

IGU Executive Committee Statement on Geography, Human Rights and Palestine

The International Geographical Union (IGU) affirms the important role of geographers in advancing peace and shared prosperity among all peoples and nations. This commitment is rooted in respect for human dignity and equality, regardless of religion, race, language, gender, or cultural background. The IGU Executive Committee, in upholding these IGU values, understands that oppression can be both recognised and unrecognised. It is our collective belief that mutual understanding within and across borders is vital for a stable and just world.

The ongoing events in Palestine, driven by actions of the current Israeli government and its defence forces, require unequivocal condemnation. While it is not customary for the IGU to comment on individual conflicts, the gravity and urgency of this humanitarian crisis compel us to reflect on our values, our collective commitment, and our responsibility as a community. We acknowledge the right of all countries to self-defence; however, the ongoing actions in Gaza have been characterized as genocide by highly respected bodies such as Amnesty International, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) (see links below). In line with these assessments, the IGU Executive Committee expresses its support for the immediate release of all hostages and the implementation of a permanent ceasefire.

The IGU remains steadfast in its mission to foster international scientific collaboration. This requires inclusion rather than exclusion, unless direct complicity in the oppressive actions is incontrovertible. The IGU values the work of individual Israeli geographers and desires to work with Israeli geographers, among all other academic scholars, to find a solution to the current situation and in promoting peace. The IGU Executive Committee therefore calls for:

- an unrestricted media and humanitarian access.
- academic freedom for geographers and other scholars including those who research, teach, and advocate for the rights of Gazans and Palestinians and for the recognition of the Palestinian state.
- direct support to displaced geography scholars, students, and education professionals.
- the promotion of geographical research to foster restoration, safety and healthy lives for all people in the region.
- the revitalisation and preservation of the Palestinian academic community, which is integral to our broader mission of promoting peace, resilience, and shared prosperity through geography's commitment to evidence, justice, and human dignity.

The IGU strongly reaffirms the importance of academic freedom, which would facilitate better cross-border understanding and strengthen evidence-based dialogue, which geography actively helps to promote. The IGU strongly supports educators and researchers working in regions affected by conflict, where people, institutions, and infrastructure have been profoundly disrupted. Standing in solidarity with these communities is not only a moral imperative but a recognition of the essential role of geography and science in building resilience, recovery, and long-term cooperation.

The IGU Executive Committee believes that this is an important role for an academic organization, which has a long history of cooperation and supporting geographers, and indirectly other people, throughout the world. We will continue to do so in the future and call on other geographers and our national members and commissions to do likewise. Working together, we strive to contribute to prosperity, understanding and harmony.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/06/1164496>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cde3eyzdr63o>