

Statement on the Crisis in Gaza*

Since October last year we have witnessed a relentless stream of massacres, mass destruction of homes, schools, and hospitals, and the displacement of over a million people in Gaza. As an organization representing academics and students in political studies in Aotearoa New Zealand, we cannot stand silently by while this violence continues. In addition to supporting calls for an immediate end to the violence, NZPSA also 1) unequivocally condemns the destruction of Gaza's education system, 2) affirms its support for the right of students and academics to protest against [war crimes](#), [crimes against humanity](#), and [genocide](#), and 3) calls for more measures from the New Zealand Government, including immediate assistance for Palestinians who are in need of safety and security.

The NZPSA unequivocally condemns the 'systematic obliteration' of Gaza's entire education system and the killing of thousands of students and academics. All twelve universities in Gaza have either been completely or partially destroyed since October last year. Libraries and archives have been [bombed and burned](#). These were all places of learning and repositories of research and knowledge. Many distinguished professors who taught in these institutions have been [killed](#), some in [targeted attacks](#). Tens of thousands of students are now unable to complete their programmes of study and graduate with the degrees that promised them [a better future](#). Thousands of their friends and classmates have been killed or wounded. We express full solidarity with our Palestinian colleagues in condemning this 'scholasticide' in the strongest possible terms. It should not be accepted anywhere for any reason.

The NZPSA stands in solidarity with students and academics in support of their [academic freedom](#) and their right to protest on and off university campuses. We call on all university administrators in Aotearoa New Zealand to show respect, care, and support for students and academics as they make their voices and demands heard in response to the violence they are seeing. The lack of effective political response to Israel's assault has generated a global mobilisation of students demanding action from their institutions and governments. Many student and faculty protestors have themselves faced the [excessive and unwarranted use of police force](#) as their university administrators have sought to remove them from their campuses. As educators in political studies, we respect the right of our students and academics to speak and organise for causes that are meaningful to them. While all protests transgress normal rules and expectations, we have seen no evidence to suggest that student protestors in Aotearoa New Zealand have behaved in ways that are discriminatory or unethical. Calling for an end to genocide should not be controversial and should not be a punishable offence; indeed, it is something that all university leaders should actively support.

The NZPSA calls upon the Government of Aotearoa New Zealand to take stronger and more decisive actions in response to this crisis. Such actions should include:

- Ongoing public support for the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice in carrying out their investigations of [war crimes](#) and the [crime of genocide](#).
- Ongoing support for and monitoring of the full and fair implementation of [UN Security Council Resolution 2735](#).
- A [fast-track visa process](#) for at-risk Palestinians, particularly those with family in New Zealand. This was [made possible](#) for Ukrainians in 2022 and is the least we can expect from a nation that claims to respect human rights and dignity.

As scholars and students of politics, we know that history does not look kindly upon those who stay silent or support war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. While the voice of the NZPSA may be a small one, we raise it here in the interests of peace, justice, protection of all lives, environments, and cultural heritage, and political dialogue toward a better world.

Please direct any media or other enquiries to admin@nzpsa.co.nz

* This statement should not be taken to represent the views of all individual members of the NZPSA. It was published after a process of consultation with the current membership in which over 80% of respondents expressed support for it.