

Statement in solidarity with the Palestinian people

Stockholm, October 19th 2023

We – participants in the Decolonizing Architecture postmaster programme at the Royal Art Institute, accepting the invitation from Birzeit University and following the statement from Ghent university – strongly condemn the war crimes committed by the Israeli regime against the civilian population in Gaza. We express our solidarity with the Palestinian population and call for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the blockade.

The ongoing Israeli assaults are the most recent evidence of the enduring occupation, which stands as the longest in contemporary times. Long before Hamas came to exist, Israeli settler colonialism and apartheid worked to establish a Zionist system founded and maintained on ethnic cleansing, land dispossession, illegal annexation, and the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and sovereignty.

For decades, the West has turned a blind eye to the Israeli government's numerous human rights violations inflicted on innocent Palestinian civilians. On Monday, October 9th, 2023, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said, "we are fighting human animals," referring to Palestinians, and pledged to "act accordingly." He declared a "complete siege" of the Gaza Strip, saying there would be "no electricity, no food, no fuel." The October 16th airstrike on the Baptist Hospital in Gaza, killing upwards of 500 civilians, is a clear testament to this genocidal regime.

The Israeli regime's constant breach of international law has not moved Western institutions to assert their so-called values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, and human rights. In this regard, the UK, USA, France, Italy, and Germany have offered Israel 'steadfast support' in a joint statement, giving the Israeli regime the green light to commit war crimes and atrocities against the Palestinian population. We strongly condemn the European Union's consistent double standards and lack of political action regarding the genocide and ethnic cleansing committed against the civilian population of Gaza, the ongoing settlement expansion, and settler terrorism in the West Bank, and the apartheid faced by Palestinians in the 1948 territories.

Academia's silence is deafening. The term "decolonise" has been widely used within academia and mainstream media without pointing out its most obvious example of colonial continuity. Decolonization is not a metaphor, nor is it only a theory to be used for intellectual clout. It is about supporting the right for self-determination of Palestinians to live freely and with dignity. We strongly urge the academic community worldwide to mobilize and take action to end the dehumanization of Palestinians. Choosing to remain silent is a loud endorsement of the oppressor.

DAAS Students