

**Tuesday, October 24, 2023**

**Statement from the Executive of the Black Canadian Studies Association (BCSA) in support of the Palestinian people under siege and occupation by the Government of Israel**

As scholars of Black life in Canada, we analyze the experiences of those racialized as Black to highlight the role of race, a socio-historically constructed concept with ongoing structural power. In Canada, we do this in a settler nation with racial hierarchy at its core, founded upon violence against Indigenous people and the enslavement of African people. Advocacy against discrimination, prejudice, and persecution based on racial and ethnic identity in all social, economic, and political systems is at the cornerstone of our scholarship. Our positionality is anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-islamophobic, anti-apartheid, anti-fascist, anti-war, and against antisemitism.

The BCSA Executive strongly affirms the rights of scholars, students, and members of the academic community to speak about and freely analyze current and past events in the region currently occupied by Israel. As we condemn the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, let us not be silent on Canada's active role in the historical and ongoing siege on Palestinian civilians. We affirm that Pro-Palestine analysis should not be silenced.

The BCSA joins the chorus of humanitarian and human rights organizations in calls for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the siege of Gaza and the violence in the West Bank as necessary steps toward permanent liberation. Further, we call on Canadian institutions, including universities and legislatures, to immediately reverse the censoring and silencing of decolonial and anti-racist scholars, students, politicians, and activists who are speaking out against the perpetuation of ethnic cleansing and are calling for an end to attempted genocide.

We want to express both sadness and outrage at lost lives.

There is an urgent need to act *now* for a ceasefire, to stop the bloodshed. As the armament escalates, there will be further human rights violations and the consequences of not acting will continue to grow; thousands of civilians have already been killed this month alone, and millions of Palestinians have been forced into dire conditions, with no water, food, or electricity.

Showing public solidarity is not enough. Faculty members, students, academic associations, and postsecondary institutions must consider everyday decolonial actions in our teaching, research, and service that will transform our praxis. We must collectively work towards an otherwise way of living and being for occupied peoples both locally and globally.

History tells us the world has had a few chances to act before it had to look back in shame. This is one of those chances. We must act.

In solidarity,

**The Black Canadian Studies Association's Executive**