



We Are All the South

A Call from Birzeit University Union of Professors and Employees
to academic and cultural communities worldwide

On the twenty-seventh day of the genocidal war being waged by the settler colonial state of "Israel" against the Palestinian people in Gaza and throughout historic Palestine, coinciding with the date of the infamous Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917, which marked imperial endorsement of the Zionist colonial project in our land, we declare to the world that we are still alive and engaged in our national struggle for freedom and self-determination. We declare that our people, with a population of more than 15 million worldwide, remain steadfast in Palestine and throughout the diaspora. We renew our call to our partners in the world, advocates of justice and freedom, and those in solidarity with our just national struggle, to stand with us against the most brutal waves of genocide and ethnic cleansing we have faced for more than seven decades.

We initially issued a statement at the beginning of this war entitled "We Are All Palestinians" to emphasize the century-long war against Palestinians and the historical injustices it has carried. We also solidified our people's uncompromising will to engage in all forms of revolutionary acts as we face unprecedented levels of colonial violence. Today, we address you with a statement entitled "We Are All the South." The imperialist forces and its hegemonic power, which has long nurtured the Zionist project in our land, have once again aligned themselves with the old-fashioned narrative known as the "clash of civilizations against barbarism," aiming to break the will to life and freedom among the Palestinian people. We want to frame the situation as we see it and as we live it, not only because of this most recent iteration of violence, but because we have long endured and thrived through the violence of settler colonialism.

During this war, the settler army targeted our people in Gaza, located in the southern part of our Palestinian coastline, unleashing unprecedented violence through the most destructive weapons accumulated in its arsenal, supplied and re-supplied by its Western allies. While the war waged from the skies in Gaza, this campaign also included killing, destruction, and brutal arrests against our people in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the 1948 occupied territories. The settler state employs all kinds of colonial violence from its well-rehearsed arsenal, both physical and legal, including targeting our academics and university students inside "Israeli" universities, merely for expressing sympathy with the victims of the aggression in Gaza and its open wounds. This is in addition to the McCarthyist campaigns targeting Palestinian academics, students, intellectuals, and artists around the world in unyielding attempts to silence their voices.

From our national, ethical, and humanitarian standpoint, we must inform you of the current situation across Palestine and the diaspora in the academic and cultural fields:

- Since the start of this savage war on Gaza, in addition to the homes, hospitals, orphanages, mosques, churches, and shelters under the care of the United Nations, "Israel" deliberately and systematically also targeted schools, universities, academic institutions, and cultural centers with direct shelling and ceaseless bombing. Their military actions have physically



destroyed institutional infrastructures in Gaza and paralyzed the educational process in all academic institutions across Palestine, targeting 53 universities and other institutes of higher education affecting around 250,000 students and 3,000 secondary and primary schools affecting nearly 1,500,000 students. They have intensified their campaign against intellectuals threatening them with physical harm, arrests, and threats of their livelihoods. This current campaign has also featured targeted expulsions of professors, students, and workers in both the academic and cultural fields.

- In addition to its direct involvement in the crimes of the Zionist apartheid system, "Israeli" academia is now actively participating in the genocidal war by utilizing its human, intellectual, and promotional resources. This campaign has received official support from some Western academic institutions further exposing our people and those who are in solidarity with us to violent measures working towards a suffocating silence and erasure of Palestine and Palestinian voices everywhere we exist. As we observe the aggressiveness of these institutions, we call on all our comrades in the world, in unions, academic institutions, research centers, and collectives, to activate their engagement in the BDS movement, which aims to end international support for "Israel's" oppression of Palestinians and pressure "Israel" to comply with international law through a campaign of boycott, sanctions and divestment of "Israeli" institutions. The genocidal war being waged by "Israel" today leaves no room for doubt about the principles, objectives and need for the BDS movement and its call initiated in 2005.
- The timid and apologetic attempts made by a few academics and intellectuals in the early days of the war to "condemn violence on both sides" do not deserve a response. However, we once again need to emphasize that there are not "two sides" in the current genocidal war, but rather a criminal army exercising brutality against a besieged people defending their lives and their right to defend life. This is a new round of the long war waged by the Zionist colonial settler state against the Palestinian people and their resistance. It is a war that clearly demonstrates the excess of Palestinian righteousness in the face of the excess of "Israeli" force, where there is no moral equivalence between the colonizer and the colonized, and there never will be. There is no equivalence between their swords and our blood, and there is no equivalence between the iron of their bombs and the flesh of our victims.

Therefore, the clarity of the horrific genocide in Gaza today leaves no room for debate about the form, mechanism, or purpose of solidarity with Palestine and Palestinians. It compels us to remind you of the common human, intellectual, and ethical grammar in our collective struggle against all colonial conditions in the world. We remind you that solidarity begins with recognizing the sovereign voice of the oppressed and that they have the right to determine the form, means, and ends of their struggle. You are our partners in our humanity, and you are our partners in the battle to defend it: we are all the South, we are all Palestinians, we are all resistance, we are all Gaza.

2 November 2023

Birzeit University Union of Professors and Employees, Occupied Palestine