

# Rebuilding Hope

Birzeit University  
and Higher Education in Gaza

[bzu.gaza@birzeit.edu](mailto:bzu.gaza@birzeit.edu)



# Introduction

al Aqsa university \ AFP

The genocidal destruction unfolding in Gaza is not an event that stands apart from the structures of elimination that govern the logic of Zionist settler-colonialism, which is based on the eradication of the Indigenous people and its replacement with a settler population. These structures operate on multiple levels: destruction of life in the form of the genocide and forced displacement; destruction of society through violently targeting institutions and the shattering of infrastructure; destruction of culture to prevent the existence of a collective identity; and working to prevent a political national future for the Palestinian people.

The basis of this war being waged on the Palestinians in the Gaza strip using the logic of elimination (and extending to other parts of Occupied Palestine) is essentially **to make life impossible; to facilitate forced displacement; to destroy the social infrastructure**, including the health, legal, educational and cultural sectors (including institutions of higher education, schools and cultural institutions in addition to civil society organizations); **to reduce Palestinian life to one composed of minimal conditions of survival**; and to destroy the socio-psychological cohesion through systematic humiliation, defamation, starvation, and permanent expulsion, driving society to the point of despair, particularly following the historically unprecedented loss of human lives.





## Governing Principles

al Azhar University \ AFP

In the midst of this situation, Birzeit University sees that it has a moral and national commitment to take an active role for Gaza, based on a vision of two concepts: **“Institutional mutual reinforcement”** through providing as much as is possible to institutions of higher education, academics, and students in order to resume their roles in society, and **“Rebuilding hope”** by rebuilding possible and potential life in Gaza despite the genocidal destruction. This commitment stems from Birzeit University’s historical institutional role as the first Palestinian university, its academic role in its commitment to academic excellence, its role in society serving and developing the Palestinian community, and its strategic vision as a university for **Palestine and all Palestinians**.

The proposed interventions are based on a vision to continually confront settler-colonial goals and logic of our erasure, and to strengthen the steadfastness of Palestinians in the face of these challenges of settler-colonialism. This is done by standing with social institutions, and particularly universities and institutions of higher education through **institutional synergy, university education, and the production of transformative knowledge** grounded locally and linked to the material and social reconstruction needs of Gaza. These interventions are to be organized according to priority considering their conceptual and practical intersections, and to be implemented simultaneously depending on the availability of necessary resources and the needs and visions of the universities in Gaza and their priorities. Thus, Birzeit University shall become a hub for Palestinian, Arab, and global initiatives aiming to support higher education in Gaza.



**First, infrastructure and institutional synergy:** There is a need to provide resources to support institutional infrastructure, assist researchers and students in accessing the knowledge necessary to complete their academic journey; to establish partnerships with universities in Gaza; to lead a coalition of universities globally to support academic faculty to remain in Gaza and rebuild their universities; to assist in supporting digital infrastructure; to support plans and research designed by universities in Gaza for their rebuilding by providing collaborative research teams in various fields, as well as active participation in urgent relief efforts.

**Second, higher education in coordination with universities in Gaza:** This entails mutual collaborations between academic faculty from Birzeit University and globally with those in Gaza universities, and building infrastructure to enable remote learning for students in Gaza adhering to standards of academic quality. Moreover, this includes providing psychological and social support to students, as well as co-supervision of graduation projects and graduate theses, and preparing to receive some of Gaza's students physically at Birzeit University, when possible, based on the political realities following the war.





**Third, transformative research:** This is done through partnerships between researchers at Birzeit University, universities globally, and universities in Gaza to undertake research and studies arising from the genocidal assault that are grounded in the priorities of the Palestinian community in Gaza. The goal is for this knowledge to be transformative, grounded in local analytical paradigms aimed at rebuilding Gaza materially, socially, culturally, and environmentally, in line with local and cultural contexts and Palestinian political sovereignty, not internationally imposed by the logic of power.

Birzeit University views itself and its scholars engaged in academia as an emancipatory apparatus, and is committed to providing what it can to achieve that collective goal, as well as fulfilling its ethical responsibility in supporting the return of Gaza's universities.

**Birzeit University calls on all its partners—universities, research institutions, academics, and people of conscience—to support these interventions to enable the return of academic life to universities in Gaza and rebuilding hope for Palestinians.**

For coordination and joint efforts, contact: [bzu.gaza@birzeit.edu](mailto:bzu.gaza@birzeit.edu)





**BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY**

[bzu.gaza@birzeit.edu](mailto:bzu.gaza@birzeit.edu)

[www.birzeit.edu](http://www.birzeit.edu)

+0970 2 2982000

