

Resolution for Justice in Palestine

The Canadian Sociological Association comprises sociologists and kindred professionals who study, among other things, war and peace, democracy and totalitarianism, conflict resolution and violence, genocide, systems of inequality and their effects, states and legal orders, colonialism and settler colonialism, nationalism, and nation-building.

Principles

- Whereas the [Canadian Sociological Association is committed](#) to the values and principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization (EDID) and to enacting these principles in concrete and meaningful ways.
- Whereas the Federation for Social Sciences and Humanities's [Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization](#) (AC-EDID) has advised the Federation to embark upon the journey toward decolonization in their disciplines, scholarly associations, and universities.

Context

Humanitarian Situation in Gaza

- Whereas, according to investigations by the Israeli newspaper, [Haaretz](#), the proportion of civilian deaths in Gaza is higher than the average in all world conflicts of the 20th Century; and
- Whereas, [reports](#) from the Gaza Ministry of Health suggest that more than 1 out of every 200 people living in Gaza have been killed since 7 October 2023, with 70% of the dead being women and children; and
- Whereas the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) have raised alarms about the ongoing humanitarian crises in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [As the Secretary General of the IFRC states](#), “The current humanitarian situation for civilians in Gaza is beyond catastrophic. Millions of lives are at risk of hunger. An urgent and unhindered flow of humanitarian aid must be ensured to reach those in need. Not tomorrow, but now.”
- Whereas the World Health Organisation June 6 Emergency Situation Update of the Occupied Palestinian Territory indicates that there have been [36,731 fatalities, 83,530 injuries, and more than 10,000 people missing under the rubble](#). Further, health facility functionality and access is dire. “Rafah: no functional hospitals, jeopardizing the right to health of around 90,000 Gazans residing there. [...] Out of six field hospitals (FH) in Rafah, only the ICRC FH is fully functional. The UAE FH operates at partial functionality, while accessibility remains extremely difficult due to ongoing siege and hostilities. The

report also notes that there is a “continued dismantling of the health system, reducing health service availability and threatening the right to health of over 2.2 million people in the Gaza strip”; and

Scholasticide in Gaza

- Whereas [every university in Gaza has been destroyed](#), while [more than 5,479 students, 261 teachers and 95 university professors have been killed in Gaza](#); over 7,819 students and 756 teachers have been injured; hundreds of primary and secondary schools have been destroyed or damaged; and numerous [cultural heritage sites](#), including libraries, archives and museums, have been destroyed, damaged, or plundered; and
- Whereas the United Nations has characterized the situation as “[scholasticide](#)”; and

Genocide in Gaza

- Whereas the [Application Instituting Proceeding and Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures by the state of South Africa to the International Court of Justice](#) presents compelling evidence that the actions of the state of Israel in Gaza since 07 October 2023 amount to genocide under the terms of the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention, evidence which it summarizes as follows: “such information as is available establishes that Israel: (1) is engaged in killing Palestinians in Gaza — including Palestinian children — in large numbers; (2) is causing serious bodily and mental harm to Palestinians in Gaza, including Palestinian children; and is inflicting on them conditions of life intended to bring about their destruction as a group. Those conditions include: (3) expulsions from homes and mass displacement, alongside the large-scale destruction of homes and residential areas; (4) deprivation of access to adequate food and water; (4) [sic] deprivation of access to adequate medical care; (5) deprivation of access to adequate shelter, clothes, hygiene and sanitation; and (6) the destruction of the life of the Palestinian people in Gaza; and (7) imposing measures intended to prevent Palestinian births”; and
- Whereas the [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967](#) further contends that “The context, facts and analysis presented in this report lead to the conclusion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating Israel’s commission of genocide is met. More broadly, they also indicate that Israel’s actions have been driven by a genocidal logic integral to its settler-colonial project in Palestine, signaling a tragedy foretold”; and
- Whereas, the [United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel](#) finds sufficient evidence that Israeli authorities are responsible for war crime and crimes against humanity including “starvation as a method of warfare, murder or wilful killing, intentionally directing attacks against civilians and civilian objects, forcible transfer,

sexual violence, torture and inhuman or cruel treatment, arbitrary detention and outrages upon personal dignity” and also “extermination, gender persecution targeting Palestinian men and boys, murder, forcible transfer, and torture and inhuman and cruel treatment”; and

- Whereas Israeli political leaders have openly applied dehumanizing and/or genocidal frameworks to Palestinians, for example: Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has called Palestinians “[bloodthirsty monsters](#)” and “[children of darkness](#)” who obey the “law of the jungle” and has referred to the Biblical story of the [extermination of the nation of Amalek](#); Defence Minister Yoav Gallant has stated that in Gaza “[we are fighting human animals](#)”; President Isaac Herzog has denied the distinction between combatants and civilians, stating that “[It’s an entire nation out there that is responsible](#). It’s not true this rhetoric about civilians not aware not involved. It’s absolutely not true. ... and we will fight until we break their backbone”; Deputy Speaker of the Knesset and Member of the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee Nissim Vaturi has tweeted that “[\[n\]ow we all have one common goal – erasing the Gaza Strip from the face of the earth](#)”; to mention only a few examples; and
- Whereas the [genocide](#) in Palestine did not begin on 7 October 2023 but has been ongoing for more than 75 years, starting with the 1948 mass killing and displacement of Palestinians (the Nakba) and continuing up to the present through a variety of means including repeated military assaults on Gaza and the West Bank; and

Effects on Children in Particular

- Whereas even before the events of 7 October 2023, the Special Rapporteur had documented how [children constitute half of the population under occupation in Gaza and “are the prime victims of this system](#), living in constant dread, fear and despair”, suffering systematic violence in the form of direct killing, injury, arbitrary detention, mistreatment and torture during detention, dehumanizing rhetoric, shrinking educational opportunities, and forcible impoverishment, all of which cumulates in “the ‘[unchildling](#)’ of Palestinian children, robbing them of the lightness of childhood and debilitating them from generational development as a people”; and

International Legal Sanctions

- Whereas the [International Court of Justice has ordered](#), with overwhelming consensus, that Israel must take immediate and effective measures to refrain from acts that could lead to sanctions under the Genocide convention, to prevent and punish incitements to genocide, to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people in Gaza, and to preserve evidence of genocide; and
- Whereas, the [International Court of Justice](#) on May 24, 2024, by thirteen votes to two, determines that Israel must “Immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action

in the Rafah Governorate, which may inflict on the Palestinian group in Gaza conditions of life that could bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”; and,

- Whereas [the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court](#) has applied for arrest warrants for both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Hamas leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar, on charges of war crimes; and

Canadian State Complicity

- Whereas the Canadian state has [historically opposed or abstained from United Nations resolutions holding Israel accountable](#) for its violence towards Palestinians, and [has continued to provide arms to Israel](#) since October 2023; and
- Whereas Canadian police forces have targeted [scholars](#) teaching about Israeli settler colonialism, [journalists](#) covering pro-Palestinian demonstrations, and pro-Palestinian [activists](#) themselves; and

Responses by Scholars and Labour

- Whereas in Canada, eleven faculty associations have [passed motions](#) calling their university to divest from Israeli businesses: the [Renison Association of Academic Staff at the University of Waterloo](#); the [Syndicat général des professeures et professeurs de l'Université de Montréal](#); the [Wilfrid Laurier Faculty Association](#); the [University of Windsor Faculty Association](#); the [Dalhousie University Faculty Association](#); the [Emily Carr Faculty Association](#); the [Toronto Metropolitan University Faculty Association](#); the [University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association](#); the McMaster University Faculty Association; the [Athabasca University Faculty Association](#); and the [Ontario College of Art and Design Faculty Association](#); a movement of [faculty at the University of Toronto](#) have called for an academic boycott of Israel; the [Canadian Association for Work and Labour Studies](#) has issued a statement in support of student encampments; and the [Canadian Union of Public Employees](#) has called for the Israeli government to withdraw from occupied Palestinian territories; and
- Whereas internationally, a growing number of academic and labour associations have taken various actions in support of Palestinians: among others, the [American Anthropological Association](#); the [British Society for Middle Eastern Studies](#); and [American Sociological Association](#); the [National Women's Studies Association](#); the [Middle Eastern Studies Association](#); and the [Association for Asian American Studies](#); and [over 200 labour unions](#) in the US; and
- Whereas Canadian universities, including student groups and faculty, actively campaigned for divestment from South African companies during the 1980s; [for example, students at the University of Toronto successfully advocated for divestment from companies operating in South Africa](#); and

- Whereas the University of Alberta launched an [initiative](#) in 2022 to protect digital data in Ukraine in an attempt to preserve Ukrainian cultural heritage and cultural legacy that were threatened by the war; and
- Whereas the CSA's Anti-Islamophobia Subcommittee, the Decolonization Subcommittee, and the Women's Gender and Social Justice Association co-hosted a special [event](#) on Palestine in December 2023 aiming to equip the CSA members and educators on how to activate the classroom as a decolonial space for pedagogical solidarity; and
- Whereas the Faculty for Palestine Canada, the Jewish Faculty Network and the Palestinian-Canadian Academics and Artists Network issued [a joint statement](#) in 2024 requesting Canadian universities to take urgent action to support the education system in Gaza and Palestinian students at risk; and

Persecution and Freedom of Speech

- Whereas those who organize, write, teach, and/or speak in support of Palestine within Canada and beyond [have been silenced, intimidated, punished, and harassed](#); and
- Whereas such harassment has included [arbitrary suspension](#) and [investigation, threats](#) against students' academic progression, [police intimidation](#), [many firings](#), and a general [chilling of free speech](#) by scholars and students; and
- Whereas students' rights to protest have been attacked on campuses across the country, prompting the [University of Calgary and University of Alberta Faculties of Law to express concern that students' Charter rights are being violated](#); and
- Whereas support of the Palestinian people and opposition to their colonization, containment, and murder [is often misrepresented as anti-semitic](#); and
- Whereas the definition of antisemitism put forth by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance has been [widely criticized](#) for falsely equating criticism of the state of Israel with anti-semitism, while [a petition of Jewish scholars](#), Jewish organizations such as [Independent Jewish Voices](#), and the [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#) all affirm that criticism of the state of Israel is not intrinsically anti-semitic.

Be it resolved that the Canadian Sociological Association:

1. On behalf of its members, shall issue a call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, and condemning scholasticide, including the total annihilation of educational systems in Gaza, and the systematic destruction of educational life in the rest of Palestine.
2. Unequivocally support the academic freedom of its members and our students. This freedom includes the pursuit of knowledge and education free from harm, censorship, intimidation, and silencing. It also includes defending scholars' right to speak out against

Zionist occupation and settler-colonialism, and supporting students' Charter rights to engage in protest actions such as the ongoing encampments on university campuses.

3. Establish a subcommittee called the Subcommittee For Justice in Palestine.

This subcommittee will serve as a dedicated platform for comprehensive research, dialogue, and advocacy, focusing on acts of scholasticide, genocide, and systemic violence in Palestine. The subcommittee will address the systematic destruction of educational institutions and cultural heritage, which undermines the intellectual and cultural foundations of Palestinian society. The subcommittee will work to prevent atrocities and support affected Palestinian scholars and students. The subcommittee will also explore the complexities of Palestinian liberation and Israel's ongoing settler-colonial practices, aiming to promote justice, peace, and human rights. Through these efforts, the subcommittee will enhance the Canadian sociological community's role in global human rights advocacy, informed policy-making, and educational initiatives, thereby fostering social justice and the protection of cultural heritage in Palestine.

The subcommittee will be tasked with:

- Mobilizing knowledge and resources for the membership to address scholasticide, settler-colonialism, and Zionist occupation in Palestine.
- Fostering collaboration and partnerships with academic institutions, organizations, and community groups dedicated to addressing scholasticide in Palestine, including, but not limited to, reporting on initiatives aimed at strengthening the scholastic and pedagogical rights and opportunities for Palestinian scholars and students.
- Strengthening links with and supporting Palestinian scholars and students.
- Advancing support for the academic freedom of all sociologists and sociology students targeted for their scholarship and activism in support of the Palestinian struggle.
- Reporting on the state of educational initiatives in Canadian universities on anti-Palestinian racism, genocide, and de-colonization.
- Bringing current and emerging issues of concern dealing with anti-Palestinian racism and scholasticide to the attention of the Association.
- Working in ways that complement and connect with other anti-racist struggles, including (but not limited to) struggles against Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Black racism, and Canadian settler colonialism.

The movers of this motion will issue an open call for Palestinian scholars and students, comrades and allies, and other members who align with the mandate and objectives of the subcommittee, to serve as its members.