

Kashmir Scholars for Palestine

As South Africa's case against Israel, under the Articles IX and III of the United Nation's Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, commences at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on January 11, 2024, we, the scholars of Kashmir Scholars Consultative and Action Network, express our complete support for this crucial humanitarian, legal, and political intervention to *immediately* stop the *ongoing Nakba*, to impose a permanent ceasefire, and to prevent any further crimes against Palestinians by ensuring their right to self-determination, right to return, and the lasting liberation of Palestine. We express *unequivocal* and *unconditional solidarity* with the people of Palestine, and fully denounce the ongoing genocidal crimes being committed by Israel in Gaza.

Since October 7, 2023, Israel has (illegally) deployed white phosphorus and dropped more than 25,000 tonnes of explosives on Gaza, roughly equivalent to at least two nuclear bombs thrown on Hiroshima, at a speed and scale unprecedented in human history. As of January 10, 2024, Israel has killed 23,357 Palestinians, including at least 8,000 children, and injured 59,410. About 7,000 Palestinians are missing—presumed dead—still under the rubble. About 1.9 million people, nearly 85% of the population of Gaza, are displaced; half-a-million have no home to return to. Moreover, a shocking 33% of all structures in Gaza—masjids, churches, homes, hospitals, factories, studios et al—are destroyed; 23 out of 36 hospitals rendered utterly inoperable; 70% of schools are completely demolished. Only 7% of the pre-war water supply is available; one shower for every 4500 people; and one toilet for every 220 people. Additionally, the West Bank is

under accelerated attacks from Israel: more than 171 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli illegal settlers and the Israeli state since 2022, with 48% of all fatalities occurring in the three months since October 7, 2023. Disease and death haunt the remaining refugee camps of the beleaguered and besieged Palestinians in Gaza: a shocking 81% of *all human beings* in the world currently facing catastrophic or famine-level hunger are in Gaza.

The level of dehumanization of Palestinians and the incitement to genocide via public declarations to “destroy” Palestinians by the occupying power that are underway on Israeli print, electronic, television, and social media by innumerable Israeli leaders, Knesset members, officials, religious figures, celebrities, and soldiers are brazen and incendiary. Many of us scholars at KSCAN analyze such troubling discourses, and are amply convinced that these not only foundationally facilitate and enable the ongoing genocidal violence but also give abundant evidence of the “intent to genocide,” as required by the Article III of the United Nation’s Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Israel’s public figures have themselves accused the Israeli judiciary of ignoring incitement to genocide in Gaza. Within a week of the attacks in October 2023 by Israel, 800 scholars of international law and genocide studies warned of a “potential genocide” in Gaza. Notably, Raz Segal, a leading scholar of Holocaust and genocide studies at Stockton University and the endowed professor in the study of modern genocide, has definitively called it a “textbook case of genocide.”

As a group of scholars, it behooves us to take special note of the fact that Israel has engaged in deliberate and targeted genocidal epistemicide, wantonly attacking Gaza’s academic institutions, museums, historical monuments, and archives. Israel has

reduced the two top universities of Gaza—the Islamic University of Gaza, and Al Azhar University—to rubble. Numerous faculty, many of stellar international repute, have been killed along with their entire families. This list includes the world-renowned physicist and head of the Islamic University of Gaza, Professor Sofyan Tayeh; the former head of the Islamic University of Gaza, Professor Eid Shabir; poet, author, and the founder of We Are Not Numbers, Professor Reefat Al Areer; and many more scholars, poets, and artists. Israel has also conducted targeted attacks on medical educators and practitioners, many of whom have been killed, as have over 79 journalists. In short, Israel has decimated a collective intellectual treasure-house of Gaza and Palestine in particular, and of the world at large. These murderous attacks are all manifestly calculated to demolish Gaza's academic and intellectual infrastructure and the indigenous Palestinian system of knowledge-production, knowledge-recording, and knowledge-preservation.

As scholars in particular of Kashmir, the mutually-enabling and mutually-fortifying military and diplomatic relationships between India and Israel do not escape us. As believers in the indivisibility of justice and in the inevitable intersection of our oppressions and oppressors, as well as modes and methodologies of liberations and emancipations, we realize that the ethnic cleansing and the genocidal war crimes of the Israeli State on the Palestinian people *must not* go unaccounted. Other oppressors and occupying forces will also inevitably be emboldened, including the colonizing forces in Kashmir, already on genocide alert since August 2019.

Unfortunately and predictably, as the whole world watches a genocide unfold in real-time, the settler-colonial states of the global North, where many of us reside, have not only not made any serious interventions for a ceasefire, leave alone for the *prevention and punishment of genocide*, as called for by the

United Nation's Genocide Convention, but have abetted and enabled the grievous crimes.

We applaud South Africa's brilliantly documented case against Israel for committing genocide of Palestinians in Gaza "in manifest violation of the Genocide Convention" at the ICJ, and deeply appreciate the way in which it squarely "place[s] the acts of genocide in the broader context of Israel's conduct towards Palestinians during its 75-year-long apartheid, its 56-year-long belligerent occupation of Palestinian territory and its 16-year-long blockade of Gaza, including the serious and ongoing violations of international law associated therewith, including grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and other war crimes and crimes against humanity." Genocide is not episodic, but almost always "on a continuum," as theorized by Raphaël Lemkin, the scholar who coined the neologism "genocide." The world is already very late in recognizing the continuous genocide, the Nakba, of Palestinians started in 1948. We all *must* come together to end it. Right now.

It is for all these reasons that Kashmir Scholars Consultative and Action Network (KSCAN) calls for:

1. an immediate ceasefire;
2. immediate restoral of access to food and water to everyone in Gaza;
3. an immediate end to Israeli state violence and settler violence in the Gaza, West Bank and Jerusalem;
4. an end to Israeli occupation, colonialism, and apartheid;
5. self-determination of the Palestinian people in Palestine and in exile, and the right to return;

6. end the silencing and criminalizing of students, scholars, and activists engaged in Palestinian advocacy on campuses around the world;
7. end Israel's exceptionalism and impunity;
8. support the academic and cultural boycott of Israel as outlined by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel until all the above demands are met.