhannad Ayyash, Professor of Sociology, Mount Royal University

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Courtney Bonam, Assistant Professor, University of California Santa Cruz

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Cynthia Franklin, English Prof., U. of Hawai'i

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Mary Jo Klinker, Winona State University

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