

NASSS Public Statement on Palestinians, Israel, and State Violence

In the recent conflict that erupted during the end of Ramadan in 2021 (sacred month of fasting for Muslims) when Palestinian Muslims were attacked and removed from the Al-Aqsa mosque and their homes in Sheik Jarrah by Israeli forces, 217 Palestinians' have lost their lives, including 63 children and 36 women.⁵ With the corresponding rocket fire from HAMAS, twelve Israeli individuals have lost their lives.⁵ There are also unconfirmed reports about Palestinian footballer Muath Nabil Al-Zaanin being killed due to Israeli bombing.⁶

With Gaza as one of the densest regions of the world and described as an “open air prison,” these lethal attacks by the Israeli state in response to HAMAS rocket fire endangers spaces of leisure, sporting realms, and everyday practices of play so critical to managing life, pleasure, desires, and trauma. These attacks are eliminating the infrastructure of Palestinian society in Gaza and in the West Bank. Schools and hospitals have been bombed and destroyed. Hence, news coming from Palestine is very worrisome for scholars from around the world, including Palestinians, Jews, and Israelis. In addition, as sport scholars who study the international and transnational impact of sport and sporting cultures, we are extremely disturbed by not only the attacks that harm sporting icons but also the very infrastructure of sport and everyday life for Palestinians. We understand the historical legacies of colonialism and reiterate our strong commitment to decolonization, Palestinian sovereignty, Palestinian Indigenous rights, and religious freedom for all communities. The disproportionate use of force by the Israeli state and the continued settler colonialism and dispossession are part and parcel of living under apartheid regimes for Palestinians.

As athletes have started to bring awareness of this issue, it is important to stand with vulnerable communities facing powerful militaries, deadly violence, and displacement. With increased censorship and violence directed towards Palestinians protesting in Gaza, West Bank, and Israel, voice and solidarity matter. In these difficult times, the NASSS members who have signed this statement ensure that we stand with Indigenous, ethnic, racial, and religious minorities, especially scholars from the South West Asian/North African (SWANA) region and Palestine as well as Jewish communities facing the recent surge in anti-Semitism. We stand against anti-Semitism in the broadest possible terms, that is both supportive of Palestinian freedom and condemns anti-Jewish racism and anti-Muslim racism. As scholars of sport and leisure, we are very aware of the forms of oppression ethnic minority, religious minority, and Indigenous athletes can face in the sporting context and beyond. We believe that the freedom to express solidarity with any minority group is the basic right of any athlete. We fully condemn state violence, dispossession, and all forms of settler-colonialism.

With the rise in attacks against Jewish and Muslim communities, we condemn anti-Semitism in all its forms. We stand with Palestinians and Jews. We stand with the advocates for peace and justice on all sides to call for an end to the Israeli state violence in Gaza and the West Bank, a stop to the removal of Palestinians from their homes in Israel, and a halt to the destruction of Palestinian infrastructure. We also oppose using actions of the Israeli state to justify attacks against Jewish communities in Western nations since equating Israel with all Jewish people simplifies and distorts a complex history and present reality. Therefore, we stand with Palestinians and their Israeli allies to call for an end to the current invasion and occupation of Palestine by the Israeli state and call an

end to the rise in anti-Semitism. Lastly, we reassure SWANA region scholars, Muslim scholars, Jewish scholars, and Palestinian scholars that your opinion and humanity matters; Palestinian lives matter, and we firmly stand with athletes, activists, and many academic associations to advocate for the Palestinian cause and an end to the state-violence and removal of Palestinians from their homes by the Israeli government. We advocate for a broader coalition and social justice work that addresses issues of anti-Semitism, anti-Jewish racism, anti-Muslim racism, and settler colonialism simultaneously while addressing the long histories of collaborative work among segments of all of these communities. We condemn all forms of anti-Semitism, both the attacks on Palestinians by the Israeli nation-state and the rise in attacks against Jewish communities.

Academic Association Statements in Support and in Solidarity with Palestinians

Arab American Studies Association: <http://arabamericanstudies.org/aasa-statement-on-sheikhjarrah/>

Association for Asian American Studies: <https://aaastudies.org/solidarity-with-palestine/>

The Council of the American Studies Association: <https://www.theasa.net/about/news-events/announcements/statement-continued-responsibility-american-studies-palestine>

Gender Studies Departments: <http://genderstudiespalestinesolidarity.weebly.com/>

Middle East Studies Association: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/letters-from-the-board/2021/05/21/mesa-board-statement-in-support-of-palestinians>

National Women's Studies Association: <https://mailchi.mp/nwsa/nwsa-palestinian-solidarity-is-a-feminist-issue>

Princeton University community statement of solidarity with the Palestinian people: <https://www.dailyprincetonian.com/article/2021/05/princeton-university-community-statement-of-solidarity-palestine-israel>

Scholars of Jewish Studies and Israel Studies: https://israelpalestinejs.weebly.com/?fbclid=IwAR06-4X0M74cXo6CeL7K51IL3zJYGLJ25ptiBf4yM3MI245i_V9o-aQGUDa

University of California Press: https://www.ucpress.edu/blog/56253/solidarity-and-support-for-palestinians-in-their-fight-for-liberation/?fbclid=IwAR1BDSq3QPBHvYEqE_5OhN1j_kWwl96_6PqRFgCyNUNviRtfHf43MUhtJI

Sources

¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/19/pogba-diallo-hold-up-palestine-flag-after-manchester-utd-match#:~:text=Football%20superstar%20Paul%20Pogba%20and,home%20game%20of%20the%20season.>

² <https://www.firstpost.com/sports/fa-cup-leicesters-hamza-choudhury-wesley-fofana-show-support-for-palestinians-after-title-win-9625271.html>

³ <https://www.sportbible.com/football/football-news-arsenal-in-talks-with-sponsor-after-mohamed-elnenys-palestine-post-20210515>

⁴ <https://www.rt.com/sport/523911-mohamed-elneny-israel-palestine-post-instagram/>

⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/05/18/israel-gaza-conflict-latest-updates/>

⁶ <https://www.daily-bangladesh.com/english/Palestinian-footballer-killed-in-Israeli-attack/60252>

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