



July 18, 2022

Statement of Solidarity with Birzeit University

As an association of feminist academics with expertise in the Middle East and North Africa region, we write to express our concern regarding the continued difficult conditions of our fellow academics at Birzeit University in Ramallah, and elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Harassment, raids, and assaults by Israeli police and military forces, ongoing for years now, have included the storming of the campus on various occasions and the shooting, arrest, and injuring of students and faculty. In one notorious incident, the assault of 10th January 2022 at Birzeit University resulted in the serious injury of one student and the arrest of five students.

That attack was strongly condemned by several academic associations in the United States and Europe, which also issued statements of solidarity with Birzeit University's President Beshara Doumani. Life in the Occupied Territories is difficult enough without the added insult and injury to academic institutions, which adversely affects the capacity of Palestinian faculty, students, and staff to teach, learn, and serve.

We also learned with deep dismay of the "Procedure for Entry and Residency of Foreigners in Judea and Samaria Region", which grants the Israeli military immense powers to determine the future course of Palestinian higher education by divesting local control over academic institutions and deciding who may or may not enter to teach or study. The intended effect, we believe, is to isolate Palestinian universities from the outside world, a policy decision that we find intolerable and immensely unjust. We therefore call on the Israeli government to immediately rescind the policy.

The Association for Middle East Women's Studies (AMEWS) is an organization of scholars and individuals with an interest in women and gender studies in the context of the Middle East/North Africa and beyond, including transnational and diasporic communities in Europe as well as North and South America. AMEWS is affiliated with the Middle East Studies Association of North America, Inc. (MESA), a non-profit association that fosters the study of the Middle East. MESA promotes high standards of scholarship and teaching, and encourages public understanding of the region and its peoples through programs, publications and services that enhance education, further intellectual exchange, recognize professional distinction, and defend academic freedom in accordance with its status as a 501(c)(3) scientific, educational, literary, and charitable organization. Both AMEWS and MESA work with academic networks around the world.

As feminist scholars with ties to Palestinian and Israeli scholars alike, we join the chorus of those across the globe who call on the Israeli authorities to respect the human rights, dignity, right to education, and academic freedom of Palestinians.

Sincerely,

Association for Middle East Women Studies (AMEWS)