

20 May 2021

We, scholars of genocide, mass violence, and human rights, stand with Palestinian victims of Israeli state violence in Gaza and across Israel-Palestine.

The current violence against Palestinians began with the continued displacement of Palestinians in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah by municipal and state authorities working together with Jewish settlers (<https://www.972mag.com/sheikh-jarrah-palestinian-youth/>); this cooperation is demonstrated by one of a number of examples of Jewish settlers talking explicitly about displacing Palestinians in Jerusalem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TB0dtnOgPnA>).

The violence of Israeli security forces against Palestinian Muslim worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque on 7 May, during the holy month of Ramadan, added to an already very tense situation and escalated the violence across Israel-Palestine, including the Palestinian militant group Hamas firing rockets into Israel on 9 May, the Israeli army launching a deadly attack on Gaza, and interethnic violence erupting across the country between Jews and Palestinians. A very dangerous pattern of Israeli state violence within Israel has also emerged, including organized attacks by Jewish settlers on Palestinians in Lod, Haifa, and other cities, aided at times by Jewish security forces (https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-armed-settlers-lod-mosque-attacked-night-curfew?fbclid=IwAR1uqv-Z57BHA1jfxU3jpCK7uxPrq2bIHWvyNcu5-dG0ae6ZCxr_6RvzFg). Additionally, dangerous statements by Israeli authorities against Palestinians (Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for instance, told Jewish border police forces in Lod to operate without concern for investigations for their actions: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-calls-for-administrative-detentions-to- quell-arab-jewish-violence/>) only serve to intensify the violence further, as groups of armed Jewish militants, organized openly on social media, have engaged in the last few days in attacks on those they believe to be Palestinian.

Hamas rockets into Israel have so far killed 12 people, including 2 children. Every innocent person killed is a terrible loss and every traumatized child is heartbreaking. As terrible as these losses are, the scale of Palestinian losses is disproportionately larger. The Israeli attack on Gaza

has so far killed at least 217 people, including at least 63 children, displaced more than 50,000 people, destroyed international media headquarters, and created damage in infrastructure with far-reaching implications.

As scholars of genocide, mass violence, and human rights, it is our moral and intellectual responsibility to center the voices and perspectives of victims and survivors of state violence. We study and teach about a wide range of processes and cases of mass atrocities and state violence. Unfortunately, Israel—like many other modern states—also commits state violence, and we must not remain silent about it. Indeed, we teach students about the dangers of remaining silent and about the importance of speaking up and taking action. This is particularly significant in this case, as Palestinians, their history, and the ongoing Israeli state violence against them since the Nakba in 1948 have been marginalized in our field for far too long.

We thus call on governments, the United Nations, the European Union, and the International Criminal Court to:

- (1) Work to protect Palestinians in Israel, under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, and in Gaza now and in the future. Indeed, the violence now has intensified systemic racism and exclusionary and violent nationalism in Israel—a well-known pattern in many cases of state violence—posing a serious risk for continued persecution and violence against Palestinians, exacerbated by the political instability in Israel in the last few months.
- (2) End support for Israeli military aggression.
- (3) Hold accountable all those responsible for documented war crimes and human rights violations.

We furthermore express our commitment, as scholars and teachers, to:

- (1) Teach about Israeli state violence against Palestinians, relying also on scholarship by Palestinians.
- (2) Invite Palestinian scholars and activists to speak on campus and in conferences on genocide, mass violence, and human rights.
- (3) Oppose any attempt on campuses to suppress free speech and silence Palestinians or voices in support of the Palestinian struggle for justice and freedom.

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