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...another case of bending to Jewish pressure...



Jeff Haynes / Agence France Presse

Zionist groups planned to lobby Univ. of Illinois trustees over Salaita appointment

Submitted by Ali Abunimah on Mon, 08/11/2014 - 19:58

In a new interview with The Electronic Intifada, [Cary Nelson](#), past president of the [American Association of University Professors](#) (AAUP), has revealed that he is directly advising national Zionist organizations in their campaign against [Steven Salaita](#). This included a proposal to directly lobby the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois.



Cary Nelson (Sage Ross/[Wikimedia Commons](#))

Last week it was reported that [University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign](#) (UIUC) Chancellor Phyllis Wise had abruptly terminated Salaita weeks before he was due to start teaching in a tenured position in the American Indian Studies Program.

This followed a media campaign against Salaita, a prominent advocate for the boycott of Israeli academic

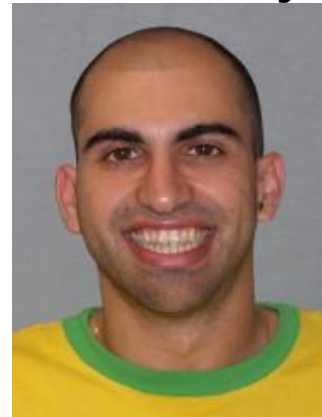
institutions, over tweets he made condemning Israel's massacre in Gaza.

Wise's move has drawn [broad and forceful condemnation](#) from heavyweight academics and organizations [including the AAUP](#).

Nelson, a professor of English at UIUC, also spoke frankly about his affiliation with the Israel on Campus Coalition, a Zionist advocacy group funded by an extreme anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim ideologue.

Nelson also revealed his own ties to the editor of a far-right website that has been monitoring Salaita.

Nelson denies "monitoring" Salaita



Steven Salaita

I called Nelson up because I had [read](#) that he was dissatisfied with my characterization from our [earlier interview](#) that he had closely "monitored" Steven Salaita's tweets for months.

I based this on his statement that he had first read Salaita's tweets months ago, and that "There are scores of tweets. I have screen captures ... The total effect seems to me to cross a line."

Also, Nelson wrote in an [essay](#) on 8 August, that "I have been following his tweets for some months."

But now, Nelson explains, "I first looked at Salaita's Twitter page a few months ago. I've been there a total of three times and I've read his tweets. I read occasionally things on *The Electronic Intifada* website. While I read *The New York Times* every day, I wouldn't say that I monitor it. Monitoring suggests like the FBI monitors your phone calls continuously."

Nelson also says he did not make the "scores" of screenshots himself. Rather, he says, "they were emailed to me by the person who edits [legalinsurrection.com](#) ... he sent me a collection of them."

Legal Insurrection is a website managed by William A. Jacobson, a law professor at Cornell University with headline anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim views who rails against fellow educators who support the [academic boycott](#) of Israel.

His site attracts writers with similarly extreme positions. In one [recent posting](#), for instance, a contributor praised Egyptian dictator [Abdulfattah al-Sisi's](#) crackdown which has involved killing hundreds of people and jailing thousands more suspected of the slightest sympathy with the elected Muslim Brotherhood government that Sisi overthrew in a military coup last year.

"It will be interesting to see if the 'Sisi Doctrine' of blending religious reformation with a full frontal assault on terrorist groups is effective and exportable," the post says.

Jacobson himself has been a strong opponent of academic boycott of Israeli institutions, especially the [vote](#) endorsing it last December by the [American Studies Association](#).

Now [Jacobson sees](#) Salaita's predicament as a sort of well-deserved comeuppance, pointing to the "hypocrisy" of those who refuse ties with Israeli universities:

Many of those rushing to Salaita's defense on the ground of academic freedom, however, themselves are among the worst violators of academic freedom through the anti-Israel academic boycott. They would turn away a Dean or representative of an Israeli academic institution, would bar joint programs and research, and even cooperation in journal publications.

Nelson's revelation of the role of Jacobson in providing him with ammunition against Salaita certainly exonerates Nelson of making "scores" of screenshots himself. But it also underscores the role of far-right activists in targeting Salaita, as well as Nelson's alliance with them.

Zionist groups planned to target Illinois trustees

In both of my conversations with him, Nelson insisted that he has never spoken to anyone in the UIUC administration about Salaita's case. But he did acknowledge that he has given advice to off-campus Zionist groups since the Salaita story broke.

"I've had at least fifty emails from people about the [Salaita] tweets and some of them are from people who I'm sure have a role in one organization or another," Nelson said.

"I had a call from someone who does represent an outside organization asking for my opinion about whether that organization or other organizations should approach the Board of Trustees to make some statement against Salaita's appointment and I advised that they should not," he added. "I said that the academic process should run its course and that while it was fine for people outside the university to comment negatively about any faculty's work, they shouldn't attempt to influence university decisions."

Nelson's advice is disingenuous to say the least. The Zionist group or groups he is counseling on strategy hardly need to intervene directly when Nelson is effectively doing their dirty work for them.

Instead of allowing the academic process to run its course, Nelson has himself waged a high-profile media campaign against Salaita, which includes spurious accusations of "[incitement to violence](#)," impugning without any evidence Salaita's teaching record, and putting forward pseudo-legal arguments for why the University of Illinois is under no obligation to honor its contract with him.

Nelson has served as self-appointed public prosecutor, offering a tweet-by-tweet exegesis of Salaita's words in an article for [Inside Higher Ed](#). This includes the canard that some of them are "anti-Semitic" – a charge based on misrepresentation that no one who has engaged in good faith with Salaita's history of ethical scholarship and advocacy can take seriously.

Nelson has done all this when Salaita has had to remain silent, in accordance, one can reasonably infer, with legal advice designed to prevent any further damage to his rights and position.

Israel on Campus Coalition fellow

Nelson also spoke to me about [his role as one of about two dozen national "Faculty Fellows"](#) of the Israel on Campus Coalition (ICC).

The group has established the ICC Academic Network which it describes as "a national community of pro-Israel professors who are dedicated to mentoring students, forging new ties between US and Israeli academics, and combating the BDS [boycott, divestment and sanctions] movement in academia."

It focuses its "recruitment efforts on professors who teach at schools with a high risk of anti-Israel activity and whose fields of study [are] targeted by the anti-Israel BDS movement."

It also provides "Israel Solidarity Grants" to "campus initiatives that demonstrate visible public support for the State of Israel."

Nelson himself states that he receives no payment for his role with ICC, which he said includes advising pro-Israel faculty and students on campus.

While he didn't mention it in our conversation, Nelson is scheduled to speak on an ICC-sponsored panel at this December's meeting of the American Anthropological Association (AAA). The panel is titled "[Boycotting Israeli institutions of higher education abridges academic freedom](#)."

None of the panelists or the chair is a member of the American Anthropological Association, according to a search of the group's membership database. The all-male panel is to be chaired by the ICC's [Sam Edelman](#). While it is obviously within Nelson's rights to participate in such promotional activity for the benefit of a foreign state, it is notable that ICC board member, West Coast

chair and donor Adam Milstein is notorious as a "[pro-Israel Muslim basher](#)."

As Alex Kane has [reported for Mondoweiss](#) in a story on Milstein's alleged financing of an anti-Palestinian candidate in student elections at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA):

Milstein has quickly become a lightning rod for criticism because of his outspoken, often anti-Muslim political views and his funding of controversial groups who share his ideology. Since 2009, Milstein's foundation has given StandWithUs, a right-wing pro-Israel group, about \$738,000. He has also given, since 2009 over \$260,000 to Hasbara Fellowships, which promotes anti-Muslim films and speakers; \$40,000 to Christians United for Israel in the 2011 and 2012 fiscal years; \$10,000 in those same fiscal years to the virulently anti-Muslim David Horowitz Freedom Center; and in 2012 \$5,000 to the Central Fund of Israel, a US-based non-profit that funds illegal West Bank settlements and other projects, including, the organization says, in Israel proper.

Since 2010, Milstein has given \$40,000 to the Israel on Campus Coalition.

Other beneficiaries of Milstein's largesse include a who's who of Israel lobby groups including the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, [AIPAC](#) subsidiary The American Israel Education Foundation, The Israel Project, CAMERA, MEMRI and NGO Monitor.

Kane notes, however, that it is "Milstein's tweets that have many students at [UCLA] upset."

A look at [Milstein's Twitter feed](#) reveals a stream of strident anti-Muslim invective. On 16 May, for instance, Milstein celebrated the victory of the Hindu nationalist BJP party in India's general election, [tweeting](#) that its leader Narendra Modi was Israel's "best friend" as well as being a "pro-Hindu anti-Muslim nationalist!"

In an 8 June tweet, Milstein, a property magnate, lar



Adam Milstein @AdamMilstein

More than ever, Pres. Obama makes public his policy of cuddling up to Islam and abandoning the State of [#Israel](#)
[3:09 PM - 8 Jun 2014](#)

Milstein's sectarianism is embodied in his foundation's [mission](#) which aims "to protect our Judeo/Christian values," as well as donating money "to combat anti-Semitism and anti-Israel activity."

Nelson pleads ignorance about ICC and its most high-profile board member Adam Milstein.

Asked what he thought of Milstein's strident positions, Nelson said, "I don't think I know anything about his views. I've encountered the name before. I just can't recall what I read about him."

Pressed on whether Milstein's extreme anti-Muslim views would disturb him, Nelson replied, "I'm not going to comment on him. I just don't know enough to comment on him."

Asked what due diligence he had done on ICC before allowing it to use his name, Nelson stated, "several of my friends are part of that group, so I did talk to my friends, to people that I trust about the role of the organization and whether my playing these kinds of roles on campus would be useful."

He said that at the time he was asked to join ICC, the group's website was down and so – unlike Steven Salaita's Twitter page, *The New York Times* and The Electronic Intifada – he had never looked at it.

Now that he knows, it will be interesting to see if Nelson cancels his affiliation with the Israel on Campus Coalition, or keeps up his public association with it as a more honest reflection of the strident Zionist and anti-Palestinian views that evidently motivate his current campaign against Steven Salaita.

COMMENTS

[CORRECTIONS](#)

[Permalink Submitted by Cary Nelson \(not verified\) on Mon, 08/11/2014 - 22:47](#)

As explained to Ali, I had ONE conversation with a person who advises a Jewish organization. He asked whether organizations should intervene with the Board of Trustees. I said "No," let the academic process proceed on its own. He agreed and said he would pass on that advice. Ali has characterized that reluctance to intervene as a campaign. Furthermore, no one provided me with ammunition against Salaita. I wrote down the tweets myself from his tweet site. The only purpose for the screen shots was to provide me with appropriate scholarly corroboration in the event the tweets were removed. The ICC does great work in helping people get the anti-boycott faculty perspective to our colleagues. The Anthropology Association has several pro-academic boycott sessions planned, so they were happy to get one anti-boycott session scheduled, giving members some access to an alternative view. As for donors to the ICC, I do not research who donates to organizations in which I participate; I am interested in an organization's mission and programs.

Cary Nelson

[IN ADDITION](#)

[Permalink Submitted by Cary Nelson \(not verified\) on Tue, 08/12/2014 - 06:16](#)

The Legal Insurrection website has been an extremely useful and responsible source of factual information about the struggle against the movement to boycott Israeli universities. It was the place, for example, that kept track of university president opposition to the ASA boycott resolution. More recently it has published screen shots of Salaita's tweets so people can judge them for themselves. It also provides political commentary, but in a far more rational style than a number of sites speaking for the opposition. As for myself, I have regularly defended faculty members attacked for their pro-Palestinian views. I am also in print urging a two-state solution and unilateral Israeli withdrawal from 90% or more of the West Bank,

even without an agreement. That means abandoning settlements and empowering Palestinians to develop their own state. It is not anti-Palestinian to condemn a faculty member who disseminates vulgar and anti-Semitic hate speech. Solving the Arab/Israeli conflict requires respect for both peoples, not a heart hardened against either Jews or Palestinians.

Cary Nelson

Hardening of hearts

Permalink Submitted by Jim Holstun (not verified) on Tue, 08/12/2014 - 15:11

Ah, Cary, what a soft heart you have! You only want Israel to steal 10% of the land remaining after it stole 78% of Palestine! I believe that, someday soon, there will be a more-than-lifesize statue of you for that "generous offer" (as the expression goes) on a corner in downtown Nablus.

No, it is "not anti-Palestinian to condemn a faculty member who disseminates vulgar and anti-Semitic hate speech." But it is positively craven and indecent to continue disseminating such unsubstantiated libels. Shame on you.

Libel

Permalink Submitted by James Holstun (not verified) on Tue, 08/12/2014 - 11:52

Hi, Cary!

Nice, subtle parsing of the word "monitoring"! You've been "following" Professor Salaita's tweets for "some months." You've been studying a collection of screenshots sent to you by Professor William A. Jacobson. You quote a small anthology of them in your Inside Higher Education piece. But you haven't been "monitoring" him. Interesting distinction, Cary! I wonder why people sometimes find literary critics lacking in candor?

Anyway, you presumably DID write the words that appear under your name in that piece, where you accuse Professor Salaita of "sophomoric, bombastic, or anti-Semitic tweets." Please substantiate. Anti-Semitism is odious, but it is not self-demonstrating: it requires evidence.

Compare "pedophilia." If I were to accuse you of sending out pedophilic tweets, you would be well within your rights to ask for evidence. If I only responded, "well, the word means 'lover of children,' and I'm pretty sure Cary loves children," you might even be within your rights to sue, and win. [Let me emphasize that this is an example only, and I have absolutely NO reason to think he's a pedophile, in either sense of the term. And for all I know, he hates and avoids children.] So please share with us the Salaita tweets that you think are specifically anti-Semitic. Accusing an Israeli prime minister of taking joy in killing hundreds of children shortly after he has killed hundreds of children hardly counts—even if those children are of an ethnicity that merits lesser degrees of attention in your book.

And remember: anti-Jewish "blood libels" are "libelous" because they accuse innocent Jews, or Jews collectively, of ritual murder. They're not libelous simply because they attack a child murderer whose murders you may wish to extenuate.

Looking forward to your non-responsive response, or your silence, or your attempt to distract readers from your libel of Professor Salaita, or whatever else you come up with.

Jim

reply

It is deplorable when an Permalink Submitted by maggie (not verified) on Tue, 08/12/2014 - 12:49

It is deplorable when an academic has his personal speech governed by a lobbying group for a foreign country. It is deplorable when academic freedom is dictated by how much money a particular religious / political group can muster to buy their preference in an institution of higher learning. This is America. We are allowed to criticize a foreign country's war crimes without having to lose our jobs because AIPAC doesn't like where our freedom of speech allows us to go. This nonsense has to stop. Cary Nelson is an embarrassment to this country.

Fredrick Toben, 13 Aug 2014 -12:00

The sadness of the Salaita case is that such personal tragedy will replicate itself as the world economy re-adjusts in an attempt to escape the inevitable predatory capitalist's bursting of the shonkly monetary bubbles that are currently floating about in all of today's theaters of war.

Add to that, the shield and sword of "antisemitism", "racism", "Holocaust denial", et al, is wearing thin for those who dream of establishing Eretz Israel.

Also, the millions of Freemasons living in the "free-and-democratic West", who each month vow to "help re-build King Solomon's Temple" are realizing that their offspring care little for what is going on in Palestine's Jerusalem/AIQuds.

German philosopher Martin Heidegger clarified this situation thus:

>>The Jews, with their marked gift for calculating, live, already for the longest time, according to the principle of race, which is why they are resisting its consistent application with utmost violence.<<

It is such an insight into what mindset is driving the extermination of the Palestinian people that is also targeting Professor Salaita.

But then that's nothing new in the world and we need to go into the dialectic used by such individuals. It is the Talmudic-Marxist win-lose death dialectic. This needs to be contrasted with the civilising Hegelian life-giving win-win dialectic, as illustrated thus: Man = thesis; woman = antithesis; = the opposites come together in a life-giving act, are conserved, = synthesis = child.

Talmudic-Marxist death dialectic: man-woman come together in life-death struggle; woman castrates man= synthesis = androgynous person, neither male nor female.

The death dialectic won WW I and WWII - and has continued to rule rough-shod over the globe while dispensing consumerism, which enables individuals to self-destruct, as did Robyn Williams the other day, but refuses to self-reflect upon its own costs of survival - as played out in the current Middle East tragedy

Your comment has been queued for review by site administrators and will be published after approval.



Ali Abunimah

Co-founder of The Electronic Intifada and author of The Battle for Justice in Palestine

Is the firing of Steven Salaita the beginning of a new Blacklist?

Tithi Bhattacharya and Bill V. Mullen on August 11, 2014



Steve Salaita

Steven Salaita, an Arab-American Professor of American Indian Studies, was just fired from his job for tweeting criticisms of the Israeli massacre in Gaza. The University of Illinois, which fired Salaita, will try to tell you his job was 'rescinded.'

But he was fired.

Here's why the University and mainstream media **don't** want to say he was fired.

Because firing a tenured professor purely for his political opinions, especially one with multiple academic publications to his record, means the University has violated the following:

- 1) His First amendment rights.
- 2) His academic freedom.
- 3) His rights as an employee at a public university, as well his rights to due process.

Here's the single reason why we claim he was fired: *more than one month ago, Steven Salaita signed a contract to work at the University of Illinois.*

Approximately three weeks later, he was told he no longer had that job.

That's a firing, not a rescission.

This incident signals the following:

—For those of us who have tenure in the academy, it tells us that our private expressions on social media may now outweigh our academic work.

Steven Salaita has published six academic monographs of distinction. He was in fact hired for his scholarly excellence. Clearly, his firing had nothing to do with that work. If Salaita's case is established as precedent, comments we make on our own time can be used by the University to monitor us and ultimately to fire us.

—For those of us who do not have tenure in the academy, or are doing graduate work, Salaita's case is a clear gag order. Everyone already knows the high levels of stress and anxiety faced by untenured faculty [produced by microlevel monitoring of social and professional behavior](#). Salaita's firing proves that our worst nightmares are true: University administrations **are** keeping track of what we do and say, even outside of work.

—Salaita's case also has specific implications for faculty of color and minority faculty. Cary Nelson, a past president of the American Association of University Professors, has charged that Salaita's social media expressions fail some standard of ["civility" and "collegiality."](#)

These terms are typically used to deny tenure and promotion to women and minority faculty.

As we all know, professors as a social group (including Professor Cary Nelson) are rarely known for their social graces. Using language of "incivility" is clearly a signal that some 'some groups' lack the right 'cultural grooming' to join the academic club.

Anstup Basu, a faculty member in the Department of English at UIUC, and a colleague of Cary Nelson, told us:

[As regards] the nebulous charges pertaining to 'civility' and 'tone.' Who decides such standards and protocols in the public sphere? Like all of us, Salaita publishes his excellent academic work following the language games of the academy. But when it comes to his extramural presence in the wider public sphere, who are we to institutionally determine what language he should use and what tone? How can it be the University of Illinois' or anyone else's business to judge and police it? I therefore strongly feel that such charges of 'uncivility' begin from a patronizing position of majoritarian power, particularly because the issue at hand is one of colonial occupation and apartheid.

As we know, we have a long history of voices from margins being silenced and condemned by those in power precisely on the grounds of civility, propriety of language, and tone. From Churchill's complaints about Gandhi's 'loincloth' to relentless patronizing censures of rap lyrics and Black culture, where do we begin, and where exactly do we draw the line?

This is a matter of deep shame for a world class research University. The decision should be revoked immediately and a formal apology issued.

The charges of anti-Semitism that are always raised when we stand against the state of Israel, also does not work in the Salaita case. Michael Rothberg is the Head of the Department of English at UIUC and the Director of the Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies. He has made the following public statement in support of Salaita:

I have reviewed a large number of tweets sent by Professor Salaita during recent weeks. While I understand that they are partisan and angry messages—and therefore may be considered controversial—I do not agree that anything written there warrants firing or rescinding an offer that was already promised. Indeed, if academic freedom and the right to free speech do not guarantee controversial and offensive political expression—and especially expression outside the classroom—what are they good for?

Steven Salaita was a tenured Associate Professor who accepted one job and resigned another. In between, he was fired. He now has no job, no personal home to live in, and no insurance for his family, including his two year-old son.

The most important political lesson of the Salaita case is this:

that criticizing the crimes of the Israeli state is the new McCarthyism.

Steven Salaita is being fired because, much like suspected Communist sympathy during the Cold War, support for Palestine is the "third rail" of political expression from which Universities continue to retract their professed support for both academic freedom and free speech.

As eminent McCarthyism scholar Ellen Schrecker [has written of Cold War anti-Communism](#):

The academic community was as deeply involved in this process as any other segment of American society. In their willingness to punish the men and women who were fingered by the anticommunist professionals during the first stage of the operation, the nation's educational leaders differed little from the movie moguls who imposed the Hollywood blacklist or the state and federal bureaucrats who fired people on the word of anonymous informers.

Academic freedom was no protection...it proved to be a highly malleable concept that could be manipulated to justify the exclusion of alleged Communists from the nation's campuses.

University of Illinois has not just fired Steven Salaita. It is trying to blacklist him.

His firing is part of an ongoing effort by ally states and their institutional proxies to punish critics of Israel, [be it at demonstrations on the streets of London, Paris or Cairo](#), or in the halls of the University.

Salaita's case also proves a crucial point of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement against Israel: that universities are not 'neutral venues.'

Indeed, University of Illinois Chancellor Phyllis Wise who notified Salaita that he was fired, strongly opposed the American Studies Association vote to boycott Israeli Universities last December.

Steven played a leading role in the ASA boycott campaign and has written extensively about why such a campaign was necessary.

Chancellor Wise and University President Robert Easter, in a public statement, endorsed a statement released by the Association of American Universities that stated

"any such boycott of academic institutions directly violates academic freedom...it is a principle that should not be abridged by political considerations. American colleges and universities...must stand as the first line defense against attacks on academic freedom."

For Phyllis Wise then, where the interests of the state of Israel are at stake, it is not ok for individuals to boycott institutions, but it is ok for institutions to boycott individuals.

Steven Salaita's case is a landmark case for our times.

The massive public outpouring of support for a Palestinian scholar and a vocal critic of Israel is unprecedented in this country. People are leaving angry comments in support of Salaita in the UIUC facebook page. One parent, Leighann Jones, wrote:

I am sending my daughter to you with the expectation that she will receive the best education that we can provide her. I am disheartened to read this afternoon that Chancellor Wise rescinded an offer to hire Steven Salaita based solely on his views of the Israeli attacks on Gaza. My daughter's first lesson: Keep your mouth shut, or else.

[The public outcry has exposed](#) the silencing and intimidation that University administrators and powerful institutions have historically used against people who stand for Palestine. And we need to keep speaking out. Steven Salaita must have his job back. Until then our work is not done.[1]

Tithi Bhattacharya is a Professor of South Asian History at Purdue University, a long time activist for Palestinian justice and on the editorial board of the International Socialist Review.

Bill V. Mullen is a Professor of American Studies at Purdue University. He is the author or editor of several books and on the Advisory Board for the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI).

[1] Please [sign the petition in support of Steven Salaita](http://mondoweiss.net/2014/08/salaita-beginning-blacklist.html).
<http://mondoweiss.net/2014/08/salaita-beginning-blacklist.html>

...note the statement sneaks in the Holocaust – that's how it's done...

South Africa: Cosatu Condemns the Arrest of Palestinian Activist in Cape Town

[Congress of South African Trade Unions](#) (Johannesburg)

PRESS RELEASE, 11 AUGUST 2014

COSATU strongly condemns the arrest of the Palestinian activist in Sea Point on Sunday. The country supports the Palestinians' fight against this horrific act of genocide from the side of the Israeli army. These Zionist supporters are the ones who are in the wrong as they are acting in justification of the genocide.

The Zionists in South Africa must be confronted when they try and perpetuate their lies and propaganda. As South Africans we may allow freedom of expression, but we do not allow freedom of oppression, which the Israelis are guilty of. The few Zionist supporters who gathered in Sea Point were a mere fraction of those who marched in Cape Town in support of the Palestinians.

We should as a country not be tolerating those who deny the holocaust; neither should we be tolerating those who condone genocide against

the Palestinians. We have chosen sides against this genocide acts from Israeli and in defence of the Palestinians, as a country. We should not tolerate the butchers of women and children in Gaza, who parade with impunity in our country, because we are true to our slogan of 'an injury to one is an injury to all'.

We will be confronting the funders and supporters of the Israeli aggression in Cape Town, because a declaration of war against the Palestinians is a declaration of war against South Africans, and this battle must be taken up in Cape Town. The Zionists may have bought the souls of the Mayor and the Premier, but these two citizens of the Western Cape have condoned the killing of women and children with their silence against the atrocities in Gaza. They do not represent the people of the City and have shown

themselves to have no morals that align with the public values of the majority of Capetonians. Release the arrested Palestinian supporters immediately and withdraw all charges against them,

failing which COSATU will be taking action against the Western Cape Police and City Police. With questions, please call COSATU Western Cape Provincial Secretary, Tony Ehrenreich, 0827733194 http://allafrica.com/stories/201408120560.html?aa_source=nwsltr-middleeastandafrika-en

An open letter for the people in Gaza

[Paola Manduca a](#) , [Iain Chalmers b](#), [Derek Summerfield c](#), [Mads Gilbert d](#), [Swee Ang e](#),
on behalf of 24 signatories

The Lancet, Volume 384, Issue 9941, Pages 397 - 398, 2 August 2014

We are doctors and scientists, who spend our lives developing means to care and protect health and lives. We are also informed people; we teach the ethics of our professions, together with the knowledge and practice of it. We all have worked in and known the situation of Gaza for years.

On the basis of our ethics and practice, we are denouncing what we witness in the aggression of Gaza by Israel.

We ask our colleagues, old and young professionals, to denounce this Israeli aggression. We challenge the perversity of a propaganda that justifies the creation of an emergency to masquerade a massacre, a so-called "defensive aggression". In reality it is a ruthless assault of unlimited duration, extent, and intensity. We wish to report the facts as we see them and their implications on the lives of the people.

We are appalled by the military onslaught on civilians in Gaza under the guise of punishing terrorists. This is the third large scale military assault on Gaza since 2008. Each time the death toll is borne mainly by innocent people in Gaza, especially women and children under the unacceptable pretext of Israel eradicating political parties and resistance to the occupation and siege they impose.

This action also terrifies those who are not directly hit, and wounds the soul, mind, and resilience of the young generation. Our condemnation and disgust are further compounded by the denial and prohibition for Gaza to receive external help and supplies to alleviate the dire circumstances.

The blockade on Gaza has tightened further since last year and this has worsened the toll on Gaza's population. In Gaza, people suffer from hunger, thirst, pollution, shortage of medicines, electricity, and any means to get an income, not only by being bombed and shelled. Power crisis, gasoline shortage, water and food scarcity, sewage outflow and ever decreasing resources are disasters caused directly and indirectly by the siege.¹

People in Gaza are resisting this aggression because they want a better and normal life and, even while crying in sorrow, pain, and terror, they reject a temporary truce that does not provide a real chance for a better future. A voice under the attacks in Gaza is that of Um Al Ramlawi who speaks for all in Gaza: "They are killing us all anyway—either a slow death by the siege, or a fast one by military attacks. We have nothing left to lose—we must fight for our rights, or die trying."²

Gaza has been blockaded by sea and land since 2006. Any individual of Gaza, including fishermen venturing beyond 3 nautical miles of the coast of Gaza, face being shot by the Israeli Navy. No one from Gaza can leave

from the only two checkpoints, Erez or Rafah, without special permission from the Israelis and the Egyptians, which is hard to come by for many, if not impossible. People in Gaza are unable to go abroad to study, work, visit families, or do business. Wounded and sick people cannot leave easily to get specialised treatment outside Gaza. Entries of food and medicines into Gaza have been restricted and many essential items for survival are prohibited.³ Before the present assault, medical stock items in Gaza were already at an all time low because of the blockade.³ They have run out now. Likewise, Gaza is unable to export its produce. Agriculture has been severely impaired by the imposition of a buffer zone, and agricultural products cannot be exported due to the blockade. 80% of Gaza's population is dependent on food rations from the UN. Much of Gaza's buildings and infrastructure had been destroyed during Operation Cast Lead, 2008–09, and building materials have been blockaded so that schools, homes, and institutions cannot be properly rebuilt. Factories destroyed by bombardment have rarely been rebuilt adding unemployment to destitution.

Despite the difficult conditions, the people of Gaza and their political leaders have recently moved to resolve their conflicts "without arms and harm" through the process of reconciliation between factions, their leadership renouncing titles and positions, so that a unity government can be formed abolishing the divisive factional politics operating since 2007. This reconciliation, although accepted by many in the international community, was rejected by Israel. The present Israeli attacks stop this chance of political unity between Gaza and the West Bank and single out a part of the Palestinian society by destroying the lives of people of Gaza. Under the pretext of eliminating terrorism, Israel is trying to destroy the growing Palestinian unity. Among other lies, it is stated that civilians in Gaza are hostages of Hamas whereas the truth is that the Gaza Strip is sealed by the Israelis and Egyptians.

Gaza has been bombed continuously for the past 14 days followed now by invasion on land by tanks and thousands of Israeli troops. More than 60 000 civilians from Northern Gaza were ordered to leave their homes. These internally displaced people have nowhere to go since Central and Southern Gaza are also subjected to heavy artillery bombardment. The whole of Gaza is under attack. The only shelters in Gaza are the schools of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), uncertain shelters already targeted during Cast Lead, killing many.

According to Gaza Ministry of Health and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),¹ as of July 21, 149 of the 558 killed in Gaza and 1100 of the

3504 wounded are children. Those buried under the rubble are not counted yet. As we write, the BBC reports of the bombing of another hospital, hitting the intensive care unit and operating theatres, with deaths of patients and staff. There are now fears for the main hospital Al Shifa. Moreover, most people are psychologically traumatised in Gaza. Anyone older than 6 years has already lived through their third military assault by Israel.

The massacre in Gaza spares no one, and includes the disabled and sick in hospitals, children playing on the beach or on the roof top, with a large majority of non-combatants. Hospitals, clinics, ambulances, mosques, schools, and press buildings have all been attacked, with thousands of private homes bombed, clearly directing fire to target whole families killing them within their homes, depriving families of their homes by chasing them out a few minutes before destruction. An entire area was destroyed on July 20, leaving thousands of displaced people homeless, beside wounding hundreds and killing at least 70—this is way beyond the purpose of finding tunnels. None of these are military objectives. These attacks aim to terrorise, wound the soul and the body of the people, and make their life impossible in the future, as well as also demolishing their homes and prohibiting the means to rebuild.

Weaponry known to cause long-term damages on health of the whole population are used; particularly non fragmentation weaponry and hard-head bombs.^{4, 5} We witnessed targeted weaponry used indiscriminately and on children and we constantly see that so-called intelligent weapons fail to be precise, unless they are deliberately used to destroy innocent lives.

We denounce the myth propagated by Israel that the aggression is done caring about saving civilian lives and children's wellbeing.

Israel's behaviour has insulted our humanity, intelligence, and dignity as well as our professional ethics and efforts. Even those of us who want to go and help are unable to reach Gaza due to the blockade.

This "defensive aggression" of unlimited duration, extent, and intensity must be stopped.

Additionally, should the use of gas be further confirmed, this is unequivocally a war crime for which, before anything else, high sanctions will have to be taken immediately on Israel with cessation of any trade and collaborative agreements with Europe.

As we write, other massacres and threats to the medical personnel in emergency services and denial of entry for international humanitarian convoys are reported.⁶ We as scientists and doctors cannot keep silent while this crime against humanity continues. We urge readers not to be silent too. Gaza trapped under siege, is being killed by one of the world's largest and most sophisticated modern military machines. The land is poisoned by weapon debris, with consequences for future generations. If those of us capable of speaking up fail to do so and take a stand against this war crime, we are also complicit in the destruction of the lives and homes of 1.8 million people in Gaza.

We register with dismay that only 5% of our Israeli academic colleagues signed an appeal to their

government to stop the military operation against Gaza. We are tempted to conclude that with the exception of this 5%, the rest of the Israeli academics are complicit in the massacre and destruction of Gaza. We also see the complicity of our countries in Europe and North America in this massacre and the impotence once again of the international institutions and organisations to stop this massacre.



Full-size image (24K) Associated Press
For the **Open Letter to Israel Academics** see
<http://haimbresheeth.com/gaza/an-open-letter-to-israel-academics-july-13th-2014>

We declare no competing interests.

Supplementary Material
Supplementary appendix



PDF (63K)

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- [a](#) New Weapons Research Group and University of Genoa, Genoa, Italy
[b](#) James Lind Library, Oxford, UK
[c](#) Institute of Psychiatry, King's College, London, UK
[d](#) Clinic of Emergency Medicine, University Hospital of North Norway, Tromsø, Norway
[e](#) Barts and the Royal London Hospital, London, UK
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