



Bethlehem University

Date: 18 October 2023

**“We teach Life . . . Sir”** Rafeef Ziyadeh

As a leading institution of higher education in Palestine, Bethlehem University is not merely a witness to the unfolding horrors in Gaza and the West Bank; we are committed to upholding the truth and shaping a better future. In line with the mission, vision and values of Bethlehem University, we find ourselves morally and ethically compelled to raise our voices against the ongoing genocidal war and terrorist attacks perpetrated by Israel and Zionist settlers.

We as educators committed to "teaching Life" are outraged at the unfolding and increasingly horrifying scenes of death that we are helplessly witnessing coming out of Gaza. The war against the Palestinian people has been ongoing for the past 75 years marked by genocide and ethnic cleansing. However, the past ten days have seen schools, universities, homes, apartment buildings, and now a major hospital being bombed. This latest horror, of targeting innocent civilians in Gaza, has reached an unprecedented level of evil. Entire families have been wiped out; entire neighborhoods are flattened; hospitals are threatened and now bombed indiscriminately against all international conventions. Regardless of color, creed, ethnicity, or race, all human life is precious, of equal value, and should be protected.

We vehemently condemn the indiscriminate violence that the Israeli war machine has inflicted upon Palestinians in Gaza, the destruction of educational and religious institutions, and the blatant disregard for human life and international law. The scenes of carnage are further amplified by the devastating silence of the “humanitarian” west and the silencing of voices that are trying to counter the lies and the spread of anti-Palestinian propaganda.

In these dire circumstances, we reaffirm our commitment to "teach Life." We echo the words of the Kairos Palestine Document 2009, which warns against the "selective application of international law" that leaves us vulnerable to a "law of the jungle." We call upon local and international intellectuals and academicians to stand firm against the demonization and dehumanization of a people to the point of forced displacement and genocide. We also condemn all expressions of selective moral outrage that obscure the pain and suffering of Palestinian victims as well as the structural injustices that give rise to violence in the first place.

The Palestinian people have long suffered under the “law of the jungle” of occupation. The time has come for all who believe in justice to rise against this outrage by speaking out, demanding justice, and the affirmation of human rights. What is happening is an affront to all the morals and values that are accepted by conscientious human beings worldwide. We, at Bethlehem University will continue to teach life, and life to the fullest, to the best of our ability; for each of our students, for each of us, for Palestine, for the world and for the future.