

American University of Beirut – Faculty United in Solidarity with Palestine and the Palestinian People

In light of the atrocities that Israel is currently carrying out with impunity in Gaza, we, faculty members at the American University of Beirut, would like to express our full and unconditional support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people.

As Gaza is currently being razed to the ground, attempts to discuss the ongoing situation as a battle between two equally belligerent nations are inaccurate, misleading, and morally vacuous. Such framing completely erases the history of settler colonialism in Palestine, as the Zionist state was built on the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and their forced expulsion from their land and homes. Palestinians have been suffering from the violence and brutality of Zionism for more than 75 years: colonization, ethnic cleansing, forced exile, settlement, administrative imprisonment, structural racism, daily humiliation, and systematic annihilation. The Palestinian resistance movement has tried all possible peaceful means to fight for their rights for over a century, from peaceful protests such as the Great March for Return in Gaza in 2018 which was met with brutal repression by occupation forces and campaigns such as the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement which has been denigrated and attacked in many campuses in the West; to diplomacy and peace negotiations that have largely failed to deliver a dignified solution to the Palestinian people.

While world leaders are standing in support of the Israeli government's genocidal attack on Gaza as "self-defense," the right of Palestinians to self-defense against their occupier, as per international law, has long been ignored and vilified. Colonial logic normalizes violence against the colonized by dehumanizing Palestinians to legitimize their killing. The declaration of Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant that Palestinians are "human animals," and that Israelis should treat them accordingly is a blatant call for genocide. The military and political support of western powers and their allies, particularly the United States, enables Israel's genocidal violence. Western media propaganda provides it with moral cover by deploying orientalist and Islamophobic tropes and spreading disinformation to legitimize the atrocities committed by the state of Israel. In this context, all talk about a population transfer of Gazans to Sinai in Egypt is no less than a continuation to the Nakba, and forms yet another expulsion of Palestinians from their land.

As faculty members at the American University of Beirut, we condemn the blatant misrepresentation of history, the spreading of misinformation, and the dehumanization of Palestinians; and we condemn the US President's decision to aid and abet Israel's attempted genocide of the Palestinians and the complicity of Arab states in the normalization of their dispossession. We also stand in solidarity with colleagues and students in academic institutions in the West and the occupied territories who are being attacked, sanctioned, and accused of antisemitism or hate crimes for voicing their support for the Palestinians and their cause. The Palestinian resistance is a struggle against Zionist settler colonialism and apartheid. Framing it as anti-Jewish is the strategy used to equate anti-Zionism with anti-semitism, meant to silence Palestinians and their allies. In line with our colleagues at Birzeit University, we believe that as academics and scholars "We have to use our words, however futile they may feel in such critical times." Our words today are clear: We stand in full and unconditional solidarity with the Palestinian people until liberation.

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