

Group Analysts for Palestine – GA4P



STATEMENT IN SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE

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Introduction

The statement that follows has been long in the making. It originated with a working group within the IGA-UK's Power, Position and Privilege Committee, comprised of a core group of women, the late Claire Bacha, Erica Burman, Farideh Dizadji, Viv Harte and Reem Shelhi who, together with other colleagues, took on the task of formulating a public call for solidarity with Palestine, taking inspiration from the Black Lives Matter statements that organisations, including the IGA, had adopted in recent years.

One offshoot of this working group was the 'Can We Talk about Palestine?' workshop that took place over three sessions at the Group Analytic Society International Symposium of August 2023, in Belgrade. Viv and Farideh were joined by Julia Borossa, Angelika Golz, Philippa Marx, Sally Skaife and Jud Stone and in planning and delivering these spaces for dialogue (for an account, see Contexts Sept. 2023

[https://groupanalyticsociety.co.uk/contexts/102-2/\[groupanalyticsociety.co.uk\]](https://groupanalyticsociety.co.uk/contexts/102-2/[groupanalyticsociety.co.uk])). The Steering Group which finalised the statement below was born out of our involvement in both these projects. The humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank, lends urgency to this statement, which gives voice to our ethical position and explores our responsibility as Group Analysts.

We invite all interested group analysts, associates and individuals to join us.

Please contact us at: GA4Palestine@alloneworld.org

STATEMENT

Socio-Political injustice permeates our world, bringing with it the associated dynamics of privileging those in power and acts of turning away. Breaking silence and speaking truth to power shifts this pattern. In the current world climate, and with specific reference to events in Palestine/Israel and the enabling complicity of large swathes of the Western world, we believe it is vital and incumbent upon us to now speak out. As Group Analysts and citizens of the world, we join the resounding call to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people as enshrined in international law and make a clear statement in unequivocal solidarity with Palestinians and for Palestine.

Rationale:

Group Analysis is a long-established, radical, personal, and socio-political enterprise underpinned by 'an open-ended list of ethical and political values'¹. Our approach draw inspiration from psychoanalytic traditions, emphasizing the importance of truth-seeking,

¹ Benjamin, A., & Tucker, S. (2021). We've all got skin in the game: National Diversity Working Group: Power, Privilege and Position. *Group Analysis*, 54(3), 437-459.

introspection, and perseverance in the face of contentious subjects and difficult emotions. We recognize the necessity of grappling with discomfort and pain to access deep-seated truths within the personal and social unconscious, working towards the alleviation of suffering and the healing of fractured people and societies. Motivated by its radical beginnings, Group Analysts uphold values of fairness, democracy, social responsibility, and the sense that 'we are all each other's consequences'².

It is in this context that now we find the socio-political voice of group analysis in relation to the Palestine/Israel conflict:

We have been distraught and perturbed by historical, recent, and ongoing events concerning Israeli state violence against Palestine and its people. A combination of warfare, territorial theft, harassment, and forcible displacement has devastated millions of Palestinian lives. Israel's position as a settler colonial regime that practices military occupation and apartheid against the Palestinian people can no longer be overlooked. For over half a century, Israel has ruled over Palestinian land with a system of structural racialised asymmetry, inequality, and oppression. Israeli state crimes include evicting Palestinians from long held land, the demolition of Palestinian homes and villages, unrestrained settler violence along with periodic aggressive military assaults on the besieged and vulnerable civilian population of Gaza. There have also been shoot-to-kill policies, and the deliberate maiming of civilians, imprisonment without trial and the use of torture, night-time arrests, abusive interrogation, the incarceration of children and the kidnapping of the bodies of Palestinians killed by the armed forces. It has been increasingly clear that Israel's deliberate occupation and expansion of settlements has the aim of eliminating Palestinian identities and culture, as well as lives and territories.

Hamas' appalling attack on 7th October, itself a war crime, must be seen in the context of the pre-existing and longstanding dispossession and oppression of Palestinians and the 16-year blockade of Gaza that wilfully limits even food and water entering the area. We are deeply shocked and appalled by the relentless bombardment of Gaza, killing thousands of civilians.

We note that, principally in Gaza, but also in the West Bank, we are witnessing the determined displacement and erasure of an indigenous population. All the while many countries, including the UK, refuse to condemn Israel or hold it to account.

The United Nations Security Council's countless previous resolutions condemning Israel's actions and calling on it to end its illegal occupation of Palestine have been blatantly ignored. The continued silence of the international community and citizens of the world to speak out and hold Israel accountable for its illegal activity makes us all culpable in enabling Israel to continue and even accelerate its flagrant violation of international law and disregard for human rights. Israel's attack on Gaza has to date resulted in the genocide of thousands of civilians, nearly half of whom are children, the injury of hundreds of thousands and the displacement of nearly the entire Palestinian population of Gaza. The continuing endorsement by many nations across the globe of Israel's actions forces us to speak out. We refuse to stand by and be silent.

² Stegner, W. (2013). *All the little live things*. Penguin UK.

Call to Action:

From a group analytic perspective, Palestine as a Location of Disturbance encapsulates common dilemmas concerning human conflict and suffering. Themes pertinent across all nations, societies, and individuals are reflected - the pernicious effects of occupation, colonialism, oppression, splitting and fragmentation along with greed, envy, and the victim/perpetrator/bystander cycle. Through engaging with these issues Group Analysis can work towards ending the silencing that has surrounded this situation for too long and produce change.

We therefore call on all of us, and in particular group analysts nationally and internationally, to engage with the Palestinian/Israeli situation politically and clinically, consciously, and actively, without shying away from addressing sensitive issues pertaining to traumas past and present. We recognise the unique sensitivity of Group Analysis' historical beginnings, being in some key ways born out of Jewish responses to the traumas of antisemitism, genocide, and geographical displacement. We make this call precisely out of a consciousness that the creation of the State of Israel was accelerated by an extraordinary trauma and loss, itself subject to political handwashing by the West. This history, however, does not and cannot justify pursuing the present violent colonial, apartheid and oppressive policies regarding the Palestinians and their land.

Therefore, we make a clear stand in solidarity with our Palestinian colleagues and the people of Palestine in saying:

1. **Organising:** We call on the IGA-UK, GASi and other relevant communities to organise, sponsor, and promote workshops on Palestine/Israel and for the IGA & GASi community to help promote discussion and debate and counter the general climate of silence, paralysis, negation and disavowal.
2. **Educating:** We call for better understandings of antisemitism and Islamophobia, as well as clarifying the differences between antizionism and antisemitism.
3. **Joining Us:** We welcome all members of the IGA-UK to join us as well as group analysts and individuals across the world.
4. **Practicing Solidarity & Sumud:** We urge the IGA-UK, GASi and other relevant communities to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people, and steadfastly make this position widely known, as well as creating opportunities for education and reflection.
5. **Amplifying Marginalised Voices:** We recognise that the situation in Palestine particularly affects our Arab, North African and Muslim colleagues and call on the IGA-UK and GASi to find ways of supporting them to have their voices heard.
6. **Exploring BDS:** We encourage debating what adopting a BDS position might mean in Group Analysis and how we can respond to demands from Palestinian civil society organisations for economic and cultural boycott of Israeli institutions.

Group Analysts for Palestine

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