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Colonialism, Military Occupation, and Siege are the Root Cause of All Violence

Oct. 19, 2023

Dear CSU community members,

As members of the CFA Palestine, Arab, and Muslim (PAM) Caucus, we are writing to share our collective grief over the horrific state of siege in Gaza and the recent reprehensible, grossly unjust, and atrociously inhumane events that have forced 1.1 million remaining Palestinians, who are mostly refugees, to flee their homes or risk losing their lives to escalated military bombings. In violation of the 4th Geneva Convention, Israel has engaged this last week in the most severe form of collective punishment and retaliation against the Palestinian people of Gaza, including bombing hospitals and UN schools/shelters, with no indications whether and when this ongoing nightmarish military assault and siege will stop. Echoing colonial archetypes that seek to rationalize state violence against occupied people, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant announced Israel's deadly decision to ban food, water, and electricity to all Gazans. Declaring that Israel was "fighting human animals," Israel's top military official reinforced a racist, degrading, and dehumanizing Zionist colonial mindset about Palestinians. According to the [United Nations](#), with no humanitarian supplies allowed into Gaza for over a week, more than 2 million Palestinians' lack of access to clean water will undoubtedly cause pervasive death among this population, violating basic human rights of Palestinian civilians. In a further attempt to isolate an already besieged people and prevent news of these atrocities from reaching the international community, the Israeli army announced it is cutting off the Internet in Gaza.

We are deeply concerned that the Israeli regime is capitalizing on the October 7th militant incursion to create another Nakba by forcing Palestinians to leave their land, while simultaneously killing displaced refugees and blocking safe passage through its indiscriminate air strikes despite its claims to precision weaponry. Instead of supporting an immediate cease fire and calls for de-escalating Israel's brutal military assault, the US government is deliberately choosing to increase military aid and weapons to Israel to enable it to carry out this genocide. According to [USAID Data Services](#), as of January 2023, in constant 2021 U.S. dollars (inflation-adjusted), total U.S. aid to Israel obligated from 1946-2023 is an estimated \$260 billion. We cannot in good conscience stand by idly while the Israeli government violates all human rights conventions and ignores the human catastrophe in Gaza where the death toll stands at this moment at over 3000 people and expected to rise as we write, including over 1000 children who were killed by Israel's nonstop indiscriminate bombardment during the last 7 days, wounding close to 13,000 people. It is estimated that at least another thousand people are buried under the rubble and might not have a chance to be pulled out alive.

For the last 75 years, Israeli military colonialism, occupation and apartheid has already caused widespread societal destruction for Palestinians, whereas over [half the population currently lives](#)

[in poverty](#). Subjected to [food rationing](#), limited mobility in what humanitarian advocates have called an “[open air prison](#)”, widespread denial and limited access to education and employment, Palestinian life is stunted on all levels. Enshrined in the [Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949](#) international law extends special provisions and protection to non-combatants living under occupation. Scores of human rights organizations have documented the ongoing systemic Israeli human rights violations of Palestinians living under this colonial and apartheid regime. Despite such overwhelming evidence, the United States government and policy makers have shut their ears to these gross violations of Palestinian human rights that are enshrined in US law, including protocols for military aid. Similarly the inherent bias in US mainstream media consistently spotlights the humanity and suffering of individual Israelis while ignoring investigative coverage and reporting about Israel’s crimes, let alone the suffering and pain of individual Palestinians, reducing them to dry statistics. Revenge is not a justifiable use of military power and this collective punishment of Palestinian civilians is a war crime.

Dissent against this atrocious war is the only honorable and conscionable act. Silence is not an option and neutrality only amounts to complicity. We must challenge those among us who hold power in US higher education to stand up and be counted. They know that billions of dollars sent to Israel to support ethnic cleansing and genocide could be spent in the US for the people, including our students, who cannot afford the skyrocketing costs of higher education, healthcare, housing, transportation, food and other basic needs. Attacks on our colleagues, students, and academic freedoms are examples of epistemic and physical violence on our campuses. These violences are directly tied to the horrendous genocide taking place in Palestine.

We write to demand an immediate end to the ongoing massacre in Gaza and call on all our colleagues and the larger CSU community to stand with the Palestinian people and refuse to allow a new Nakba. To that end we join Palestinians and the international community to call for:

1. An immediate ceasefire in Gaza;
2. An immediate end to all US aid to Israel;
3. Opening the Israel-controlled crossing to allow food, fuel and medical supplies into Gaza;
4. Pressuring the US government to restore electricity, internet, and water that Israel cut off Gaza;
5. Support for a prisoner exchange;
6. International, reputable and unbiased commissions to investigate war crimes;
7. Honor the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions; and
8. Additionally, we call on all administrators in higher education to provide the necessary support and resources to protect our faculty, staff, students, and community members who speak out and protest against the genocide as well as those whose families and communities are directly impacted.

For additional resources, please visit [CFA Palestine, Arab, Muslim Caucus](#)