Psychoanalytic Voices for Palestine

CALL FOR PSYCHOANALYTIC PROFESSIONALS TO ADDRESS

THE HUMAN CATASTROPHE IN GAZA

"From the humane (including psychoanalytic) point of view we are led as citizens to struggle with the unending task of exposing lies and striving for the preservation of sane humane values – this is our only hope." Hanna Segal, 'September 11' (Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, 2006).

As psychoanalytic and allied practitioners we want to add our voices to those who have spoken out against the ongoing slaughter and mayhem being inflicted on the people of Gaza and the West Bank, especially in light of its apparent genocidal nature. We are uncomfortable with the loud silence of our professional associations in response to these atrocities – in contrast to the principled and humane statements issued in response to Black Lives Matter and the invasion of Ukraine.

Our associations responded in an appropriate manner to the horrific attacks launched by Hamas on October 7th. However, the historical context of occupation and siege, impoverishment and massacre was ignored. This scotomisation underlies international complicity with Israel's response.

We are deeply disturbed by a military campaign that, beside the terrible toll of death and destruction has, according to the UN, rendered Gaza uninhabitable. This has raised concerns about an imminent forced population transfer, and about crimes against humanity as formally defined. We note that the International Court of Justice, in its ruling of 26th January 2024, concluded that there are plausible grounds to believe a genocide is being perpetrated in Gaza, and reminded Israel of its explicit obligations under the Genocide Convention.

In the first instance, we call for an immediate ceasefire and negotiations towards a peace aimed at providing justice and security for both the Palestinian and Israeli communities. It is time to end the impunity that has enabled Israel to disregard Palestinian rights. To this end, we urge that the international community and civil society uphold the principles of international law, as contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations Conventions, and that these form the basis for collective thought and action.

We also express our deep concern at the way in which, over recent years, freedom of thought and speech in relation to Palestine/Israel has been curtailed in this country, and within our professions.

We call for freedom to speak and act peacefully without fear of recrimination, harassment or censure.

We understand the intensity of emotions that can be released when this subject is broached, but cannot accept that this justifies the suppression of that open and free discussion that is essential if we are to combat fundamentalism and dehumanization.

We invite all who share these concerns to add their names to this statement, by writing to us at the following email address: pav4pal@gmail.com

Signed:

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