



Association for
**Iranian
Studies**

AIS Council Statement on the War in Gaza

October 12, 2023

Dear colleagues,

As we watch the devastating war and massacre in southern Israel and the indiscriminate bombardment of, and carnage in, Gaza, it is impossible not to be affected by these grim events and the enormous human suffering that this intractable conflict has inflicted. We are a community that cares deeply about the seven decades of dispossession that Palestinians have endured. We feel profound sympathy for Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and elsewhere in the world, many of whom have faced appalling conditions as refugees for decades.

We are also a community that speaks out against violence and inhumanity toward babies, women, children, teenagers, the youth, the disabled, and the elderly, be they Palestinian or Jew. The barbaric attacks and brutal tactics of Hamas against defenseless Israeli civilians must be forcefully condemned, even as we decry the destruction of Gaza and the added burdens of occupation and dispossession that helpless Palestinians – who have nowhere to flee and who are being deprived of basic human necessities – must again painfully withstand. We find all depraved and inhumane acts in this war abhorrent and denounce them in the most categorical terms.

Jews have suffered a terrible history of anti-Semitism and mass murder. Palestinians have also become victims of systemic discrimination and slaughter. History has shown that fascist and intolerant ideologies – wherever they exist– yield bigotry, animosity, and destruction.

Some of us in the field of Iranian Studies may be peripherally affected by these heartbreaking events, but we are still touched by them. As academics, we have a moral obligation to counter acts and rhetorics of hate and to work toward peace, tolerance, and justice. Sometimes, it is difficult to know how to compare different experiences of suffering or to mete out justice, but one thing is certain: Endless cycles of oppression, violence, and hate only derail and delay the possibility of a peaceful future.

Let us reflect on this painful moment as another indelible tragedy in our beloved region of the world that requires of us compassion and resolve – whatever our religion, politics, ethnicity, nationality, gender, or race. We can stand together as scholars who condemn the unsparing killing of innocents, the abuse of women and children, the vernacular of hate, and who strive instead for common decency and humanity.

We pray for peace as we mourn all the precious lives shattered and lost.