

From: Ussama Makdisi <makdisi@berkeley.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:37 AM PDT
To: Ussama Makdisi PhD <makdisi@berkeley.edu>
BCC: mcmiller@berkeley.edu <mcmiller@berkeley.edu>
Subject: UC Berkeley Faculty Petition to prevent genocide in Gaza

Dear colleagues,

I have been part of a UC Berkeley faculty group that has worked together to write this petition to speak up against genocide in Gaza and express solidarity with the Palestinian people. At the very least I hope you will read the statement as it adds context to the current terrible situation in Palestine.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1l4l1CrB1aIFxlp_UGzcXQAOfks12u_EJHcZbKJS1Oc/edit?usp=sharing

If you are moved to sign onto the letter, you should add your information here <https://forms.gle/QEEKh4iyatZi1KAA6>

Names will be added to the petition manually as they come.

Please share widely!

UC Berkeley Faculty Statement of Solidarity with Palestinians

To sign: <https://forms.gle/QEEKh4iyatZi1KAA6>

We faculty members at UC Berkeley stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people in Gaza facing [genocidal](#) Israeli state violence. We stand in solidarity with our fellow educators in occupied Palestine who have renewed their [call](#) for international academic institutions to stand with, and not against, the subjugated, brutalized, displaced, and terrorized Palestinian people.

As of this writing, and growing by the hour, Israeli military operations have killed a reported 2,670 civilians in Gaza, over half of them children. The World Health Organization warns that only 24 hours of water, electricity, and fuel are left in the Gaza Strip. Israeli air strikes continue to hit the Rafah border crossing. Due to the blockade and continuous shelling, specific figures are impossible to confirm. Journalists in the area are threatened. We refuse to remain silent as we watch a systematic genocide underway, supported by the United States government.

We insist on the recognition of the dignity and value of Palestinian lives and of the right of Palestinian people to demand liberation. As educators who have spent our careers dedicated to humanistic learning and critical thinking, we are appalled by the constant dehumanization, dehistoricization, and devaluation of Palestinian life. We refuse the specious framing of Israel's overwhelming violence against Palestinians as simply retaliatory. To do so deliberately elides and denies decades of constant, ongoing, documented settler-colonial dispossession, oppression, and brutalization of the indigenous Palestinians by the occupying Israeli state. This is an abdication of scholarly and ethical responsibility. Such framing also ignores the fact that major human rights organizations [Human Rights Watch](#), [Amnesty International](#), and [B'tselem](#) classified Israel in 2021 as an *apartheid* state because of its extreme structural racism against Palestinians and the flagrant privileging of Israeli Jews over Palestinians across all the lands occupied and controlled by Israel.

The decontextualization of the Palestinian people goes hand in hand with their dehumanization. And the dehumanization of Palestinians is a key step toward their mass killing. This historical moment has clear antecedents in how struggles against colonialism in Africa, Asia and the Americas and slave revolts in North America have often been framed and demonized as “barbaric” to justify further oppression.

The Gaza Strip in its current mangled geography is itself a product of the Nakba of 1948, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were expelled from their homes and villages in other parts of Palestine to make way for the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel. In 1967, Israel invaded and occupied the rest of Palestine including the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, two decades before Hamas was founded. Then in 2007, Israel and Egypt, with the support of the United States, [commenced](#) an inhumane blockade of Gaza that lasts until today.

We note that of the 2.2 million stateless inhabitants of the Gaza strip now suffering under massive Israeli bombardments, 70% are themselves refugees and 43% are children under 18. The structure of the resulting apartheid state renders Gazans systematically vulnerable to catastrophic violence. In recent days, we have witnessed Israel's Defense Minister characterize Palestinians as “human animals” and impose a complete siege on Gaza so as to block two million Palestinians from accessing anything needed to survive: water, food, fuel, and basic medical supplies. We see U.S. government officials assisting in plans to transfer Palestinians to Egypt—yet another effort to expel Palestinians from their land as a continuation of the ongoing Nakba.

We are horrified by the premeditated genocidal violence and explicit calls for “annihilation” directed at the population of Gaza. We invite all our colleagues and students, across disciplines and irrespective of ethnicity or religion, to learn about Palestinian history and life. There can be no justice for Palestinians without an end to apartheid, and there will be no end to apartheid so long as so many tacitly

or openly accept, condone and justify the ongoing structural and colonial violence and discrimination against native Palestinians.

We believe that all human life has equal value. We will not pretend that the history and humanity of the indigenous population of Palestine have no intrinsic value. We stand without hesitation with our Palestinian and allied students, staff, and faculty of all faiths and nationalities who fight for justice in Palestine. We note with alarm how many Palestinian, Muslim, Arab, and allied students, staff, and faculty have been harassed and bullied without meaningful intervention by UC campus leadership. We refuse the blatant mischaracterization of calls for Palestinian liberation as antisemitism, which we abhor. We call for our colleagues working against antisemitism to stand with us to demand justice for all oppressed and colonized people.

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