



MAKERERE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

We, the undersigned scholarly community at Makerere Institute of Social Research, Makerere University, strongly condemn the ongoing massacre and war crimes committed by the state of Israel against civilians in Gaza. We express our solidarity with the Palestinian population and call for an immediate ceasefire, and the end of violence through a political solution that effectively recognizes the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, return, and political existence.

This violence occurs in the context of full support of major Western powers, whose own history of colonial genocide is well known in Africa. In an atmosphere of manipulation, racism, and paranoid Islamophobia on the part of dominant Western or pro-Western media, we seek to highlight that the violence of the Israeli regime in Gaza, where a 16-year blockade has created unliveable conditions, started before the creation of Hamas and the recent events. It is a normalized and daily reality of colonial occupation for Palestinians that has generated in Palestine, as it has historically done in Africa and elsewhere under colonialism, various forms of resistance as part of the struggle for liberation. Comparative historical consciousness exposes the criminalization of Palestinian resistance or its labeling as 'terrorism' as being part and parcel of colonial mentalities and strategies.

In constant and well-documented breach of international law and obligations as the occupying power, Israel continues to violently target Gaza today, bombing private and public spaces including homes, schools, hospitals, playgrounds, universities, mosques, and churches, deliberately killing any and all Palestinians indiscriminately. The current worsening of the blockade through cutting access to water, electricity, and fuel that sustain vital services is now tied to the displacement of more than a million of the population there. This is more than those provoked by the *Nakba* (catastrophe) that occurred with the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 and is a continuation of its 75-year-old history of Zionist settler colonialism, a political regime based on land dispossession, ethnic cleansing, and apartheid.

We support a structural framework for understanding the ongoing violence beyond binary positions that either invoke Israel's 'legitimate' right of self-defense or appeal to legal-humanitarian discourses that go no further than condemning the killing of innocent civilians on both sides. Far from justifying violence against civilians in Israel, we call for a framework that allows for identifying the root causes of Hamas' recourse to violence as well as the ongoing genocidal massacre in Gaza as being part of the colonial nature and history of the Israeli regime. That history is inextricably connected to the neo-liberal economic order it participates in, and benefits from, through the occupation of Historic Palestine. Without addressing the structural and historical causes of the current violence, the military and humanitarian solutions pursued so far will continue to support cycles of violence. As we advocate for concrete decolonization, we recognize that this idea is inseparable from the ideal of liberation of colonized people everywhere. There is no decolonization without a free Palestine!

We urge the scholarly community and wider society in Uganda, Africa, and beyond to mobilize and sustain action in solidarity with the Palestinian people in view of putting an end to their suffering, and to the violence likely to spread through the region.

16th October 2023

Makerere Institute of Social Research Academic Community.