

## **Statement in solidarity with the Palestinian people**

Ghent, October 10th 2023

We, the undersigned, 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 Israeli regime is responsible for the unfolding of violence. 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 is 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](#). Statements that now condemn Hamas' violence exhibit the same selective blindness to the violence perpetrated by Israel and the system that produced Hamas. Framing the Palestinian struggle for liberation as 'terrorist' or 'complex' is an idle attempt at describing a reality of violent colonial oppression - that historically has (and inevitably will) always lead to colonized peoples' resistance.

For decades, the West has turned a blind eye to the Israeli government's numerous human rights violations inflicted on innocent Palestinian civilians. [The Belgian](#) prime minister, for example, has expressed his full support for Israel despite the racist and genocidal language used by the Israeli government and their desire to eliminate Palestinian citizens. 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." International human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and War Child have branded Gaza as '[the world's largest open air prison](#)' under a 16-year-long illegal blockade, [as confirmed by the United Nations](#) and [International Red Cross](#).

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. Therefore, we denounce such a statement from the Quint Leaders and also 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 offer this statement to the Palestinian people, whose suffering is not forgotten and whose tenacity and fierce resistance in the face of racism and settler colonialism

inspire us. We stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and commit to working through political, economic, and cultural methods to achieve decolonization and Palestinian liberation. We call on our fellow academics to use this statement to advance solidarity with Palestine and reject the continuous censorship and criminalization of Palestinian support across Europe.

The days ahead will demand a resolute stance against colonial reprisals. We strongly urge the academic community in Belgium and worldwide to mobilize and take action to end the continuous destruction of the Palestinians.

**This statement is an initiative of the PhD Community of the Department of Conflict & Development of Ghent University, Belgium. More than 1500 people have signed and supported our collective statement. Of these signatories, 289 people are students, researchers and professors from Ghent University, 380 from other Belgian universities, and 688 from other universities in Europe, the UK, and worldwide. Of all people that have signed, most of them were PhD candidates and students (453 and 449 respectively).**

You can find the full list of signatures [here](#).

You can sign and support our statement [here](#).

**Selection of signatures:**

***From the Department of Conflict and Development Studies, Ghent University***

Christopher Parker, Professor  
Jeroen Adam, Professor  
Karen Büscher, Professor  
Sami Zemni, Professor  
Koen Bogaert, Professor  
Maria Martin de Almagro, Professor  
Marianne Maeckelbergh, Professor  
Anneke Newman, Postdoctoral researcher  
Brecht De Smet, Postdoctoral researcher  
Jeroen Cuvelier, Postdoctoral researcher  
Joachim Ben Yakoub, Postdoctoral researcher  
Julie Carlier, Postdoctoral researcher  
Lana Salman, Postdoctoral researcher  
Max Ajl, Postdoctoral researcher  
Omar Jabary Salamanca, Postdoctoral researcher  
Sibo Kanobana, Postdoctoral researcher  
Soraya El Kahlaoui, Postdoctoral researcher  
Aleksandra (Ola) Hall, PhD Candidate  
Amina Adebisi Odofin, PhD Candidate  
Arthemis Snijders, PhD Candidate  
Charlotte Vekemans, PhD Candidate  
Dunia Daghlas, PhD Candidate  
Emmanuel Akampurira, PhD Candidate  
Fayrouz Yousfi, PhD Candidate  
Haithem Gasmi, PhD Candidate

Jorn Verschuere, PhD Candidate  
Jules Bakker, PhD Candidate  
Juliette Billiet, PhD Candidate  
Krishna Kumar Saha, PhD Candidate  
Marta ILL-Raga, PhD Candidate  
Marte Beldé, PhD Candidate  
Marwa Neji, PhD Candidate  
Mary Ann Manahan, PhD Candidate  
Maurizio Totaro, PhD Candidate  
Medina Moosa, PhD Candidate  
Natan De Coster, PhD Candidate  
Nathalie Bavurhe, PhD Candidate  
Sam Kniknie, PhD Candidate  
Sara Weschler, PhD Candidate  
Sheikh Shams Morsalin, PhD Candidate  
Theodoros Karyotis, PhD Candidate  
Yasmine Akrimi, PhD Candidate  
Roshni Kapur, PhD Candidate

***Students from Conflict & Development, Ghent University:*** Brian Driscoll, Britt Peerlinck, Chaïma El Aïsaoui, Couwtar Dadah, Damianos Kasalias, Dilek güneş Reubens, Eva Beyts, Evelyn Boone, Evy Gijssen, Febe Visart, Flore Wouters, Frederik Guillaume, Giulia Schoofs, Hafsa Zahid, Hanaa El Hajji, Hannelore Lenssens, Hared Abdifatah, Hebe Willems, Iman Ben Addou, Jack Kirk, Jamari issaka, Jasper Peeters, Juliane Lamvik, Klara Missault, Kobe Goderis, Laetitia Henau, Léane Bergeret, Leen Al Massalma, Lies Evenepoel, Liuva Ramos, Louay Odeh, Louise Macours, Maite Acosta, Maud Menschaert, Mila Noor De Baere, Milou Kuipers, Minte Habtie, Morgane Bresseur, Myrthe Tinel, Naufal Raharema, Nejra Sehagic, Sabrina Odofin, Tille Dewulf, Valentina Horvatić, Valentine Martin, Yeliz Akman, Marieke Bleyaert, Hanne Willems, Freya Sanders, Donya Selahpour, Arnout Schokkaert, Eugénie Simon, Ryan Loosveldt, Sandrine Cools, Martina Mondaini, Annelien Peeters, Zara Elgers, Miri Cecilia Marcella Beyens, Eva Vandenberghe, Vinnie Cuyt

***Professors from Ghent University and other Belgium universities***

Eric Vanhaute, Professor, History, Ghent University  
Herman De Ley, Professor, Em. Philosophy, Ghent University  
Jan Orbie, Professor, Political Science, Ghent University  
Koenraad Stroeken, Professor, Dept Languages and Cultures, Ghent University  
Mieke Van Houtte, Professor, Sociologie, Ghent University  
Carine Plancke, Professor, Ghent University  
Hans Grymonprez, Professor, Ghent University  
Abdellali Hajjat, Professor, ULB  
An van Dienderen, Professor, Kask & Conservatorium school of Arts Ghent  
Ann Schreppers, Professor, KU Leuven, Antwerpen, Tolkwetenschap  
Annemie Leemans, Professor, Department of Communication, University of Antwerp  
Arjan Post, Professor, Arabic and Islamic Studies, KU Leuven  
Cristina Poza Allepuz, Professor, College of Europe  
Dalibor Tomic, Professor, Collège d'Europe de Bruges  
David Jamar, Professor, Sociologie, University of Mons

Dounia Bourabain, Professor, School voor sociale wetenschappen, Hasselt University  
Gert Van Hecken, Professor, University of Antwerp  
Henk de Smaele, Professor, University of Antwerp  
Hilde Heynen, Professor, Department of Architecture, KU Leuven  
Iman Lechkar, Professor, VUB  
Isabel Van Bos, Professor, Royal Academy of Fine Arts Ghent  
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Jihane Sfeir, Professor, Université Libre de Bruxelles  
Luce Beeckmans, Professor, Department of Architecture, KU Leuven  
Manuel Aalbers, Professor, Division of Geography, KU Leuven  
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Nele Aernouts, Professor, Department of Geography, VUB  
Paolo Favero, Professor, University of Antwerp  
Petra Van Brabandt, Professor, Sint Lucas Antwerpen School of Arts KdG  
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Tomaso Ferrando, Professor, Institute of development policy, UAntwerpen  
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Maarten Loopmans, Professor, KU Leuven  
Mekhitar Garabedian, Professor, School of arts, Ghent / KASK  
Madeline Lutjeharms, Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (em.)  
Napolitano Valentina, Professor, Aix-Marseille University, AMU, LPED  
Flavio ORZARI, Professor, ERG St Luc  
Helen Mauli Dowling, Professor, Sint Lucas Antwerpen  
Yana Jaspers, Professor, Vakgroep criminologie VUB  
Lieven De Caeter, Professor, Department of Architecture, KU Leuven

***Selection of International support from Universities in EU, UK & Worldwide***

Amanda Alencar, Professor, Department of Media and Communication, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands  
Anya Topolski, Professor, Radboud University, Netherlands  
Brunilda Pali, Professor, Political Science, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands  
Christian Henderson, Professor, Leiden University, Netherlands  
Cristiana Strava, Professor, School of Middle Eastern Studies, Leiden University, Netherlands  
Lars de Wildt, Professor, Centre for Religion, Conflict and Globalization / Centre for Media & Journalism Studies (University of Groningen, RUG) Netherlands  
Daniela Vicherat Mattar, Professor, Leiden University, Netherlands  
Débora Antunes, Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands

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Elena Burgos Martinez, Professor, Area Studies, Leiden University, Netherlands  
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Jeff Handmaker, Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands  
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Arianna Lissoni , Professor, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

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Sari Hanafi, Professor, American University of Beirut, Lebanon

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Olivia C. Harrison, Professor, Department of French and Italian, University of Southern California, USA

Zahra Ali, Professor, Rutgers University-Newark, USA

Fabiola Hanna, Professor, School of Media Studies, The New School, NYC, USA

Ujju Aggarwal, Professor, The New School, USA

Dina Al-Kassim, Professor, California Scholars for Academic Freedom, USA

Brittnay L. Proctor, Professor, The New School, USA

David Klein, Emeritus Professor of Math, Cal State Northridge, USA

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Cassius Adair, Professor, The New School, USA

Lana Lin, Professor, Media Studies, The New School, USA

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Zakia Salime, Professor, Rutgers University, USA

Rabab Abdulhadi, Professor, Arab & Muslim Ethnicities & Diasporas Studies, USA

Massa Lemu, Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University, USA

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Ahlam Muhtaseb, Professor, California State University, San Bernardino, USA  
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Karim Ben Kahla, Professor, Tunis High school of Commerce, Tunisia  
Raja Gmir, Professor, Faculté des sciences humaines et sociales Tunis, Tunisia  
Yasmina Kefi Ghodbane, Professor, Faculty of Humanities and social sciences of Tunis, Tunisia  
ESSAIDI Mouna, Professor, Faculté des sciences humaines et sociales, Tunisia  
Thouraya Belkahia, Professor, Université de Tunis, Tunisia  
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Abdeljelil Chamam, Professor, Electrical Engineering Department- ENSIT, Tunisia  
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Houneida Hafsa, Professor, Faculté des Sciences Humaines et Sociales de Tunis, Tunisia  
Hayet Amamou, Professor, Histoire, Université Tunis, Tunisia  
Insaf Machta, Professor, Faculté des sciences humaines et sociales de Tunis, Tunisia  
Sümeyye Sakarya, Professor, Political Science and Public Administration, Ankara University, Turkey  
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Amy Bartholomew, Professor, Legal Studies/Political Economy Carleton U, Canada  
Diana Cordoba, Professor, Queen's University, Canada  
Mandy Turner, Professor, University of Manchester, UK  
Mattias Bengtsson, Professor, Sociology and Work Science, Univ. of Gothenburg, Sweden  
Wafa Abid, Professor, Faculté des Sciences Humaines et Sociales de Tunis, Tunisia  
Josh Scannell, Professor, School of Media Studies, The New School, USA  
Alma Hafsi, Professor, Psychologie université de Tunis, Tunisia  
Sarrah HAFSA, Professor, Higher Institute of Management of Gabes, Tunisia  
Stephanie Fetta, Professor, University of Massachusetts, USA  
Samia BEN YOUSSEF, Professor, University of Tunis, Tunisia



Sophie Withaecx, Professor, Maastricht University, Netherlands  
Karim Souanef, Professor, Université de Lille, France