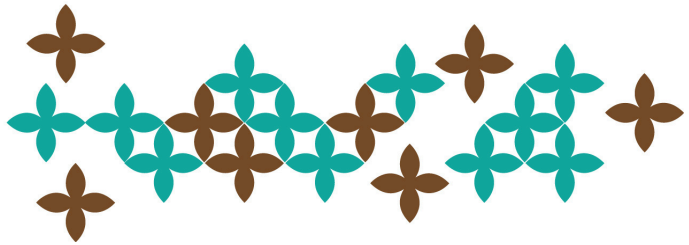




**Australian
Association
for Pacific
Studies**



Statement of the Australian Association for Pacific Studies (AAPS) Executive on the Israeli Occupation of Palestine

The Australian Association for Pacific Studies (AAPS) asserts its solidarity with the Palestinian people. We add our voice to the call for an immediate ceasefire, and for an end to the decades of occupation, displacement, and violence that have preceded this moment. As scholars and students, we express our grief and outrage at the destruction of universities and places of learning throughout Gaza, and the killing of Palestinian academics who we recognise as our colleagues. We stand with students in Palestine, as well as student-led movements in Australia, the United States, and elsewhere, who are demanding a ceasefire and institutional divestment from weapons companies supplying the state of Israel.

The escalation of violence in Gaza, described by many as part of an ongoing genocide, is a stark reminder that colonial legacies and apartheid systems continue to perpetuate human suffering across the world. As scholars of, and for the Pacific—a region that has long been subject to colonial subjugation and militarism—we feel deeply the acts of partition, confinement, and violence being inflicted on the Palestinian people. We recognise, too, the exploitation of land and resources, and the environmental devastation that accompanies the devastation of human lives.

As Pacific scholars, we also recognise the interconnectedness of struggles against colonialism and racism across other occupied sites in the Pacific region, including West Papua, Hawai'i, Guam, Australia, Kanaky New Caledonia, Maohi Nui/French Polynesia, Aotearoa/New Zealand and elsewhere. Pacific scholars like Epeli Hau'ofa, Teresia Teaiwa and Haunani-Kay Trask have taught us to recognise the forces of resistance, creativity, and solidarity that can bind people and communities across oceans and continents, and in refusal of forces of fragmentation and isolation. Their insights, and the Pacific values of dialogue, relationality, and reciprocity guide our solidarity.

Many Pacific governments have historically aligned with Israel, often citing religious and biblical justifications for doing so, and often in conditions of geopolitical pressure from powerful Global North countries. We urge these governments to reconsider their unwavering support of the state of Israel and stand in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for survival, self-determination and sovereignty. We call on Pacific communities and Church leaders, including all those in the diaspora, to similarly assert solidarity with Palestine, and opposition to Zionist policies of segregation and subjugation. We commend those who have done so.

We call for an immediate cessation of all acts of violence, and for a concerted effort to end the occupation and dismantle the apartheid system in Palestine. We call for a centring of decoloniality in the global response to this conflict—a rejection of the colonial logic of domination and a commitment to the rights and sovereignty of Indigenous and oppressed peoples everywhere. We reaffirm our commitment to the values and practices rooted in our Pacific heritage, and to the spirit of expansiveness, relationality, and resilience that the Pacific Wansolwara/Moana (ocean) calls us to centre in our commitment to justice.

From the Wansolwara/Moana to the Middle East, from the river to the sea.

Australian Association for Pacific Studies (AAPS) Executive
8 May 2024