FEMINISTS AGAINST GENOCIDE: End Academic Complicity Now!

Preamble

We issue this statement to support ongoing efforts to demand that universities – a sector we inhabit – act on their social responsibility to do their part in stopping Israel's genocide in Gaza and the oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian people. For over two years, students, staff, and activists inside and beyond academia have protested the State of Israel's current onslaught through petitions, open letters, statements, public meetings, demonstrations, walk-outs, strikes, encampments, and building occupations, urging universities to end collaborations with Israeli institutions and use boycott as a form of political pressure. We aim to contribute to these efforts because universities, through their partnerships and resources, are complicit in Israel's atrocities and must take responsibility as institutions of knowledge and wield their power to oppose its genocide in Gaza and the unchecked expansion of the ethnic cleansing directed against Palestinians.

We, the authors of this statement, write from within Western European universities, which are deeply implicated in the roles that European countries and institutions play in sustaining Israel's atrocities, systemic oppression, and dispossession of the Palestinian people. We also write in solidarity with feminists from the global South(s) and Europe's East, who continue to wage their own context-specific struggles against neo-imperial discursive, material, and political violence, and whose solidarities with the Palestinian people highlight the crucial importance of multidirectionally de/anticolonial movements. This situatedness is also reflected in this statement, which does not claim to represent varied academic contexts worldwide. We have chosen to write this feminist statement as a way to build mobilization across different feminist academic communities. We envision it as a resource for continued organising within universities – pushing governing bodies to cut ties with Israeli institutions, demanding an end to the genocide in Gaza, creating systemic support for Palestinian students and scholars, and sustaining pressure against Israeli violence in its many systemic forms. Making this situatedness explicit is important, as it clarifies both the position from which we speak and the limits of our statement. At the same time, we invite all, world-wide, academic staff, educators, students, activists, and civil society members to support it by signing, and to use it – or a contextually adapted version – in their efforts at their own universities.

Feminist responsibility

> "From Angela Davis we understand that justice is indivisible; we learn this lesson time and again from Black, Indigenous, Arab, and most crucially, Palestinian feminists, who know that 'Palestine is a Feminist Issue'[1]."
> Gender Studies Departments in Solidarity with Palestinian Feminist Collective[2]

As continuously demonstrated by the work of Palestinian scholars and activists in Palestine and diaspora over decades: Palestine is a feminist issue. As Palestinian journalist Mariam Barghouti reminds: "A feminist who is not also anti-colonial, anti-racist and in opposition to the various forms of injustice is selectively and oppressively serving the interests of a single segment of the global community"[3].

Feminism, at its core, demands justice, liberation, and an end to all systems of oppression for all peoples. Just as intersectional feminist and queer scholarship has long interrogated and challenged interconnected systems of oppression, such as patriarchy, racism, classism, (settler)colonialism, antisemitism, antiMuslim racism, state violence, and imperialism, it must also oppose Israel's settler colonial project and its practices of choking Palestinian life, and the intensifying ethnic cleansing in the West Bank at this time as well as the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Since October 2023, the Israeli state has launched one of the deadliest assaults in recent history, killing over 64.656 and injuring over 163.503 Palestinians, and displacing more than 2.1 million people[4]. But the number of killed Palestinian people may be much higher according to The Lancet, which already in June 2024 suggested that the killing in Gaza could claim many more lives than the official reports indicate, with an estimate of 186.000 Palestinians killed by Israel by the end of the onslaught[5]. Another study published in The Lancet suggests that the number of direct deaths in Gaza has been underreported by 41%[6]. For almost two years, entire families have been obliterated by relentless bombardment, traumatising the entire population of Gaza and beyond. The environmental destruction in Gaza is unparalleled, as Israel has been systematically targeting agricultural farmlands, infrastructure, water sources, and turning cities into rubble, thereby compounding the ongoing humanitarian crisis and the displacement of Palestinians[7]. Israel is also systematically targeting the education sector in Gaza. By May 2024, all universities in Gaza had been destroyed or damaged[8]. As of September 2025, total of 179 public schools was destroyed, and 118 public schools and 100 UNRWA schools were bombed and vandalised. Israel killed 17.935 school students, 1.301 university students, and 232 university staff, and injured 2.791 university students, 3.193 school teachers, and 1.446 university staff[9].

More than crimes against humanity, this is a genocide as well as a continuation of over 75 years of settler colonialism, apartheid and impunity[10] – of 75 years of physically, psychologically, legally and militarily violent dispossession, occupation, and unequal laws that are designed to suffocate all aspects of Palestinian life and the right to political self-determination. This violence manifests through discriminatory laws, the fragmentation and walling off of communities, regulating and proscribing travel, ruthless attacks and expulsions from homes, sexualised violence, illegal occupation of Palestinian land, and the systematic use of administrative detention to imprison without knowledge of the allegation or expectation of a trial. These forms of Zionist-settler-colonialism are deeply rooted in European colonialism. In addition, the current genocide in Gaza is a continuation of the Nakba of 1948, when over 750.000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their land to maximize the territorial control of the new state of Israel. According to Ilan Pappé, this was one of the largest forced migrations in modern history, a "premeditated and systematic act of ethnic cleansing carried out by Zionist forces"[11].

In January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found strong plausibility that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, and in May 2025 renowned genocide scholars, such as Raz Segal and colleagues from the Netherlands, US, UK, Australia, Croatia and Canada unanimously concluded that Israel's military operations in Gaza meet the legal threshold of genocide[12]. In August 2025 the International Association of Genocide

Scholars declared that Israel's policies and actions in Gaza constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity and meet the legal definition of genocide[13]. These were followed in September 2025 by a report by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, concluding that Israel has committed four of the five genocidal acts defined by the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide[14]. Humanitarian bodies such as Amnesty International, The Center for Constitutional Rights (US), the UN special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, Francesca Albanese, and Human Rights Watch have all corroborated that there is sufficient evidence that Israel's onslaught in Gaza since 7 October 2023 amounts to genocide. While these reports are important, as feminists we need to remain critical of these institutions' entanglement in the global power structures and their failure to stop the Israeli occupation, the expansion of settlements, and the genocide in Gaza.

Today, Israel continues to occupy the West Bank and aggressively expand settlements in clear violation of international law. Despite repeated calls by the International Court of Justice and the United Nations to halt these actions[15], the Israeli state proceeds with absolute impunity, systematically shielded and buttressed in varying degrees by Western powers. While at the July Emergency Conference in Bogota 30 countries from mostly the Global South devised actionable diplomatic, legal and economic measures to put pressure on Israel to stop the genocide in Gaza and to prevent transfer of weapons to Israel[16], most of the Western European countries limited their newly awakened capacity to question Israeli actions to words of condemnation at the most[17]. Despite the International Criminal Court's (ICC) issuing of arrest warrants for multiple Israeli government officials[18], most notably Benjamin Netanjahu and Yoav Gallant, no arrests have been made. The charge against the so-called Western community that they continue to lack the political will to stop this genocide is legitimate. Based on this well-supported impunity, the State of Israel has since been emboldened to expand its ground offensive in Gaza City, and in recent months, to intensify military interventions in Lebanon, Syria, Qatar, and Iran, and to intercept boats and kidnap crews of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition[19] and of Global Sumud Flotilla[20].

Meanwhile, in Gaza, the humanitarian situation continues to worsen into a horrific situation for those who remain[21]. Israel deliberately denies food, water, fuel, and medical supplies to over two million people, plunging them into catastrophic conditions. Hospitals have been bombed, and medical care has collapsed. Accessing scarce humanitarian aid has become a deadly risk, as widely reported in media covering the massacres of Palestinians trying to reach food distribution sites run by the Israeli and USbacked Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF)[22]. Man-made famine, mass starvation and malnutrition are spreading across Gaza, having killed more than 360 people by August 2025[23] despite trucks loaded with supplies waiting to enter, prompting over 100 humanitarian organisations urgently to call for action[24]. This weaponization of basic needs is part of a systematic strategy to render Palestinian life unliveable – another manifestation of genocidal intent.

Scholasticide, sophicide, and reprocide

> "Education is the practice of liberation."
> Palestinian Feminist Collective[25]

A central part of Israel's genocide in Gaza is what Karma Nabulsi called *scholasticide*. As scholars at Birzeit University explain, in Palestine scholasticide takes place as "the systematic destruction by Israeli forces of centres of education"[26]. In the past two years, Israel has damaged 95.2% of

schools and cut off from education 720,000 students[27]. Gaza's university presidents describe this as "a systematic and deliberate attempt to eliminate our universities, their infrastructure, faculty, and students"[28]. Scholasticide in Palestine forms part of a broader *sophicide*, "the deliberate annihilation of Indigenous knowledge traditions … through the systematic murder of mentors, teachers, researchers, scholars, academics, writers, librarians, archivists, spiritual leaders, historiographers, creatives, poets, interns, lecturers, professors, staff, and lab technicians"[29] and the destruction of schools, libraries, and archives. These attacks are reinforced by censorship, intimidation, and repression that erase Palestinian histories and intellectual memory and extend to the West Bank, where the IOF has repeatedly stormed Palestinian universities, including Birzeit University, invaded 23 times since 2022[30].

In the Palestinian context, reproduction is both a counterforce to genocide and an act of resistance that carries knowledge, culture, and identity. Palestinian feminists have shown that reproductive rights are directly targeted by Israeli occupation and form a central part of the ongoing processes of ethnic cleansing and of genocide in Gaza. As the Palestinian Feminist Collective asserts, Israel is committing reproductive genocide: policies and practices that undermine the capacity of communities under occupation, siege, settler colonialism, and imperial warfare to nourish life and future generations. This includes gendered and sexual violence against women, men, and children, collective punishment and mass incarceration, psychological warfare, and forced conditions of unlivability[31] [32]. As reproductive justice scholars argue, these forms of violence structure life under Israeli occupation and siege and are an integral part of the ongoing genocide in Gaza[33]. The Institute for Palestinian Studies calls this practice *reprocide*.

Scholasticide, sophicide, and reprocide are feminist issues as they expose how systems of colonial violence target education, knowledge, and reproduction as interconnected sites of life-making. These attacks reveal the entanglement of gendered, racialised, and colonial power relations, making clear that struggles against genocide in Palestine resonate across diverse feminist analyses of oppression and resistance.

No pride in genocide and settler-colonialism

> "We, Palestinian queers, position our movement for liberation alongside anticolonial and anti-racist movements globally, and we stand firmly in objection to any attempt to hijack our movements, or exploit our bodies."
> Queers in Palestine[34]

As alQaws reminds us, "[q]ueer liberation is fundamentally tied to the dreams of Palestinian liberation: self-determination, dignity, and the end of all systems of oppression."[35]This affinity has been visible in anti-genocide and pro-Palestinian protests across campuses and beyond, where queer, feminist, and anticolonial struggles come together to confront Israel's violence and demand accountability. Organisations such as alQaws[36] and Queers in Palestine emphasise that while homophobia and transphobia persist, they cannot be separated from Israel's colonial violence, which seeks to erase both Palestinian life and queer existence.

Israeli soldiers' use of rainbow flags on the ruins of Gazan homes and land, alongside boasts of sexual violence, shows how queer symbols are weaponised to mask atrocities. As Nada Elia points out [37], pinkwashing fragments Palestinian society internally, erases queer Palestinian cultural identity and history, and silences the long-standing work of groups like alQaws[38], Aswat[39], and PQBDS[40]. Israeli government is spending millions of euros for self-promotion as a queer-friendly state conceals its

own pervasive homophobia while exploiting queer struggles as tools of colonial domination. The IOF´s longstanding practice of using personal information, including details of sexuality and gender, for blackmailing and extortion targets queer Palestinians in particular. The strategy of pinkwashing is used to legitimise genocide and occupation while silencing queer Palestinian voices. As alQaws argues, this is a form of colonial violence that weaponises queer experience against Palestinian communities, erases the history and contributions of queer Palestinians, and seeks to fragment Palestinian society[41]. In reality, pinkwashing operates as a weapon of settler colonialism, advancing Israel's project of elimination of all Palestinians, including queers.

Palestinian queer existence and struggle reveal how the fight against genocide, settler colonialism, and occupation is inseparable from struggles against heteropatriarchy, transphobia, racism, ablism, and imperial domination – and why solidarity across queer, feminist, and decolonial movements is essential.

Universities must mot be complicit

> "I witnessed unspeakable things. The scenes I witnessed defy all words; no language could ever encompass these horrors, but I will try my best to describe what I saw. As we moved from one place to another, I saw the bodies of martyrs piled in the streets, getting mauled by animals. I saw entire families getting buried in empty lands along the roads. I heard the cries of children, the weeping of widows, and the despairing howls of men. I saw the tears of paramedics, doctors, journalists, police officers, and rescue workers. I heard the whimpers of the wounded, still buried under the rubble of their own homes, trapped for hours, awaiting their fate with nobody being able to dig them out. Their cries still haunt me at night, and I find myself wishing I could go back to them, sit by them, and console them – even if only with words. I saw beautiful ancient sites turned into ruins, and I saw the schools, universities, institutions, and training centers that shaped me as a person razed to the ground."
> Diaries by Bara Hammoudeh who was accepted into MA program in Gender and Development Studies at Birzeit University but could not leave Gaza to begin her studies.[42]

Universities claim to develop socially impactful research and to be grounded in principles of academic freedom. Yet as the genocide unfolds, many institutions remain silent or assert "neutrality" – a stance that, in the face of atrocity, amounts to complicity. Simultaneously, some have actively repressed dissent: cancelling events, presenting distorted framings of activists in the media, censoring speech, dismantling student encampments, and calling the police on their own protesting students and staff.

Both public and private universities, through their dependence on governmental funding and regulations, are public institutions that have a responsibility to align with human rights legislation. This also means, following the ICJ's rulings, taking measures to prevent genocide in Gaza. For universities, this means using their symbolic, cultural, and economic power to put pressure on the elected governments of their nations to take action to stop the genocide, and to stop universities' institutional collaboration with Israel. Instead, many European universities betray these commitments as they are deeply entangled with the Israeli education-military-security establishment, either directly or tangentially, thereby supporting and even funding Israeli military projects[43], the weapons industry, and apartheid politics[44]. As European Scholars for Human Rights argued: "Israeli universities are an inextricable element of the military research and development complex, developing weapons and surveillance

technologies to be tested in the occupied Palestinian territories, in close collaboration with all major Israeli weapons manufacturers. Furthermore, Palestinian students are systematically targeted and oppressed within Israeli higher education institutions."[45].

Universities' lack of action is not a break from tradition – it is a continuation of it. Western universities have long been complicit in colonial violence: generating knowledge that justified European empire, erasing Indigenous peoples, and legitimizing transatlantic slavery. Today, by maintaining ties with Israeli universities, companies, and institutions complicit in state violence, and by suppressing proPalestinian voices that are naming and opposing their subjugation, universities are once again choosing to be on the wrong side of history. Universities and we as scholars have a responsibility! Our institutions are embedded in systems of power, and we must reckon with their historical and present-day entanglements with violence, oppression, and colonialism. As Dennis Hogan asks: "How can business as usual not cease when business as usual is so murderous?"[46] The answer is: we must act now by ending our collaborations with Israeli institutions, putting pressure on our national governments, and by standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people. As Western European universities rightly condemned the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine and many cut ties with Russian institutions – which is crucial considering the ongoing legacy of Russian genocidal violence against Ukrainians[47] – they should also act against the genocide in Gaza and ethnic cleansing of Palestine[48]. As feminist scholars we must work to challenge all forms of oppression, imperialism, colonialism, and dispossession. As Afaf Jabari argues: "The unconditional support of Western states and their allies for the genocidal war on Palestinians, which coincides with the rise of far-right movements in Europe and other parts of the world, makes it imperative for feminists to recognize and act on the interconnectedness of these oppressive systems"[49].

As scholars, students, and staff, we must demand that our universities live up to their social and institutional responsibility and exercise their power. Across the world universities such as University of the Western Cape, Ghent University, Trinity College Dublin and Queen's University Belfast have committed to full boycott, sanctions and divestment of Israeli institutions[50]. This proves that European Universities' full divestment from Israeli institutions is not only possible – it is necessary and achievable.

Universities must not remain silent. We all must act!

Our demands to universities and research institutions

We reaffirm our ethical and feminist obligation to stand against the Israeli state's apartheid, occupation, and genocide. We call on all university staff, students, and institutional leadership to take the following actions:

1. End institutional collaborations with Israeli universities, institutions, and companies complicit in occupation and violence by joining the academic boycott, in line with the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). This is not a boycott of individuals, but of Israeli institutions[51 52].
2. Use your symbolic, cultural, and economic power to actively advocate for an immediate end to the genocide in Gaza and to the settler colonial occupation of Palestinian land.
3. Support the rebuilding of the Palestinian education system in Gaza.
4. Support Palestinian researchers and students with research grants and scholarships.
5. Uphold the right to protest by supporting and protecting colleagues and students who face censorship, discipline, or retaliation for speaking out on and for Palestine.

We call on the academic community to reject complicity and take a principled stand. Where university governments fail, we must speak and act.

How to use this statement

We encourage you to actively circulate this statement within your academic communities. Bring it to your institutes, departments, faculties, and university governing bodies such as department heads, deans, rectors, university boards and councils and your staff or student representatives and request their response to the statement's demands. Use the statement to mobilise collective action within your institutions. Use it as a starting point for discussion or debate. If your institution refuses to endorse the statement or fulfil its demands, we urge you to document their refusal and the reasoning behind it. Finally, help amplify its reach by sharing it widely, through email, social media, and your professional and academic networks.

Signatures

We invite all, world-wide, scholars, university staff, educators, students, activists, and civil society members to sign this letter, and we encourage signatories to share its content and demands with their university leadership, institutes, and departments, and governing bodies to ask them to sign as well. The statement can be signed by individuals, institutes, and universities. The list of first signatories is in alphabetical order.

FEMINISTS AGAINST GENOCIDE
None of us is free until all of us are free.

You will be able to sign the statement here:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdfSXMAwTjYqtTl3zQ3hOMA3MzTPKgtBYIXbu3UB 56rFa-vWg/viewform?usp=dialog

Notes

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The quote is from the third part of Bara Hammoudeh's diaries: https://www.facebook.com/iws.bzu/posts/pfbid0zZh8K9j6jNk48U1n97TqZwsCYRL-jZ3QMaZFvhzN5gXWKFDHSoe4VoQ VKwGanQBrul.

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