



BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

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Statement from the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) *On Escalating Regional Violence in the Middle East*

The British Society for Middle Eastern Studies expresses its deep alarm at Israel's recent military aggression against Iran, which threatens to unravel ongoing diplomatic efforts between Iran and the United States regarding Iran's nuclear programme. This escalation, marked by Israel's targeting of academics and scientists and the deaths of numerous others in Iran, has since provoked retaliatory and counter-retaliatory measures, resulting in further casualties within Israel and Iran. We mourn the loss of all life, wherever it takes place.

This intensifying cycle of violence poses a grave threat to regional peace and security. World leaders have a moral and legal responsibility to de-escalate the conflict and prioritise diplomacy.

Meanwhile, we are horrified that after 20 months, world leaders have done nothing meaningful to stop Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza, which continues to claim Palestinian lives daily, whilst destroying and damaging homes, livelihoods and civilian infrastructure, including 90% of schools and universities. We condemn in the strongest terms Israel's use of humanitarian aid as a weapon of war. In the West Bank, Israeli settlers continue to terrorise Palestinian communities, forcibly displacing families from their homes, whilst the Israeli military has demolished large numbers of homes in refugee camps in the northern West Bank, leading to the largest displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank since 1967. Since Friday 13th June, Palestinians in the West Bank have been subjected to a total lockdown, further compounding their suffering.

We call on responsible international actors to uphold international law and human rights for all peoples in the region and to urgently increase pressure on Israel to:

- end its military assault on Gaza and lift the siege that is inflicting catastrophic humanitarian suffering;
- halt its occupation of Palestinian territory, in accordance with the May 2024 International Court of Justice ruling; and
- cease all acts of aggression against neighbouring countries.

We also support calls for an arms embargo on Israel and a boycott of Israeli institutions until it complies with international law.

This is a pivotal moment. Continued impunity and selective application of international norms will only deepen the crisis. The path to a just and lasting peace lies in accountability, diplomacy, and respect for the equal rights and dignity of all.

*BRISMES Council
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