

Statement issued by the Arab Council for the Social Sciences Beirut - October 20, 2023

In light of the genocidal war conducted by Israeli colonial authorities in the Gaza Strip, as a continuation of the 1948 Nakba, with the open support of a large number of governments and hegemonic powers around the world; and in the face of ethnic cleansing, racial discrimination, and crimes against humanity committed against the Palestinians, the Arab Council for the Social Sciences calls on Arab and international academic groups and institutions and university unions to stand firmly against the Israeli settler colonial system.

As an academic network of individuals and groups from the Arab region and beyond, the Arab Council for the Social Sciences seeks to research, reflect and produce knowledge about the Arab region and its just causes. It strongly condemns the racist colonial discourses, the toxic media incitement against Palestinians and supporters of their cause, as well as the explicit calls by some academics, politicians and media personalities to kill Palestinians, expel them and transfer them to Egypt and Jordan, while continuously demonizing them and distorting their struggle.

We, as an academic community from the Arab region and Global South support and seek to protect independent thought and critical thinking, as well as academic and intellectual freedoms. From this position, the ACSS is centrally engaged with the nature and role of critical knowledge, its production, effectiveness, and validity when it comes to the issues of the persecuted and the oppressed of the world, in the Arab region, and in colonized Palestine.

Within these critical circumstances, and more than ever before, there is an urgent need to interrogate the critical and epistemic axioms that conceptually frame acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing on the one hand, and the right to resistance on the other. There is a need to revisit humanist and post-colonial theories as we face continued colonial domination, double standards and monolithic unilinear reasoning.

We condemn the violation of academic freedoms and the silencing of dissent. We refuse all modes of cognitive colonization that are committed by such measures. We see the urgent need to put an end to coercive practices that force the adoption of anti-Palestinian stands and undermine the job security of workers in academic institutions.

The Arab Council for the Social Sciences calls on local and international academic organizations to fulfil their moral and intellectual obligations, work to refute Zionist colonial propaganda, and side with just causes in this world. ACSS invites academic and research organizations to employ all their means to champion our common values of freedom of expression and justice at this dramatic moment of peril.