

8,000 artists and cultural workers warn of genocide in Gaza and call for ceasefire

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Eight thousand artists, writers and other cultural workers have signed an open letter warning of ongoing genocide of the Palestinian population of Gaza and demanding an immediate ceasefire.

The letter follows other statements, including one from more than 2,000 British filmmakers, artists, actors, curators, playwrights and others that surfaced a few days ago. The latest open letter includes names from all over the world, and reflects the anger and outrage of many millions, indeed most of humanity, in the face of the Zionist siege of Gaza and the preparations for a ground assault that is predicted will claim tens of thousands of lives.

The brutal assault on the Palestinian people in revenge for the Hamas attack inside Israel on October 7 has already left nearly 5,000 dead, overwhelmingly civilians and including many children. While rejecting attacks against all civilians, the letter courageously and correctly identifies "the root cause of violence: oppression, and the occupation."

Among the signatories of the letter are well-known artists Nan Goldin, Barbara Kruger, Kara Walker and Michael Rakowitz, noted filmmaker Laura Poitras, novelists Rachel Kushner and Hari Kunzru, musician Brian Eno, singer-songwriter Jarvis Cocker, filmmaker and actress Mati Diop, poet and artist Cecilia Vicuña, academics Christina Sharpe and Judith Butler, and many many others. The letter is addressed above all to the arts community, demanding "an end to the institutional silence" over the crisis facing the 2.3 million Palestinians in the occupied and besieged Gaza Strip.

The statement makes the forthright declaration that, "We support Palestinian liberation and call for an end to the killing and harming of all civilians, an immediate ceasefire, the passage of humanitarian aid into Gaza,

and the end of the complicity of our governing bodies in grave human rights violations and war crimes."

"Silence at this urgent time of crisis and escalating genocide is not a politically neutral position," the letter goes on. "The ongoing bombing of Gaza and the killing and forced displacement of its residents has been condemned by Amnesty International, the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, and Action Aid. These, amongst other global bodies, have indicated that the collective punishment of Gaza civilians—which includes the killing of aid workers, journalists, and medics, as well as the destruction of all infrastructure and life-sustaining resources, cutting off water, food, electricity and medicine—amounts to a war crime."

"There is ample evidence that we are witnessing the unfolding of a genocide in which the already precarious lives of Palestinians are deemed unworthy of aid, let alone human rights and justice," the letter continues. "With impunity, Israel has already undertaken three of the five defining acts outlined by the United Nations Genocide Convention." The statement references the 16-year Israeli siege of Gaza, "the longest in modern history." The "directive to accomplish the systemic destruction of Palestinians and Palestine society in Gaza, comes directly from Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, who has described his targets in degraded terms, as 'human animals.'"

Another voice in support and sympathy with the Palestinian struggle has just been raised, when 20-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg posted October 20 on her social media accounts, "Today we strike in solidarity with Palestine and Gaza," alongside a picture of her holding a sign reading "STAND WITH GAZA."

"The world needs to speak up and call for an

immediate ceasefire, justice and freedom for Palestinians and all civilians affected,” wrote Thunberg, who has become well known for her warnings on climate change. Her social media posts provoked a campaign of vituperative abuse, including from the Israeli military, whose spokesperson asserted that “Whoever identifies with Greta in any way in the future, in my view, is a terror supporter.” This reactionary smear reflects the Zionist establishment’s fear of the impact that Thunberg’s statements will have on global public opinion.



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