



2 February 2026

Our ref: Prof A Lombard

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The President

Prof M Ncube

ASASWEI

secretary@asaswei.org.za

Dear Prof Ncube,

Your follow up statement to the IASSW on the Genocide in Gaza, dated 31 October 2025, refers.

We share your recognition of, and your deep mourning for, the loss of life in both Gaza and Israel and extend our solidarity and compassion to all affected communities, in particular vulnerable groups. We affirm our role as International Association of Schools of Social Work to take positions and promote informed and collective action in response to injustices and human rights violations wherever they occur.

During a meeting between the ASASWEI Executive, Prof Janestic Twikirize, and myself on 13 November 2025, I explained the approach adopted by IASSW to advance this mandate through the establishment of a globally representative Committee on Human Rights, Social Justice, and Global Solidarity. We obtained the support of the Regional Presidents for this direction, who in turn appointed a representative from each region to serve on this Committee. The Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa appointed Prof Vishanthie Sewpaul to represent the Africa region. The appointed representatives convened on two occasions to finalise the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

Given the time of the year, the Committee members agreed that their substantive work would commence in 2026, as the finalisation of the Terms of Reference extended into December 2025. This meant that IASSW would not be able to publish a position statement on genocide by the end of 2025, as had been intended. As discussed during our meeting, IASSW unequivocally condemns genocide and other atrocities, in Gaza and elsewhere. This position was also reaffirmed in my New Year

message issued in December 2025.

The launch and structure of the Committee were discussed on the first day of the IASSW Board online meeting, held over two days on 22–23 January 2025. The Terms of Reference were presented and discussed and, with a brief wording amendment, adopted by the Board.

The resolutions and demands outlined in your letter, which I undertook to present to the Board, were discussed under a separate agenda item on 23 January 2025.

The Board acknowledged and appreciated the concerns raised in ASASWEI's letter, recognising that they reflect IASSW's shared commitment as a human rights and social justice-based organisation. These discussions took place in the context of the formal adoption of the Committee on Human Rights, Social Justice, and Global Solidarity, which has representation from all IASSW regions. IASSW's response to ASASWEI's demands is therefore embedded in the mandate and purpose of this Committee, namely:

...to provide sustained, principled, and informed guidance on global atrocities, injustices, and human rights violations. The Committee affirms that IASSW takes global injustices seriously and engages with them continuously and coherently, guided at all times by ethical, transparent, and globally consistent principles. In fulfilling this role, the Committee is committed to promoting unity, deeper contextual understanding, and constructive dialogue among IASSW's diverse membership, ensuring that the Association responds to global concerns with integrity, professionalism, and full alignment with its core social work values.

In line with this approach, the Board emphasised that in situations of genocide and other atrocities, careful consideration must be given to responses that are inclusive and peacebuilding-orientated rather than punitive and further divisive.

The Board further affirmed that IASSW will, on an ongoing basis, initiate and partner in activities that foster open dialogue and create supportive spaces where diverse perspectives of social work educators and practitioners can be heard, understood, and brought into collective reflection and action. IASSW members will also be supported to establish Significant Interest Groups and to collaborate across regions and countries for more sustainable impact.



With the Board's approval of the Terms of Reference of the Committee on Human Rights, Social Justice, and Global Solidarity, IASSW reaffirms its commitment to developing position statements that demonstrate solidarity and enable transformative action. These efforts are intended to strengthen social work education and ensure that future social work graduates are well prepared to work within and across national borders in solidarity, peacebuilding, and action-oriented responses to genocide, conflict, and other injustices.

We invite ASASWEI to reconsider its approach and to continue engaging with IASSW through the collective, inclusive framework embodied in the Committee on Human Rights, Social Justice, and Global Solidarity. We encourage ASASWEI to support IASSW's approach to creating spaces for open dialogue and collaborative solutions that prepare social work educators and students to promote peaceful, just, and sustainable societies.

Through such dialogue and collective action, social work education is strengthened by engaging authentically with what it means to recognise oppression and dehumanisation; to include and respect human dignity; to challenge systemic and structural injustices; and to advocate for solutions that are sustainable and enabling for all people within and across geopolitical borders.

Furthermore, we respectfully invite ASASWEI to reconsider its stated intention to no longer represent schools of social work in South Africa at IASSW. While we note a steady increase in IASSW membership globally, it would be a significant loss if schools of social work in South Africa were to miss out on the opportunity to contribute to IASSW's vision and mission through representation on the Board. This is particularly significant given the historic and ongoing contribution of South Africa to the development and strengthening of IASSW over several decades.

Yours sincerely,

Antoinette Lombard

President, International Association of Schools of Social Work
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