

Resolution on Damage and Destruction of Schools and Cultural Institutions in Gaza and Damage to Israeli Schools

Whereas the American Library Association (ALA) “deplores the destruction of libraries, library collections, and property, and the disruption of educational process by that act, whether it be done by individuals or groups of individuals, and whether it be done in the name of honest dissent, the desire to control or limit thought or ideas, or for any other purpose” (ALA Policy B.2.8);¹

Whereas on June 19, 2002 ALA Council passed a “Resolution on the Destruction of Palestinian Libraries, Archives, and other Cultural Institutions” (CD#18.8 of 2001-2002), in which the ALA deplored the destruction of Palestinian libraries and cultural resources in the spring of 2002, and called “upon the government of the United States, as well as other governments, intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations to prevent further destruction of libraries and cultural resources and to provide material assistance for the reconstruction and restoration of these resources”;²

Whereas on January 28, 2009 ALA Council passed a “Resolution on the Connection Between the Recent Gaza Conflict and Libraries” (CD#18.1 of 2008-2009) in which the American Library Association called for the “protection of libraries and archives in Gaza and Israel” and urged “the US Government to support the United States Committee of the Blue Shield in upholding the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict”;³

Whereas libraries completely destroyed in Israeli military assaults on Gaza in 2007-2009 included the library of the al-Taghreed Society for Culture and Art, the al-Tuffah Sports Club Library, and the Union of Shaja’ya Club Library;⁴

Whereas libraries fully or partially destroyed or damaged in Israeli military assaults on Gaza in 2014 included the al-Ataa’ Charitable Society Library (completely), the al-Siraj Library - Society of Palestine Charity for Care (completely), the al-Taghreed Society Library (again), the Deir al-Balah Cultural and Social Centre Library, the Khan Yunis Services Club Library, the al-Shawka Library in Rafah, and the library of the English department of the Islamic University (completely);⁵

Whereas, according to the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, “at least 244 schools were damaged or destroyed” by Israel’s armed forces;⁶ and according to UNESCO 133 kindergartens were damaged and eleven totally destroyed;⁷

Whereas Israeli bombardment in 2018 destroyed the cultural center of the Al Mishal Foundation, including its library;⁸

Whereas in May 2021 the bombing of Gaza destroyed the Samir Mansour Bookshop—the largest bookshop in Gaza and an important publisher and cultural center—as well as bookshops and educational centers belonging to the Islamic University and other bookshops including the Iqraa al-Jadeed and Al-Nahda bookshops;⁹

Whereas the offices of the Associated Press, Al Jazeera, and other news agencies were also destroyed;¹⁰

Whereas in May 2021 at least 50 schools in Gaza and three in Israel were damaged;¹¹

Whereas the Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) in the United States and several other academic bodies have recently condemned the latest Israeli attacks and affirmed their solidarity with the Palestinian people;¹²

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA)

1. deplores the continuing and massive destruction and damage of cultural institutions in Gaza and the damage of three schools in Israel;
2. calls again for the protection of libraries and cultural resources, and urges the US Government to support the United States Committee of the Blue Shield in upholding the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict”; and
3. calls upon the government of the United States, as well as other governments, intergovernmental organizations, and nongovernmental organizations to provide material assistance for the reconstruction and restoration of Gaza’s libraries and schools.

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¹B.2.8 Destruction of Libraries, *ALA Policy Manual*,

<https://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/53intellfreedom#B.2.8>

² [Resolution on the Destruction of Palestinian Libraries, Archives, and Other Cultural Institutions | About ALA.](#)

³ Resolution on the Connection Between the Recent Gaza Conflict and Libraries,

[http://www.ala.org/offices/iro/awardsactivities/resolutiongazaconflict.](http://www.ala.org/offices/iro/awardsactivities/resolutiongazaconflict)

⁴ Palestinian Museum, "108 Libraries," *Museum News*, August 2016, [https://www.palmuseum.org/news-1/newsletter/108-libraries.](https://www.palmuseum.org/news-1/newsletter/108-libraries)

⁵ Palestinian Museum, <https://www.palmuseum.org/news-1/newsletter/108-libraries>; Mary Fasheh, "The International Board of Books for Young People in Palestine," *Progressive Librarian*, Issue #48, Spring 2021, pp. 35-36, 43-44, 46, <http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/PL/PL48/031fasheh.pdf>; Mosab Abu Toha, "Libraries in Gaza: Between Despair and Hope," *Progressive Librarian*, Issue #48, Spring 2021, pp. 55-56, <http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/PL/PL48/053abutoha1.pdf>.

⁶ "Security Council Told of Indiscriminate, Brutal Killings Children Face in Conflict," UN Office of the Representative of Children and Armed Conflict, Sept 8, 2014; [Security Council Told of Indiscriminate, Brutal Killings Children Face in Conflict – Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.](#)

⁷ UNESCO, "Rapid Assessment of Higher Education Institutions in Gaza: Data Analysis Report," 2015, [UNESCO HEI Assessment Gaza Report FINAL-January 2015.pdf \(eenet.org.uk\)](#), p. 2.

⁸ Toha, p. 61, <http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/PL/PL48/031fasheh.pdf>; "Interview with Mosab Abu Toha," *Progressive Librarian*, Issue #48, Spring 2021, [Interview with Mosab Abu Toha \(progressivelibrariansguild.org\)](#), pp. 69-70; "'Our memories have vanished': the Palestinian theatre destroyed in a bomb strike," *The Guardian*, Aug. 22, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/aug/22/our-memories-have-vanished-the-palestinian-theatre-destroyed-in-a-bomb-strike>.

⁹ Nabih Boulos, "He watched two missiles destroy his bookshop. 'My soul came out of me'," *Los Angeles Times*, June 1, 2021, <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2021-06-01/missiles-destroy-gaza-bookshop-war-israel-hamas>; "Israel-Gaza: Huge fundraising effort seeks to get bombed bookshop rebuilt," *Middle East Eye*, May 21, 2021, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/gaza-bookshop-demolished-fundraising-effort-back-feet>; "Gaza bookshop owner's dreams buried under the rubble," *France 24*, May 23, 2021, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210523-gaza-bookshop-owner-s-dreams-buried-under-the-rubble>.

¹⁰ Israeli strike destroys Gaza tower housing media organisations, *The Guardian*, May 15, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/15/israeli-strikes-destroy-gaza-jalaa-tower-media-al-jazeera-associated-press>.

¹¹ "Fifty schools in Gaza and three in Israel have been damaged in the last week – Save the Children," Reliefweb, May 19, 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/fifty-schools-gaza-and-three-israel-have-been-damaged-last>

¹² MELA, "MELA Affirms Solidarity With The Palestinian People," May 19, 2021, <https://www.mela.us/2021/05/20/mela-affirms-solidarity-with-palestinian-people/>; "Statement by the Faculty in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration on Palestine," Yale University, May 17, 2021, [Statement by the Faculty in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration on Palestine | Ethnicity, Race, and Migration \(yale.edu\)](#); "Gender Studies Departments In Solidarity With Palestinian Feminist Collective," <http://genderstudiespalestinesolidarity.weebly.com/>; Middle East Section of the American Anthropological Association, "MES Statement on Palestine," <http://mes.americananthro.org/mes-statement-on-palestine/>; "Statement in Solidarity with the People of Palestine," *Agitate*, <https://agitatejournal.org/statement-in-solidarity-with-the-people-of-palestine/>; "Call to Cultural Organizations, Artists, and Writers for Solidarity with Palestine," The Mosaic Rooms, <https://mosaicrooms.org/call-to-cultural-organisations-artists-writers-for-solidarity-with-palestine/>.