

Urgent Call for University Action on Gaza: Actively Engage with the ICJ Ruling - Demand Immediate Ceasefire and Re-instatement of UNRWA Funding

As concerned members of the University of Adelaide, University of South Australia, and Flinders University, we are deeply committed to upholding human rights principles and write to urgently address the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza. As of February 19th, 29,092, people are reported killed and estimated 8,000 missing, presumably dead, under the rubble. Sixty percent are women and children. Close to 70,000 people are reported to be injured.

The Scholars Against the War on Palestine (SAWP) campaign has highlighted the scholasticide taking place in Palestine, which has reached unprecedented levels in Gaza. Up to Day 125, Israel has bombed every university in Gaza, as well as 370 schools. These attacks have resulted in the documented loss of 231 educators, 95 University Professors and scientists, and 4,237 students.

Israel initiated its systematic retaliation attacks on October 9th, 2023, with the bombing and destruction of the Islamic University of Gaza. Tragically, the university's president, renowned scientist Dr. Sufyan Tayeh, was killed along with his family on December 2nd following the bombing of his house. Subsequent attacks targeted the University College of Applied Sciences and Technology on October 19th, Al-Azhar University on November 6th, Al-Quds Open University on November 15th, and Gaza University on December 4th, 2023. On January 17th, 2024, the IOF destroyed Al-Israa University, marking the destruction of the last remaining university in Gaza. Over the period, 90% of schools and 60% of libraries have also been damaged or destroyed.

In addition, over 80% of people facing famine or catastrophic hunger worldwide are in Gaza. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provides lifesaving aid to two million Palestinians, but it's critical work cannot continue without sustained contributions from countries worldwide. However, based on a six-page dossier from the Israeli government that 12 out of 13,000 UNRWA workers were involved in the October 7th attacks, many countries including Australia, have paused critical funding. It has now come to light that this decision to pause funding was made without sighting any evidence of the allegations and a recent investigation by Channel 4 (UK) found no evidence for the Israeli allegations against UNRWA.

The International Court of Justice landmark ruling on January 26th 2024, has stated that Israel and all 153 state parties to the 1948 Genocide Convention must "take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip". Australia's decision to freeze UNRWA funding, based on unevidenced allegations, is not upholding the ICJ ruling and may be deemed as complicity in genocide.

Four Norwegian universities have suspended ties with Israeli universities. In October 2023, RMIT terminated its relationship with Elbit Systems and its subsidiaries.

Given the urgency of the situation, we call upon our universities to also take immediate action:

1. Terminate all partnerships with Israeli academic institutions directly or indirectly involved in supporting or enabling acts of scholasticide.

2. Affirm solidarity with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling, demanding Israel take measures to prevent acts falling within the scope of the Genocide Convention.
3. Cease all collaborative activities with Israeli partners contributing to such genocidal acts until the ICJ case is resolved.
4. Issue a statement endorsing the Australian government's plea for an immediate ceasefire.
5. Advocate for the urgent reinstatement of UNRWA funding.
6. Demand the immediate release of Israeli and foreign hostages currently detained in Gaza, along with all Palestinian hostages abducted from Gaza and arrested across Palestine, who are presently held under arbitrary detention in Israeli camps and prisons.
7. Implement measures to safeguard the well-being of our students and staff affected, directly or indirectly, by the current situation.

Our universities must demonstrate leadership and endorse these critical actions, while urging the Australian government to reinstate funding to UNRWA without delay. The decision to freeze UNRWA funding based on unsubstantiated allegations undermines international law and may be construed as complicity in genocide.

As educators and researchers, we have a moral obligation to speak out against injustices and uphold principles of international law. We have a particular responsibility to address the scholasticide in Gaza and historic Palestine, advocating for the protection of educational and research institutions, as well as the students, staff, and faculty who are part of them.

The world is watching, and our institutions must take a stand against the mass suffering of Palestinians, particularly women and children. We urge our universities to act on this matter urgently and uphold principles of justice, human rights, and the rule of law.

Supporting information:

[Scholars against war](#)

[ReliefWeb: Israel kills dozens of academics, destroys every university in the Gaza Strip](#)

[ReliefWeb: Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel](#)

[Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor](#)

[International Court of Justice press release](#)

[Channel 4 investigation](#)

[Friends of Birzeit University](#)

[Haaretz, Opinion As Gaza's Lives and Homes Are Destroyed, So Is Its Higher Education](#)

[+972 magazine investigations](#)

[The Conversation: The war in Gaza is wiping out Palestine's education and knowledge systems](#)

SIGNATURES

1. Dr Sanam Mustafa, Senior Research Associate, School of Biomedicine, University of Adelaide
2. Prof. Mohamad Abdalla AM, Director Centre for Islamic Thought and Education, University of South Australia
3. A/Prof. Salah Kutieleh, Adjunct College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Flinders University
4. Dr Mohammed Sulaiman, Lecturer in Communication and Journalism, University of South Australia
5. Dr Jack Desbiolles, Senior Agricultural Research Engineer, STEM, University of South Australia
6. Prof. Jon Juredini, Adelaide Medical School, University of Adelaide
7. Dr Pallave Dasari, Adjunct Associate Lecturer, University of Adelaide
8. Dr Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, Adjunct, Business Unit, University of South Australia
9. Prof. Fran Baum AO FASSA FAHMS, Public Health Social Scientist, University of Adelaide
10. Dr Shoshana Rosenberg, Research Officer, Flinders University
11. A/Prof. Alice Gorman, Space Archaeologist, Flinders University
12. A/Prof. Natalie Harkin, Senior Research Fellow, Flinders University
13. A/Prof. Ali Gumillya Baker, Indigenous and Australian Studies, Flinders University
14. Dr Jared Thomas, Research Fellow, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Material Culture, University of South Australia
15. Dr Jeremy Ryder, Lecturer in Criminology, Flinders University
16. A/Prof. Mike Morley, Future Fellow, College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University
17. A/Prof. Barbara Baird, Women's & Gender Studies, Flinders University
18. A/Prof. Priya Chacko, International Politics, University of Adelaide
19. Prof. Julian Murphet, Jury Chair of English Language and Literature, University of Adelaide
20. Prof. Keita Takayama, UniSA Education Futures, University of South Australia
21. Prof. Claire Smith, College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University
22. A/Prof. Catherine Kevin, Australian history in the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University

23. A/Prof. Peter Pugsley, Associate Professor/Reader, School of Humanities, University of Adelaide
24. A/Prof. Nadeem Memon, Centre for Islamic Thought and Education, University of South Australia
25. Jane Morphett, PhD candidate School of Biomedicine, University of Adelaide
26. A/Prof. Tanya Crotti, School of Biomedicine, University of Adelaide
27. Dr Bill Skinner, Research Associate, Anthropology and Development Studies, University of Adelaide
28. Dr Katie Maher, Lecturer UniSA Education Futures, University of South Australia
29. Ruth Ratcliffe, Lecturer, College of Education, Psychology & Social Work, Flinders University
30. Dr Connal Lee, Lecturer in Health Ethics and Public Health, University of South Australia
31. Dr David Caldwell, Senior Lecturer in English Language and Literacy, Education Futures, The University of South Australia
32. Dr Natalie Aboustate, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, the Critical and Ethical Mental Health research group, University of Adelaide
33. Dr Melissa Raven, Research Fellow, Robinson Research Institute, University of Adelaide
34. Dr Melanie Baak, Senior Lecturer in UniSA Education Futures, University of South Australia
35. Mr Dylan Chown, Lecturer, Centre for Islamic Thought and Education, University of South Australia
36. Ms. Jen Manning, Personal Assistant and Administrative Officer, UniSA Education Futures, University of South Australia
37. Ms Siti Nur Hidayah, PhD candidate Centre for Islamic Thought and Education, University of South Australia
38. Ms Amela Mahmic, PhD candidate, Centre for Islamic Thought and Education, University of South Australia
39. Dr. Anna Szorenyi, Lecturer in Gender Studies, University of Adelaide
40. Mr. Mahmoud Idris, PhD candidate School of Biomedicine, University of Adelaide
41. Dr John Budarick, Senior Lecturer, School of Humanities, University of Adelaide
42. Dr Samantha Schulz, School of Education, The University of Adelaide
43. Dr Alexandra Diamond, Lecturer, UniSA Education Futures, University of South Australia
44. Robyn Carmody, Lecturer UniSA Education Futures, University of South Australia

45. PJ Edwards, Lecturer in Aboriginal Education, University of South Australia
46. Gregory K Macdonald, Centre for Islamic Thought and Education, University of South Australia
47. Dr Sean Williams, Senior Lecturer, College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, University South Australia
48. Dr Alice Clement, Lecturer, College of Science and Engineering, Flinders University
49. Ms. Silvia Quattrini, PhD, Centre for Research in Educational and Social Inclusion, University of South Australia
50. Ms. Carly Heinrich, Sessional Academic and PhD Candidate, University of South Australia
51. Dr David Ness, Adjunct Professor STEM, University of South Australia
52. Dr Jamie Manolev, Research Associate - Centre for Research in Educational and Social Inclusion, University of South Australia
53. Dr John Pike, Lecturer UniSA College - Education Futures, University of South Australia
54. Dr Abigail Diplock, Academic researcher, University of South Australia
55. A/Prof. Joel Windle, Enterprise Fellow - UniSA Education Futures, University of South Australia
56. Dr Valentina Bertotti, Educational researcher College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University
57. Dr Toby Freeman, Senior Research Fellow, University of Adelaide
58. Hurjehan Kadernani, Research Assistant, College of Business and Law, Flinders University
59. Desiani Muliasari, PhD candidate, College of Education, Psychology & Social Work, Flinders University
60. Dr Chrisanthi Giotis, Lecturer in Journalism, University of South Australia
61. Dr Emily Miller, Research Associate, Justice and Society, University of South Australia
62. Dr Amelia Walker, Lecturer in Creative Writing, University of South Australia
63. Michail Laoumtzis, PhD candidate School of Biomedicine, University of Adelaide
64. Dr Daniel Connell, Artist (alumni), University of South Australia
65. Fahad Farooque, Alumni Computer Systems Engineering, University of South Australia
66. Mark Barrett, Alumni Marine Biology, University of South Australia
67. Rosalie Miller, Casual Academic Tutor, College of Education, Psychology and Social Work, Flinders University

68. Melati Ismi Hapsari, PhD candidate, College of Education, Psychology & Social Work, Flinders University
69. Dr Belinda MacGill, Senior Lecturer UniSA Education Futures, University of South Australia
70. Margaret Lovell, PhD Candidate, Centre for Research in Educational and Social Inclusion, University of South Australia
71. Josephine McKenzie, PhD Candidate, Centre for Workplace Excellence, University of South Australia
72. Dr Sarah McDonald, Lecturer in English Education, University of South Australia
73. Ronan Ruggles, Student Veterinary Medicine, University of Adelaide
74. Dr Stefan Musolino, Postdoctoral researcher, School of Biomedicine, University of Adelaide
75. Dr Danila Marini, Researcher, School of Animal and Veterinary Science, University of Adelaide
76. Zoe Keys, Associate Lecturer and PhD Candidate, College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University
77. Charlotte Johnson, PhD Candidate School of Biomedicine, University of Adelaide
78. Dr Juliana Bajic, Postdoctoral researcher, School of Biomedicine, University of Adelaide
79. Dr Vicky Staikopoulos, Academic visitor and alumni, University of Adelaide
80. Dr Monique Mulholland, Senior Lecturer College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University
81. Aisha Sultan, PhD Candidate Discipline of Anthropology and Development Studies, University of Adelaide
82. Dr Eszter Szenes, Lecturer in the School of Education, University of Adelaide
83. Natalie Thomas, PhD Candidate School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide
84. Lily Atkinson, PhD Candidate School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide
85. Dr Connie Musolino, Research Fellow, Stretton Health Equity, School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide
86. Dr Raima Amin, Alumni Doctor of Medicine (MD), Flinders University
87. Dr Danijela Menicanin, Associate Dean, Learning Quality and Student Experience, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Adelaide
88. Dr Zafar A Usmani, Honorary Clinical Senior Lecturer, Adelaide Medical School, University of Adelaide
89. Dr Gillian Dooley, Honorary Associate Professor, English, Flinders University

90. Selina Martino, Alumni Laws and Psychological Science, University of Adelaide
91. Naveed Mostak, Alumni Law and Commerce, University of Adelaide
92. Mrs Shahzeen Aslam, Alumni Psychological Sciences, University of Adelaide
93. Mrs Mehreen Qayyum, Alumni Architect, University of South Australia
94. Mr Usman Hafeez, Alumni Civil Engineer, University of Adelaide
95. Muhammad Adil Qayyum, Alumni Mechanical and Petroleum engineering, University of Adelaide
96. Dr Joanne Maree Flavel, Research Fellow School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide
97. Evla Han, PhD Candidate School of Education, University of South Australia
98. Deana Bogojevic, Alumni Counselling and Psychotherapy, University of Adelaide
99. Ms Kim Anastasiou, Research Fellow, Stretton Health Equity, University of Adelaide
100. Dr Abul K. M. Farooque, Retired Senior Lecturer, Flinders University