



18 October 2023

To:  
Annamaria Campanini  
IASSW President

Joachim Cuthbert Mumba  
IFSW President  
International Federation of Social Workers  
Email: [joachim.mumba@ifsw.org](mailto:joachim.mumba@ifsw.org)

Rory Truell  
Secretary General  
International Federation of Social Workers  
[rory.truell@ifsw.org](mailto:rory.truell@ifsw.org)

## **ASASWEI STATEMENT OF ACTION ON THE PALESTINE-ISRAEL HISTORY OF OCCUPATION AND WAR**

The Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI) is constituted to promote social work education, training, research, and practice in South Africa in collaboration with the international community in the pursuit of enhanced psychosocial functioning of individuals, families, groups and the development of organisations and communities, and to promote human rights, social justice, and equality of all the people of South Africa (ASASWEI Constitution, 2019). We are mandated by our professional values and ethical principles to advocate against any form of violence. Within the sphere of our academic discourse and activism, and as an affiliate of the International Association of the Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa (ASSWA), we extend our acknowledgement of and unequivocal condemnation of all instances of atrocities and violations of human rights worldwide. The present statement serves as an articulation of our call of action specific to the ongoing atrocious conditions in the regions of Palestine and Israel. Its interpretation is best situated within the comprehensive framework of historical, political, and social justice considerations.

Thus, we condemn all forms of war, violence, extremism, genocide and domination of people and their resources. A profound sense of desolation grips us as we grieve the loss of lives in both Palestine and Israel. Additionally, we express unwavering support for our academic counterparts in Palestine and Israel, as well as for all student social workers and social work practitioners who have been displaced. We share in the sorrow of the fear and hardships you are facing and offer our sincere solidarity.

In the wake of the unfolding events, where generations of people are being wiped out in this war that ensued post the 7th of October insurgence by Hamas, it would be remiss for us not to acknowledge the historical domination by the Israeli government over Gaza and Palestine. The settler colonialism and apartheid structures designed by Britain stemming from the Balfour Declaration of 1917 over Palestine may never be excused. Neither can the United States' support for the Israeli government, in general and in the current war be overlooked. Furthermore, we censure any form of backing that contributes to the perpetuation of the conflict and warfare on either side. We urge that all parties and individuals involved, whether directly or indirectly, be subjected to due accountability for their actions. We denounce the atrocities levelled against Palestinians over the past 75 years and presently the horror levelled against civilians and the most vulnerable populations – children, women, the elderly, and people living with disabilities. Over

---

**ASASWEI (Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions)**

President: Dr P. Masinga; Vice President: Dr M. Ncube; International Representative: Dr N. Perumal; Treasurer: Dr F. Mmusi; Secretary: Dr P. Chiwara email [asasweixco@gmail.com](mailto:asasweixco@gmail.com); Website: <http://www.asaswei.org.za>

the same period, Palestine has persistently appealed to the international community for 75 years, seeking assistance in addressing the issue of Palestinian sovereignty, a petition that has yet to receive a resolute response from the international community.

The massacre of over 500 people at the Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital, and the inhumane cutting off medical supplies, food, water, electricity, and fuel in Gaza for a population of over 2 million, stands in stark contrast with the human rights and social justice which ASASWEI holds with reverence. We condemn the blockage of humanitarian corridors that allow freedom of movement and access to much-needed supplies for civilians, many of whom are children in Gaza. In addition, we can never stand by and witness the immeasurable trauma imposed on the surviving generations of children. Furthermore, entire generations are either becoming extinct through death, separated from their kin, or being scarred physically and emotionally in the process of war. Above all, the surviving generations of young people on either side of the divide will undoubtedly, in the immediate future, be susceptible to radicalisation causing endless waves of conflict and wars.

As South Africans, our stance is also informed by our struggle for democracy which is painfully etched in history as generational trauma. Thus, we do not support any form of apartheid and colonialism. It is for this reason that we are committed to a peaceful and sustainable resolution of the conflict for freedom for all. As ASASWEI, we subscribe to and, uphold the global definition of social work as espoused by the IASSW and IFSW (2014):

*“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.”*

In light of the above, as ASASWEI:

1. We wish to demystify the general notion that the war on Palestine is a religious war and that any support for the Palestinian people is akin to anti-Semitism. Our call to action is about human rights and social justice with a particular bias towards vulnerable populations.
2. We call for solidarity as associations of social work worldwide, to demand an immediate end to the current war.
3. We urge social work departments worldwide to consider including readings on the Israeli government's occupation of Palestine as well as the history of the Israel and Palestine conflict in their social work curricula.
4. Notwithstanding the broader issues of colonialism and apartheid in the social work curricula, we advocate that as international bodies, you deliberately create spaces for debates and consciousness-raising conversations amongst academics, practitioners and students across the world in respect of the history of Israel and Palestine with specific reference to human rights violations, Israeli occupation of the Palestinian land, apartheid and coloniality.
5. We call for all schools of social work worldwide to show solidarity against the loss of lives resulting from this conflict and war.
6. We further encourage participation in rallies and gatherings to support an end to the Israeli government's occupation of Palestine.
7. We call for you to put pressure on your governments to compel the Israeli government and Hamas to give effect to human rights conventions.

---

**ASASWEI (Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions)**

President: Dr P. Masinga; Vice President: Dr M. Ncube; International Representative: Dr N. Perumal; Treasurer: Dr F. Mmusi; Secretary: Dr P Chiwara email [asasweiexco@gmail.com](mailto:asasweiexco@gmail.com); Website: <http://www.asaswei.org.za>

8. We call for you to put pressure on your governments to compel the United States and the Israeli governments to end the occupation of Palestine immediately followed by mediated peaceful negotiations to begin the process of restoration and stability.
9. We support the decision by the South African Parliament earlier this year to downgrade the South African Embassy in Tel Aviv to a Liaison Office until such time that the people of Palestine's dignity is restored.
10. We urge our organizations to promote and encourage our governments to leverage their embassies and liaison offices in both Palestine and Israel as avenues to facilitate peaceful negotiations
11. We implore all our bodies to exert pressure on our governments to influence the relevant parties, urging them to establish pathways for humanitarian aid delivery and facilitate the unrestricted movement of individuals.
12. We encourage support to organisations that provide humanitarian aid to the affected civilians.

We hold a strong conviction that the cessation of hostilities caused by the Israeli-government's invasion of Palestine will ameliorate the Israeli-Palestinian relationship and restore the dignity of people, where future generations of the two nations can live in peace and harmony.

In solidarity,



(ASASWEI President)

---

For and on behalf of the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI)

---

**ASASWEI (Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions)**

President: Dr P. Masinga; Vice President: Dr M. Ncube; International Representative: Dr N. Perumal; Treasurer: Dr F. Mmusi; Secretary: Dr P Chiwara email [asasweiexco@gmail.com](mailto:asasweiexco@gmail.com); Website: <http://www.asaswei.org.za>