

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES¹

WHEREAS, members of the historical profession support the Right to Education, including the universal access to higher education enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and

WHEREAS, members of the historical profession are dedicated to the documentation of human experience through the collection and preservation of historical information;

WHEREAS, the Right to Education can be exercised only when students and faculty alike have the freedom of movement to teach and study at institutions of their choice; and

WHEREAS, Israel's restrictions on the movement of faculty, staff and visitors in the West Bank impede the regular functioning of instruction and university activities at Palestinian institutions of higher learning²; and

WHEREAS, Israel routinely refuses to allow students from Gaza to travel in order to pursue higher education abroad, and even at West Bank universities; and³

WHEREAS, the Right to Education is undermined or deterred when educational institutions are damaged, or partially destroyed, and when state authorities raid, and even close, campuses; and

WHEREAS, during its siege of Gaza in the summer of 2014, Israel bombarded fourteen institutions of higher learning, partially or completely destroying nine of them, including the Islamic University of Gaza, which houses the Oral History Center;⁴ and

WHEREAS, the Israeli military routinely invades university

campuses in Jerusalem and the West Bank and frequently impedes entry;⁵ and

WHEREAS, the Right to Education can be exercised fully and freely only when students have access to a broad range of ideas and a faculty of diverse backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Israel restricts the right to lecture, teach, or attend Palestinian universities by denying entry to select foreign nationals, including U.S. citizens, thereby denying Palestinian educational institutions the rich experiences enjoyed in other universities worldwide;⁶

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the AHA upholds the rights of all faculty and students, including Palestinians, to pursue their education and research freely and wherever they choose, and therefore,

BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the AHA calls for the immediate reversal of Israeli policies that restrict the freedom of movement required to exercise this right, including denial of entry of foreign nationals seeking to participate in educational programs; and

BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the AHA calls for the cessation of attacks on Palestinian educational institutions, including raids on campuses, which undermine and deter education and endanger historical records;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the AHA commits itself to continuing to monitor Israeli actions that restrict the right to education in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

1 For detailed documentation, see www.historiansagainstwar.org/impediments-to-palestinian-education and research

2 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/annual-report/2013>

3 <http://gisha.org/updates/4024>; and <http://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/publications/separating-land-separating-people/separating-land-separating-people-web-en.pdf>

4 <http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/UNESCO%20HEI%20Assessment%20Gaza%20Report%20FINAL-January%202015.pdf>

5 <http://mesana.org/pdf/israel20130917.pdf>

6 "Academia Undermined: Israeli Restrictions on Foreign National Academics in Palestinian Higher Education Institutions," Report of the Campaign for the Right to Enter the Occupied Palestinian Territories, 2013.

Initial Signers (AHA members may add their names prior to the November 1 deadline for submission at

<http://historiansagainstwar.org/aha16/>).

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