

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARLY CONFERENCE



Reimagining and Rebuilding Palestine: *Genocide, Trauma, and the Future of a Suffering Nation*

A B S T R A C T S

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University of Cyprus

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Social Facilities Centre Building 07

University Campus

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARLY CONFERENCE

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A B S T R A C T S

SESSION I
***GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, AND ENDLESS
SUBJUGATION***

Gilbert Achcar

University of London

The Palestinians after the Genocide: Between Ethnic Cleansing and Continued Subjugation

The genocide in Gaza was not a reaction to the operation launched on October 7, 2023. Rather, it was used by a far-right Zionist government as a pretext to launch a reinvasion of the Gaza Strip, with the aim of occupying it indefinitely and annexing it to the Israeli state at the first opportunity. The present Israeli government's objective is the completion of the 1948 ethnic cleansing initiated by the nascent Zionist state, by extending it to the remainder of British Mandate Palestine between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. The genocide in Gaza was intended to serve this purpose. Short of achieving it in the short or medium term, the only alternative offered to Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank is continued and intensified subjugation, marked by an escalating pattern of creeping expulsion and annexation.

Gilbert Achcar grew up in Lebanon and is now Emeritus Professor at SOAS, University of London. His many books include: *The Clash of Barbarisms* (2002, 2006); *Perilous Power: The Middle East and U.S. Foreign Policy*, with Noam Chomsky (2007, 2024); *The Arabs and the Holocaust* (2010, 2025); *The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising* (2013, 2022); *The New Cold War: The United States, Russia, and China, from Kosovo to Ukraine* (2023); and *The Gaza Catastrophe: The Genocide in World-Historical Perspective* (2025).

Aristoteles Constantinides

University of Cyprus

Legitimising (?) Palestinian Subjugation: A Critical Analysis of Security Council Resolution 2803 on the Future of Gaza

The paper provides a critical analysis of Security Council Resolution 2803 concerning the post-conflict reconstruction of Gaza. The Resolution endorses the so-called “historic” Trump Peace Plan and introduces various institutions for the transitional (?) governance and security of the Gaza Strip. It does so—albeit not explicitly—under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, with the aim of endowing it with legally binding force. Some of these institutions are innovative, while others reflect common features of international territorial administrations utilized in previous contexts. However, both the governance and security arrangements pose significant challenges to the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination, and the Resolution conflicts with international law, as evidenced by the positions of other UN bodies, as well as the recent findings of the International Court of Justice.

Aristoteles Constantinides is an Associate Professor of International Law and Human Rights at the Department of Law, University of Cyprus. He received his PhD in International Law from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He is currently a member of the Management Board of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). He has held visiting positions at the Universities of Amsterdam, Vienna, Grenoble Alpes, McGill, and Kaunas, as well as at the Institute of International Relations in Paris. From 2014 to 2021, he served as an advisor to the President of the Republic of Cyprus during the negotiations for the settlement of the Cyprus problem. He is actively engaged with governmental and non-governmental actors in initiatives promoting human rights in Cyprus. His research interests and publications include the law of the United Nations, with particular emphasis on the Security Council, statehood and recognition, the Cyprus problem, international human rights law, and the application of international law in domestic courts. In 2017, he received the University of Cyprus Teaching Excellence Award.

SESSION II
*INTERNATIONAL LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GLOBAL
RESPONSIBILITY*

Antonis Balasopoulos

University of Cyprus

*What is “Humanity” in “Crimes Against Humanity”?
The Crime against the People of Gaza in Historical and
Philosophical Perspective*

The term “crime against humanity” first appeared in George W. Williams’s *History of the Negro Race in America* (1882) (Williams 136, 138, 143), where it was used to designate the institution of chattel slavery in the United States. According to Felix Lösing, the term and its specific usage were subsequently taken up by U.S. President Benjamin Harrison in an 1889 address at the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference (Lösing 80n). In 1890, Williams went on to write to U.S. Secretary of State James Blaine—after also addressing King Leopold II of Belgium and President Benjamin Harrison—this time employing the term “crimes against humanity” in relation to the Belgian genocide in the Congo, and calling for the establishment of an “international commission” to investigate Belgium’s crimes (Geras 4, 45). Prior to the first successful prosecution of a state on the legal basis —among others— of committing “crimes against humanity” at the Nuremberg Trials of 1945, the term had also been deployed in connection with the Armenian Genocide of 1915. However, the joint position of Russia, Britain, and France that those responsible for the Armenian massacres should be prosecuted for this crime never led to trial proceedings.

What we observe in every instance of the history of the concept up to—and including—its use at the Nuremberg Trials against officials of the German Nazi regime is that “crime(s) against humanity” posits a direct relationship between the condition of being human and that of being stateless, or of lacking prior state protection. This is the condition of American slaves, abducted and held captive within a foreign state; it is the condition of the Congolese, rendered helpless before the violence of a foreign colonial power that had conquered their land; it is the condition of the Armenians, a subject population of the Ottoman Empire; it is that of disenfranchised European Jews; and today, it is that of the Palestinian people. “Crimes against humanity,” one of the pillars of the international legal order and of international legal civilization after World War II, articulates a compelling relationship between exclusion from all rights and the possession of a status that legitimately represents humanity as such. In other words, the fate of humanity—the quality and status of being, and of remaining, human—was predicated on

the measures taken to protect populations reduced to a condition of disenfranchisement, vulnerability, and helpless exposure to lethal danger. In this essay, I take stock of the collapse of this legal and philosophical legacy in the unipolar world after 1991.

Antonis Balasopoulos is an Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature in the Department of English Studies, University of Cyprus. He specializes in comparative utopian studies, political theory and political philosophy, postcolonial studies, visual studies, and Marxism. His most recent work includes co-editing *Readings Texts on Sovereignty* (with Stella Achilleos, Bloomsbury, 2021); a critical edition of A. L. Morton's *The English Utopia* (Peter Lang, 2023); and essays on Marxism and utopianism (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), socialism and concrete Marxism (with Roland Boer, *International Critical Thought*, 2022), the dialectics of reverie (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), anti-utopianism and Social Darwinism (*Utopian Studies*, 2023), the importance of blueprint utopianism in the present era (*Utopian Studies*, 2023), utopia and modernism in Franz Kafka (*Cultural Critique*, 2024), anti-anti-utopia in the work of Fredric Jameson (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), a series of essays on the genre history and theory of utopia and dystopia (*Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, 2023, 2024, and forthcoming in 2026), and Lenin (*International Critical Thought*, 2025). He is a member of the editorial boards of *Utopian Studies*, *Ralahine Utopian Studies*, and *World Marxist Review*. His book, *Figures of Utopia: Literature, Politics, Philosophy*, is forthcoming from Peter Lang.

Charis Papacharalambous

University of Cyprus

*Collective Responsibility in Universal Crimes
and International Criminal Law*

International crimes—such as genocide and crimes against humanity—are marked by an intrinsically collective character, both with respect to their perpetrators and to their victims. For this reason, they are predominantly conceptualised as crimes of a state-like nature. This raises a fundamental question as to whether the attribution of responsibility is correspondingly affected—namely, whether collectivity is taken into account in the objective imputation of conduct or in the assessment of the culpability of those involved. If the answer is in the affirmative, a further and more complex issue arises: whether, and in what manner, international criminal law can doctrinally accommodate such a form of responsibility, which—beyond the sphere of moral and political philosophy—remains a highly contested and unresolved problem in legal theory.

In addressing this question, and in light of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court's strict adherence to the principle of individual criminal responsibility (Article 25), the paper examines the forms of participation in international crimes as developed in criminal law doctrine, as well as the evolving hierarchy and reconfiguration of the purposes of punishment within international criminal law.

Charis Papacharalambous is Professor of Criminal Law and Jurisprudence at the Department of Law, University of Cyprus. He holds a PhD in Criminal Law and Legal Theory from Goethe University Frankfurt am Main (Germany). His doctoral dissertation, *Das politische Delikt im legalistischen Rechtsstaat*, was published by Peter Lang (Frankfurt am Main, 1991). He is a lawyer admitted to practice before the Greek Supreme Court.

His monographs (in Greek) include *Participation in Suicide* (Law & Economy, P.N. Sakkoulas SA, 1997); *Naturalism and the Normative Approach: Causality and Objective Imputation as Cornerstones of the General Theory of Wrongdoing* (Sakkoulas, Athens–Thessaloniki, 2003); *The Penal Protection of the External Security of the State: Systematic Commentary on Articles 138–152 of the Greek Criminal Code* (Sakkoulas, Athens–Thessaloniki, 2016); and *In the Pathways of Silence: Heidegger and the Law* (EURASIA Publications, 2020).

His textbooks (in Greek) include *Textbook on Cypriot Criminal Law: General Part* (two editions published by Nomiki Bibliothiki, 2015/2017, and a third edition, 2021) and *Philosophy of Law: Elements, Methods, Streams of Thought* (EURASIA Publications, 2021). He has also edited a collection of essays in jurisprudence, *Essays in Law Philosophy (2003–2022)*, Vol. I (Sakkoulas, Athens–Thessaloniki, 2023).

He has authored approximately 120 international contributions, including journal articles, case-law commentaries, and book chapters. He has edited numerous volumes in criminal law and jurisprudence, including *Paternalism and Criminal Law: Modern Problems of an Old Question* (Sakkoulas/Nomos, 2018); *The Aims of Punishment: Theoretical, International, and Comparative Law Approaches* (Sakkoulas/Nomos, 2020); and *Femicide and Criminal Law* (in Greek) (Nomiki Bibliothiki, 2023).

His fields of interest include theories of imputation and complicity, international criminal law, criminal policy, and critical and feminist legal studies.

Demetra Sorvatzioti
University of Limassol

*Between Self-Defence and Genocide: A Socio-Legal Analysis of
Gaza's Crisis and the Politics of Reconstruction*

The crisis in Gaza lies at the intersection of international law, political authority, and profound human suffering. Israel presents its military operations as an exercise of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter; yet the large-scale civilian casualties, extensive destruction of essential infrastructure, and accelerating famine have led United Nations bodies and human rights organisations to warn of a plausible risk of genocide. In parallel, emerging political narratives—including proposals for externally driven redevelopment schemes envisioning a radically transformed Gaza—raise additional concerns regarding demographic displacement and the long-term erasure of Palestinian presence and identity.

This paper examines these developments through a socio-legal lens, drawing on international humanitarian law, the Genocide Convention, and empirical reports from global institutions and humanitarian agencies. Methodologically, the study combines doctrinal legal analysis with socio-political contextualisation, assessing both the formal legal claims and their material consequences on the ground. It evaluates whether current military operations and proposed post-conflict visions exceed the boundaries of lawful self-defence and move toward patterns consistent with genocidal intent or effect.

The analysis further highlights the gap between established legal norms and political realities, noting the international community's limited and often hesitant response to the escalating crisis. Ultimately, the paper argues for strengthened accountability mechanisms, unimpeded humanitarian access, and a critical re-examination of how the doctrine of self-defence is invoked in situations where civilian destruction approaches collective annihilation.

Demetra Sorvatzioti is Professor of Law, Vice-Rector for International Affairs and Research, and Head of the Law Department at the University of Limassol. She holds a PhD in Law from Queen's University (Canada), specialising in the law of evidence before the International Criminal Court (ICC), and a PhD in Criminology from Panteion University (Greece) on criminal procedure, fair trial rights, and poverty. She is admitted to the Greek and

Cypriot Bars and has long-standing experience as a trial lawyer in both continental and common law jurisdictions.

Her academic and professional work focuses on international and comparative criminal law, evidence, fair trial rights, sentencing, and accountability for serious international crimes, including the procedural dimensions of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Prof. Sorvatzioti serves on international expert bodies such as the Clooney Foundation for Justice and Fair Trials International, and has acted as an expert witness and governmental advisor on criminal procedure and human rights compliance. Her research examines how evidentiary standards, procedural fairness, and judicial discretion operate in contexts of armed conflict, occupation, and mass human rights violations. She has published widely and delivered invited lectures across Europe and North America.

Aline Bogossian

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*Resistance Amid Injustice:
Transnational Collaboration in Solidarity with Palestine*

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Amid ongoing war, occupation, genocide, and displacement in Palestine, educators and health professionals demonstrate resistance as they navigate profound challenges on a daily basis. Despite distressing environments, uncertainty, and personal vulnerability, Palestinian academics continue to teach, inspire, and nurture students, offering compassion and support amid the shadows of loss.

This oral presentation describes and analyses an initiative that began in November 2023. In the spirit of transnational solidarity and collegial social support, a team of academics from the field of social work in Montreal, Canada, joined with nursing academics in Nablus to co-create empowering interventions rooted in lived experiences and local realities. Through sustained online dialogues, both groups engaged in critical reflection on the complexities of teaching under siege, negotiating loss, and maintaining a commitment

to educating the next generation of nursing students in the face of adversity. These exchanges fostered mutual understanding and highlighted the simultaneous need to honour grief while cultivating hope and supporting growth.

Together, the partners defined purposeful goals for their collaboration, centred on developing interventions and training programmes that acknowledge and validate the emotional experiences of educators and students alike. This process led to the co-development of the CARE (Connection, Action, Resistance, Empowerment) intervention—an approach designed to provide transnational psychosocial solidarity, emotional support, and practical strategies to help educators and students hold space for challenging emotions. The intervention was initially delivered to a cohort of nursing instructors and academics and, following participant feedback, was incorporated into a comprehensive guidebook. The Nablus-based team of nursing instructors and academics will lead its implementation with students and within professional circles in late 2025.

The presentation will outline this initiative in detail, describing its key stages and offering preliminary reflections. By foregrounding culturally situated care, this work underscores the transformative potential of collaboration and the ongoing pursuit of justice, solidarity, and collective healing.

Aline Bogossian is an Associate Professor at the School of Social Work at the Université de Montréal, Canada. Her research focuses on social work practice in the context of intellectual and developmental disability, including parenting and transitions from paediatric to adult care. She also works on feminist and decolonial approaches to psychosocial support in transnational contexts, particularly in settings marked by war, occupation, and political violence.

She is the co-founder of COSEJUST, a transnational social justice sensitization committee that develops tools and spaces for critical, glocal social work practice. Her recent projects include *Trans-dialogue: Psychosocial Strengthening in Contexts of War*, which resulted in the development of a psychosocial support guide entitled “*When You Feel Like You Are the One Holding It All*”, rooted in connection, humanity, and resistance under occupation.

Her work on the IMAGINE initiatives highlights transnational resistance and psychosocial support in contexts of conflict and gender-based violence. She has published on the need for transnational support spaces for social work practitioners facing multiple crises, as well as on paternal protection in the occupied Palestinian territories. Across her research, teaching, and collaborative work, she is committed to collective healing, solidarity, and the co-construction of culturally situated interventions with colleagues and communities in Palestine and beyond.

Nadia Kornioti
PRIO Cyprus Centre

*Violence, Partition, and Displacement on a Global Scale:
Comparative Legal-Historical Reflections and the Present Day*

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing interest in international legal scholarship in studying, analysing, and uncovering the politics and biases of public international law as an imperial and colonial project, rooted in the politics and diplomacy of the European empires of the nineteenth century. Today, this trend has produced a rich body of interdisciplinary scholarship, combining international law, global history, and post-colonial studies, among other related disciplines. This scholarship has contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the contemporary world and global politics, alongside a renewed critique of imperialism and colonialism as geopolitical projects.

In this process, however, until recently the impact, discourses, and narratives generated by international law and international institutions had been largely overlooked. The proposed paper seeks to revisit the history of Palestine through interdisciplinary research drawing primarily on international law and history, while incorporating these newer perspectives on how law has facilitated violence and injustice that continue to be experienced and witnessed today. By also employing a comparative lens, the paper examines other relevant case studies from the colonial and post-colonial periods, including the Indian subcontinent, Ireland, and Cyprus.

Nadia Kornioti is an Associate Lecturer in International and Comparative Public Law at UCLan Cyprus and an Associate Researcher at the Cyprus Centre of the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). She has worked in policy, advocacy, and consultancy with a number of international, regional, and Cyprus-based institutions. As a researcher, she specialises in humanitarian matters at the international, regional, and domestic levels, through the lenses of legal doctrine, legal history, and comparative law. She has recently published a book on inter-communal violence in Cyprus during the 1960s, entitled *Law's Politics: The Cyprus Troubles, 1960–1968*.

Shahana Rasool

University of Johannesburg, South Africa

*Who is Human Enough to Deserve Rights? An Anti-Colonial
Perspective on the Positionality of International Social Work
Organisations Regarding the Palestinian Question*

Social work, as a profession, purports to uphold human rights (HR) and social justice (SJ). Accordingly, the stances of international social work organisations (ISWOs) on socio-political issues are paramount in demonstrating solidarity with oppressed and vulnerable groups. This article reflects on the ways in which various ISWOs—namely the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), and the Social Work Action Network–International (SWAN-I)—have responded to the Palestinian question as a litmus test of their commitment to HR and SJ. Drawing on principles of critical discourse analysis from an anti-colonial perspective, the study examines statements published on the websites of these organisations between 2014 and 2024, assessing them against their professed commitments to HR and SJ. The article interrogates how social justice and human rights violations are addressed—or neglected—by ISWOs, as evidenced in their statements, or lack thereof, concerning the Palestinian question over the past decade. Published statements are analysed in terms of their content, positions, ambiguities, and contradictions.

The analysis indicates that two ISWOs are either silent or advance a false equivalence and thus remain embedded in sites of Western imperial positionality, where European concerns and viewpoints dominate, thereby marginalising alternative voices that lack comparable space, stature, and visibility. In contrast, the other two ISWOs have been more responsive, adopting a clear stance against human rights and social justice violations committed against Palestinians. The article concludes that it is critical for ISWOs to model consistent and unambiguous human rights and social justice perspectives that align with their stated aims and objectives, demonstrate solidarity with marginalised groups, and hold affiliate members accountable to ethical social justice practices.

Shahana Rasool is a Rhodes Scholar who obtained a Master's degree and a Doctorate from the University of Oxford (UK), Department of Social Policy. She is a Full Professor at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and served as

Head of the Department of Social Work from 2017 to 2019 and from 2023 to 2025. She lectures in research methods, social issues, social work theory, and community development.

Shahana Rasool has been an activist, researcher, trainer, and academic in the field of gender for many years, with a particular focus on gender-based violence. She has co-authored a book on violence against women, published nine book chapters, and authored or co-authored approximately 28 academic journal articles across a range of journals. Her research focuses on gender-based violence, gender attitudes, women's help-seeking in contexts of abuse, and decoloniality.

She is Chair of the International Conference on Gender and Sexuality and has served as Guest Editor for a special issue of the *Journal of Gender Issues* and for *The Routledge Handbook of Feminist Social Work*. Over the years, she has been an active member of various formal and informal structures at UJ, including the HIV/AIDS Committee, the Transformation Committee, Strategic Plan Development structures, the Higher Degrees Committee, Internationalisation initiatives, the Black Academics Forum, and, most recently, the Academic Freedom Committee.

Shahana Rasool is Vice-President of the Association for Schools of Social Work in Africa (ASSWA) and the African representative on the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW).

Hazem Almassry

Academia Sinica, Taiwan

*The Selectivity of Atrocity: European Union Responses
to Mass Violence in Ukraine and Gaza*

Are there examples of states applying international humanitarian law consistently or selectively? This paper examines the responsiveness of European Union (EU) member states to mass atrocities in Ukraine (2022–present) and Gaza (2023–present). Although both cases—encompassing proceedings before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the issuance of arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court (ICC)—are still under international judicial consideration, EU member states have exhibited sharply divergent patterns of action: direct and full-scale engagement in the case of Ukraine versus fragmentation, delay, and defensive posturing in the case of Gaza.

By comparing the timing of responses, the invocation of legal frameworks, and the degree of policy coordination among EU member states, the paper finds that strategic alignment with the United States is closely correlated with patterns of international humanitarian law enforcement. Greater alignment is associated with more selective application. This discriminatory approach is evident even among states with strong records of advocating for humanitarian law, suggesting that the politics of alliances prevail over institutionalised legal standards when the two come into conflict.

The implications of this divergence are particularly visible in the context of post-conflict reconstruction in Palestine. Ukraine was granted accelerated EU candidate status; Russian assets were frozen and redirected toward reconstruction; and large-scale infrastructure investments were mobilised. By contrast, Gaza faces the fragmentation of donor responses, the politicisation of humanitarian assistance, and reconstruction models subordinated to Israeli security priorities. This contrast underscores how selective enforcement affects not only immediate crisis responses but also long-term recovery prospects.

These outcomes raise troubling questions for international humanitarian governance. What alternative institutions or mechanisms can Palestinians turn to when the application of law follows predictable strategic alignments? The paper concludes by considering whether regional arrangements, South–South cooperation, or diaspora-led initiatives may offer more viable foundations for reconstruction than institutions whose enforcement practices have proven conditional.

Hazem Almassry is a Palestinian scholar from Gaza and currently a post-doctoral researcher at Academia Sinica in Taiwan. He holds a PhD in Social Sciences and works on the political economy and geopolitics of energy transitions, with a focus on EU–MENA relations, green hydrogen, and maritime governance under conditions of occupation and constrained sovereignty. His research examines how sustainability and development frameworks intersect with power, exclusion, and forms of resistance.

He is an active public writer whose essays and op-eds have appeared in platforms such as *Liberties Journal*, *Overland* (Australia), *CommonWealth Magazine* (Taiwan), *Taipei Times*, and *Storm Media* (風傳媒). He has also been featured in international media, including *Global Voices*, *Radio Taiwan International*, and *Taiwan News*, and has delivered public talks at venues such as the Taipei International Peace Forum and *CommonWealth's Taiwanology Podcast*. His public writing and media work focus on Palestine, displacement, global energy politics, and the political uses of “sustainability” discourse.

Evangelos Konstantelos

European University Cyprus

*In the Palestra of Victimhood:
Kingdom of Ends and State of Nature in the Palestinian War—
Reading Kantian Dignity and Hobbesian Fatalism*

The paper approaches the current Palestinian war as a *palestra* of victimhood: not merely a scene of passive suffering, but an agonistic space in which rival grammars of political order and moral worth are staged and tested. Framed by the conference's concern with genocide, intergenerational trauma, and the reconstruction of a viable polity, the analysis juxtaposes two canonical configurations of modern normativity: Hobbes's state of nature, in which self-preserving fear renders life perpetually vulnerable to arbitrary violence, and Kant's Kingdom of Ends, in which persons are entitled to appear as bearers of dignity and thus as limits to the instrumental logic of strategy and security.

Read through Hobbes, the fragmented and externally controlled geography of Gaza and the West Bank is theorised as oscillating between a manufactured state of nature and a quasi-permanent state of exception: law is selectively suspended in the name of security, while the power to decide when necessity overrides right is concentrated in distant sovereign authorities. Against this background, the paper reconstructs a series of practices—of education, cultural resilience, and rights-based advocacy—as fragile yet insistent instantiations of Kantian dignity, in which Palestinians refuse to be treated as expendable material within regimes of emergency governance and instead claim recognition as ends in themselves.

By tracing how these Kantian and Hobbesian logics of dignity, fear, and exception are woven into legal argument, international diplomacy, and local narratives of victimhood, the paper argues that any project of rebuilding Palestine that contents itself with a Hobbesian contract of mere security under permanent emergency will leave the deeper structure of the conflict intact. A genuinely post-genocidal political order would require the reconfiguration of institutions and collective memory so that the Kingdom of Ends becomes the immanent standard by which states of exception are constrained and practices of governance, resistance, and reconstruction are judged.

Evangelos Konstantelos, PhD, is a philosopher and artist-scholar working at the intersection of political philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, and visual culture, with a particular focus on representation, violence, and victimhood. He holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Salford (2013), an MA in Arts and Philosophy from the University of Central Lancashire (2007), and a BA in Fine Arts from the University of Ioannina (2005).

He is currently an Adjunct Professor at European University Cyprus and the University of Nicosia, teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in deontological and introductory ethics, critical thinking for the arts, and the philosophy of education. Previously, he served as Senior Teaching Fellow at SOAS, University of London (2016–2018), where he taught comparative metaphysics and comparative political worldviews, and worked as a Researcher in Political Philosophy at Goldsmiths, University of London (2013–2015).

His publications include a forthcoming monograph on corruption from a metaphysical perspective, as well as earlier research on the representation of victimhood in European art. He has presented widely in the United Kingdom and Ireland and maintains an active artistic practice, with exhibitions in Cyprus, Greece, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

SESSION III
COLONIALIST POLICIES AND DISCOURSES

Antonis Hadjikyriacou

Panteion University, Athens / Stanford University

*Para-Colonialism in Cyprus and Palestine:
Historical Connections and Shared Trajectories*

The paper explores the connections between the historical experiences of Cyprus and Palestine from the eighteenth century to the present. It argues that both societies formed an integral part of the Middle Eastern geographical and historical context, and that their trajectories intersected repeatedly through their engagement with three interrelated and overlapping phenomena that have profoundly shaped their contemporary condition: capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism. The paper employs the concept of para-colonialism, as articulated by historian Chris Bayly, to describe the non-sovereign legal and political regimes that proliferated primarily in the Mediterranean, South Asia, and East Asia during the Age of Revolutions and the decades that followed, up to the end of the First World War.

Against this conceptual backdrop, the paper examines the historical evolution of economic, political, and legal structures in both cases through the lens of para-colonialism. It further discusses the contemporary implications of this shared trajectory, with particular attention to the ways in which emerging geopolitical configurations in the Eastern Mediterranean are entering uncharted territory, generating unprecedented conditions of turbulence and uncertainty.

Antonis Hadjikyriacou is Assistant Professor of Ottoman and Turkish History at Panteion University, Athens, and an Affiliated Scholar at the Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis at Stanford University. His research and teaching focus on Cypriot, Ottoman, and Mediterranean history and are situated at the intersection of social, economic, spatial, and environmental history, adopting a long-term perspective across different scales of historical analysis. He has published widely in English, Greek, and Turkish. His monograph *Peninsular Island: Cyprus and the Mediterranean during the Ottoman Age of Revolutions* [in Greek] was published in 2023 by Psifides and earned the 2024 Stanley Kyriakides Award for the best book in History and Political Science, awarded by the journal *Cyprus Review*.

Nikos Moudouros
University of Cyprus

*Colonizing the Demos:
Far-Right Settler Politics from Palestine to Cyprus*

This paper offers a comparative analysis of far-right settler colonial formations in the occupied West Bank/East Jerusalem and northern Cyprus, focusing on how settler colonialism increasingly operates through the colonization of the political body itself. Drawing on recent political developments in Israel and the occupied areas of Cyprus, the paper examines the rise of extremist settler actors (most notably Itamar Ben-Gvir and the Jewish Power party in Israel, and Erhan Arikli and the Rebirth Party in Cyprus) as emblematic cases of a broader transformation within settler colonial regimes.

Rather than treating settler colonialism solely as a project of territorial expansion, military domination, and indigenous dispossession, the paper foregrounds the concept of the “settler demos”: a process through which settlers are constructed as the authentic political subject and primary source of sovereignty. In both cases, far-right settler movements mobilize narratives of victimhood, social marginalization, and national betrayal in order to legitimize authoritarian governance, normalize racial violence, and redefine democracy in exclusionary, ethnonational terms. While the two cases differ significantly in their relationship to state power—Israeli settlers increasingly embodying and shaping state sovereignty, and Turkish settlers in Cyprus functioning as a disciplinary extension of a metropolitan power—the paper argues that both illustrate a deepening authoritarian turn within settler colonial contexts. This turn is marked by the normalization of racialized violence, the erosion of democratic norms, and the consolidation of a neo-colonial order imposed in the name of a manufactured majority.

By situating Palestine and Cyprus within a shared analytical framework, the paper contributes to settler colonial studies by highlighting how far-right politics function as a key mechanism for the reproduction and radicalization of settler colonial rule. In doing so, it also raises critical questions about democracy, decolonization, and political reconstruction in contexts shaped by ongoing colonial domination.

Nikos Moudouros is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cyprus. His research in-

terests focus on contemporary Turkish history and politics, political Islam, political economy, the transformation of relations between Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community—particularly since 1974—as well as issues of settler colonialism. He is the author of monographs such as *State of Exception in the Mediterranean: Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot Community* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), *Claiming the Homeland: Turkish Cypriot Opposition during the Period 1964–2004* (in Greek, Psifides, 2022), *The Transformation of Turkey: From Kemalist Domination to Islamic Neoliberalism* (in Greek, Alexandria, 2012), and *Turkey as a Third Pole in the New International Order* (co-authored with Zenonas Tziarras, Papazisis, 2023, in Greek). He has also published extensively in international peer-reviewed academic journals.

Taygeti Michalakea
University of Nicosia

Corporate Involvement in the Genocide in Gaza

Corporate actors have long played pivotal roles in contexts of armed conflict, occupation, and repression. Despite their substantial contributions to the perpetuation of violence and the facilitation of human rights violations, these actors often remain outside the scope of transitional justice mechanisms and broader public discourse. Scholarly and legal debates tend to focus predominantly on violations committed by state authorities, while overlooking the broader economic, structural, and corporate dimensions of violence. This narrow approach fails to deliver justice to all victims, reinforces existing inequalities, and ultimately undermines the transition to sustainable peace, democracy, and the rule of law.

This paper examines these issues through the case study of Gaza and the international crimes committed therein. It explores the potential involvement of corporate actors—such as arms manufacturers, technology companies, financial institutions, and businesses operating in, or profiting from, the occupation—and assesses whether, and in what ways, they may bear responsibility under the international legal framework. The paper analyses the normative framework governing corporate accountability, with particular emphasis on international criminal law, including standards of aiding and abetting, modes of participation, and the evolving jurisprudence of international courts and tribunals. It further situates this analysis within the broader body of international norms regulating corporate conduct in conflict settings. In addition, the paper examines historical precedents of corporate accountability related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, including findings of UN commissions of inquiry, interventions by UN Special Rapporteurs, litigation before domestic courts, and the UN database of companies involved in illegal settlements.

The paper argues that examining corporate involvement in international crimes committed in Gaza is not merely a legal necessity but also a conceptual prerequisite for understanding the conflict itself. Economic dimensions—such as resource flows, weapons supply chains, control over critical infrastructure, surveillance technologies, and occupation-related markets—shape both the conduct of hostilities and the daily lives of victims. Integrating these factors at both analytical and practical levels is essential to achieving meaningful accountability, providing effective guarantees of non-repetition, preventing future violence, and advancing a more comprehensive and forward-looking conception of justice.

Taygeti Michalakea, PhD, teaches international law and human rights at the University of Nicosia. In addition, as a postdoctoral researcher at Panteion University, she participates in the Horizon Europe research programme (2024–2026) entitled *ARM: The Long Arm of Authoritarian States*, in which she investigates the interplay between technology and freedom of expression across different states, including countries in the African continent. She also serves as the academic coordinator of the EMRACE project at the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, which focuses on preventing labour trafficking and exploitation by enhancing systemic responses and preventive measures.

She has conducted extensive socio-legal research in human rights and international and regional law in Ethiopia, Colombia, Tunisia, and Southeast Asia, and her work has been presented at international conferences and published in scholarly journals. Her first monograph, entitled *Corporate Accountability and Transitional Justice*, was published by Cambridge University Press in October 2025. In the past, she has collaborated with the European University Institute in Florence, the Sant’Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa (Italy), Javeriana University in Bogotá, and Essex Law School in the United Kingdom.

Taygeti has also worked as a legal advisor to various international organizations and civil society actors, including the United Nations Development Programme, the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Kosovo, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the British non-profit foundation Global Rights Compliance, among others.

SESSION IV
TRAUMA, MEMORY, AND CULTURAL GENOCIDE

Georgios Orfanidis

University of Cyprus

*Archaeology of Trauma and Cultural Genocide in Palestine:
Memory, Law, and Cultural Heritage*

This paper investigates the systematic practices of destruction, distortion, and appropriation of Palestinian cultural heritage as manifestations of cultural genocide. It combines conceptual frameworks from archaeology, cultural studies, and international law to examine how material traces of violence reveal deeper processes of erasure and resistance. The Palestinian landscape—marked by demolished villages, obliterated monuments, and the displacement of cultural artifacts—constitutes a material and mnemonic archive of trauma. It exposes both the brutality of territorial reconfiguration and the enduring vitality of collective resistance. Within this framework, an “archaeology of trauma” serves as an analytical lens through which the targeting of heritage is understood as an attempt to sever communities from their spatial, historical, and symbolic continuities.

The study situates these practices within the complex architecture of international law, emphasizing the absence of explicit recognition of cultural genocide in the 1948 *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, as well as the structural deficiencies of subsequent cultural protection treaties. Despite notable jurisprudential advances—such as the *Al Mahdi* case before the International Criminal Court—the implementation of legal norms remains fragmented, particularly in contexts of asymmetric conflict and prolonged occupation. This legal lacuna highlights the urgent need to reconceptualize the safeguarding of cultural heritage not merely as a matter of technical administration, but as a profound moral and juridico-political imperative.

Concurrently, the paper explores how community initiatives, artistic interventions, and archival projects contribute to the construction of memory that resists obliteration. Through such practices, ruins and confiscated artifacts are reimagined as active sites of remembrance, reshaping the interrelations between material heritage, identity, and political self-determination. The notion of a “law of memory” is advanced as a theoretical framework connecting the preservation, restitution, and reinterpretation of heritage with questions of intergenerational justice, reparation, and social renewal.

By integrating insights from diverse disciplinary fields, this paper argues that Palestinian cultural heritage should not be perceived merely as an object of preservation, but as a dynamic arena of struggle, meaning, and future pos-

sibility. Its protection and restoration constitute essential foundations for the acknowledgment of historical trauma and for envisioning a sustainable and self-determined Palestinian future.

Georgios Orfanidis is a graduate of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where he studied Archaeology, Art History, and Religious Studies (BA, MA, PhD), Italian Literature (BA), and Cultural Management and Communication (MBA). His doctoral dissertation was conducted in collaboration with the University of Toulouse II.

In parallel with his academic training, he pursued studies in Directing and Kinesiology in Greece and Italy. He is currently studying Law (LLB/JD) at the University of Cyprus.

His academic trajectory combines the humanities with artistic and cultural production. He has worked in leading cultural institutions, including the National Gallery of Greece, the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, the A.G. Leventis Gallery in Cyprus, and the Cultural Centre of Milan in Italy.

Additionally, as a project consultant, he has been involved in theatre and cinema projects, many of which have received international awards (e.g. the World Film Festival in Cannes, 2025).

Parts of his research have been presented and published at academic conferences, journals, and edited volumes in Greece and abroad, including those of the Christian Archaeological Society and the Institute for Medieval Studies in Portugal.

He has served as a project consultant at the Social Cooperative Enterprise “*DIA TIS TEXNIS*” (Chania, Greece), under the supervision of the Hellenic Ministry of Development and Investments, since January 2025.

Ibrahim Fraihat

Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Qatar

*Rehumanization: Dismantling Systems of De-dignification,
Dignity Erosion, and Dignicide*

Scholarship on conflict, war, and genocide has long emphasized processes of dehumanization; yet far less attention has been devoted to the conditions under which rehumanization becomes possible—particularly within enduring systems of colonial domination and structural power asymmetry. Existing Western-developed literature largely conceptualizes rehumanization in intergroup or relatively symmetric contexts, leaving a critical gap in understanding how dignity can be restored when the foundational structures that produce humiliation, erasure, and moral exclusion remain intact. This article addresses that gap by introducing three analytically distinct yet interrelated concepts—de-dignification, dignity erosion, and dignicide—as central mechanisms that must be confronted to enable rehumanization under conditions of colonial rule and occupation.

Using the Palestinian case—and especially Israel’s genocidal campaign in Gaza—the article argues that Western governments have historically participated in a system of de-dignification and dignity erosion toward Palestinians, at times approaching the threshold of dignicide through political framing, selective moral recognition, and the normalization of disproportionate violence. Israel’s practices, embedded within a settler-colonial and apartheid structure, further exemplify how dignity can be systematically annihilated as a mode of governance.

The article first defines de-dignification, dignity erosion, and dignicide as foundational socio-psychological and politico-structural processes, distinguishing them from classical dehumanization. It then theorizes how countering these mechanisms constitutes the core of rehumanization in colonial contexts—moving beyond the restoration of human status to the restoration of full moral worth, political agency, and grievability. Finally, the article demonstrates how these dynamics are reflected in Western governments’ rhetorical and policy responses to Gaza, illustrating the urgent need for a rehumanization framework that confronts not only dehumanizing discourse but also the deeper structural assaults on dignity that sustain colonial power.

Ibrahim Fraihat is a Professor of International Conflict Resolution at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, a Fellow at the Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Juniata College, USA, and the Founding President of the Arab Society for Conflict Studies. He previously served as a Senior Foreign Policy Fellow at the Brookings Institution.

His book publications include: *Conflict Mediation in the Arab World* (co-ed.) (Syracuse University Press, 2023), *Rebel Governance in the Middle East* (co-ed.) (Palgrave, 2023), *Iran and Saudi Arabia: Taming a Chaotic Conflict* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), and *Unfinished Revolutions: Yemen, Libya, and Tunisia after the Arab Spring* (Yale University Press, 2016).

Anna Agathangelou

Professor of Political Science

York University, Canada

Kyle D. Killian, LMFT

Professor of Social and Behavioural Sciences

Capella University, USA

*Trauma, War, Collective Wounding, and Healing:
Psychological and Social Psychological Perspectives on Gaza
and Palestine*

The ongoing destruction of Gaza represents one of the most extreme contemporary cases of collective trauma produced by war, mass civilian killing, displacement, and the collapse of social life. This paper reviews key psychological and social psychological theories of trauma in the context of war and genocide, examining how trauma emerges, how it affects individuals and societies, and how communities attempt to cope in both the short and long term. Particular attention is given to the work of Vamik Volkan (2001) and his theory of large-group identity and “chosen trauma,” developed partly through his engagement with the Greek–Turkish conflict and Cyprus. The paper assesses the relevance and limits of Volkan’s framework for understanding Palestinian trauma, especially in Gaza, and situates it alongside alternative psychological, sociological, and interdisciplinary approaches. Comparative insights from other conflict-affected societies—including Rwanda, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and Holocaust survivors—are used to identify lessons relevant to Palestinian recovery. The paper concludes by reflecting on the profound challenges Palestinians face in addressing deep, ongoing trauma under conditions of continued violence, as well as on the conditions necessary for individual and collective healing.

Anna Agathangelou is Professor of Politics at York University and a former Fellow (2014–2015) in Science and Technology Studies at the School of Government, Harvard University. In 2023, she was awarded the Distinguished Scholar Award by the Feminist Theory & Gender Studies Section and the Distinguished Scholar Award by the International Political Theory Section of the International Studies Association.

Her publications include *“The Wake of War: Relationships Among Gender, Trauma, Resources, and Traumatic Stress in Refugee Families”* (with Kyle

D. Killian as first author), *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, 29(4), 2018, pp. 129–153; “*The Discourse of Refugee Trauma: Epistemologies of the Displaced, the State, and Mental Health Practitioners*” (with Kyle D. Killian), *Cyprus Review*, 21 (Summer 2009), pp. 19–58; *Time, Climate Change, Global Racial Capitalism and Decolonial Planetary Ecologies* (edited with Kyle D. Killian) (Routledge, 2022); *Time, Temporality and Violence in International Relations: (De)Fatalizing the Present, Forging Radical Alternatives* (co-edited with Kyle D. Killian) (Routledge, 2016); and “*Reparations, Time and Decolonizing Postcolonial Violence towards Global Gender Justice*” (with Baekova, A., & Bengezi, K.), *Feminist Formations*, 35(3), 2023, pp. 28–58.

Kyle D. Killian, Ph.D., LMFT, is Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy at Capella University and the 2023 recipient of the Capella University Faculty Excellence Award in Research and Scholarship. He is the author of four books and has published over 90 scholarly works on topics including intercultural and interracial couples, trauma and loss, vicarious resilience, and psychological assessment. His frequently cited publications include “*Helping till It Hurts? A Multimethod Study of Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, and Self-Care in Clinicians Working with Trauma Survivors*” (2008) and his book *Interracial Couples, Intimacy and Therapy: Crossing Racial Borders* (2013). Dr. Killian is also the developer of widely used and accessible measures of traumatic stress, emotional intelligence, vicarious resilience, cultural assumptions and beliefs, as well as a subtle screening tool for suicidal ideation.

SESSION V
*MEDIA, TRUTH CONSTRUCTION,
AND EPISTEMIC ERASURE*

Yamila Shannan Hussein
Harvard University

Scholasticide and Knowledge in Palestine

This keynote explores the concepts of scholasticide, educide, and genocide in the context of the ongoing genocide in Gaza through the lens of scholarship. It situates scholasticide within the broader framework of genocide, with particular attention to the production and dissemination of knowledge within academia. Tracing the conceptual emergence of these terms in Palestinian and international discourse, it examines how public state violence against the Palestinian people is organized, deliberate, systematic, and calculated, and how it is inflicted in both the material and non-material worlds.

This violence includes decades-long destruction of academic institutions and structures of formal education, as well as attempts to eradicate other forms of knowledge by and about the Indigenous people of Palestine, including archives, museums, archaeology, art, literature, heritage sites, churches and mosques, school curricula and academic scholarship, journalism, and more.

Scholasticide is understood here as an attack on Palestinian knowledge production, construction, and dissemination—an attempt to destroy Palestinian existence by rewriting the past, present, and future in both the physical world and the realms of memory, imagination, possibility, and love.

Contrary to educide, which is localized, scholasticide emerges as a global hegemonic form of violence that is not limited to the tactical flattening of buildings and infrastructure in Palestine, but extends to the manipulation of knowledge produced in academia elsewhere, manufacturing discourses that justify genocide and demonize opposition to it.

The keynote thus examines scholasticide beyond Gaza in two ways: first, how scholasticide is made possible within a global academic system that governs the industry of knowledge production through regimes of reward and punishment; and second, what scholasticide signifies for academia's silence and for the punitive practices imposed on those who name and challenge the ongoing genocide. It concludes by asking how scholasticide can be resisted—not merely through an ethical imperative of solidarity, but through a critical interrogation of the discursive practices that distort the relationship between knowledge and truth.

Yamila Shannan Hussein (Ed.D, Harvard University) is a scholar, educator, activist, and public speaker dedicated to socio-economic and political justice. Her work examines how matrices of oppression and liberation operate in the context of settler colonialism and anti-Black racism.

Dr. Hussein teaches at the graduate level on the intricate relationship between language, power, and (in)justice, critical race theory, and the institutionalization of oppression and liberation. She has designed, directed, and taught academic programs for teachers in Boston (Harvard University, Boston College, Goddard College, Lesley University, and BTR/UMass Boston), as well as internationally (Morocco, Jordan, Spain, Palestine, Mexico, and the Balkans).

Focusing on schools, her courses interrogate the role of teachers and students in cultivating political clarity in order to engage in liberation work toward justice.

Prior to her doctorate, Dr. Hussein-Shannan founded and ran the Yammita Activity Center for Children, co-founded the Teacher Creativity Center, and worked for Defence for Children International in Palestine.

A Palestinian born in Colombia and raised in Jerusalem, she is fluent in Spanish, Arabic, and English. After spending 23 years in the United States, she is currently back home in Palestine.

Abeer AlNajjar

American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

*Archives of Resistance:
Palestinian Journalism, Epistemic Erasure,
and the Fight for Truth in the Age of Livestreamed Genocide*

This paper theorizes the assault on Palestinian journalism and knowledge infrastructures during the ongoing genocide in Gaza as a multilayered project of epistemic violence (Gayatri Spivak, 1988), epistemicide (Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2014), and archival power (Derrida, 1996). The central research question guiding this analysis is: How do material destruction, institutional media control, and algorithmic governance operate together to shape what can be known, recorded, or historicized during genocide? By bringing critical media theory into conversation with genocide studies and the epistemology of power, the paper argues that Israel's targeting of journalists, archives, universities, newsrooms, and cultural institutions constitutes a deliberate attempt to annihilate not only life but also the evidentiary foundations of Palestinian history.

The framework builds on Foucault's conception of power/knowledge to examine how media systems create regimes of visibility and invisibility. Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model provides a lens for understanding Western news filters that sanitize, depoliticize, and racialize Palestinian suffering. Meanwhile, scholarship on archival silences (Trouillot) and the right to truth highlights how the destruction of physical archives intersects with digital erasure, algorithmic downranking, and platform censorship, producing a tightly controlled information environment that hinders independent verification and long-term historical reconstruction.

The paper identifies four interlocking mechanisms of epistemic control:

1. Material annihilation—the destruction of archives, universities, media headquarters, and the unprecedented killing of more than 260 journalists, resulting in the elimination of witnesses.
2. Censorship and institutional blockage—the exclusion of foreign press and the repression of Palestinian reporters.
3. Algorithmic manipulation—platform removal, shadow banning, and data instability that threaten digital evidence.
4. Discursive hegemony—Western media frames that normalize colonial violence and suspend political context.

Against this architecture of erasure, Palestinian journalists, citizens, and international activists generate a counter-archive through livestreams, citizen witnessing, and decentralized digital repositories. The paper argues that this grassroots archive constitutes an emergent form of resistance historiography, challenging dominant epistemic structures and asserting Palestinian futurity. Ultimately, the study positions the fight for truth as central to the struggle against genocide and to the future rebuilding of Palestinian historical memory.

Abeer AlNajjar is Professor of Media and Journalism at the American University of Sharjah (AUS). Her research sits at the intersection of media, politics, and conflict reporting, with a sustained focus on Palestine, Gaza, and the ethics of international news narratives. She is the author (with Bouziane Zaid) of “Western media’s ethical collapse: silencing Gaza’s voice” (*Third World Quarterly*; published online 1 October 2025). Her work critically examines whose voices become “credible” evidence in war coverage, and how institutional routines and platform dynamics can marginalize Palestinian testimony.

AlNajjar also writes on media accountability, publics, and critical news literacy in the MENA, including her LSE Middle East Centre paper on public media accountability and engaged publics. She leads the MENA Index in Critical Media Literacy, advancing regional measurement and scholarship on critical literacies and media power. Her broader publications address global news flows, journalistic ethics and professional practice, and the politics of framing during conflict and crisis. She has also published widely on the governance of digital platforms and the unequal enforcement of speech norms affecting Palestine-related content and debate.

AlNajjar was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Westminster and a Senior Visiting Fellow at the LSE Middle East Centre. She serves on the Editorial Board of *Journalism Studies* and is affiliated with the *International Journal of Communication* editorial leadership. Formerly Dean of the Jordan Media Institute, she holds a PhD from the University of Edinburgh. She co-edited *Language, Politics and Society in the Middle East* and continues to publish on media criticism, war reporting, and the ethical responsibilities of journalism in times of mass violence.

Farah Aryan

Virginia Tech, United States

Bearing Witness to Tragedy in the Digital Age

Bearing witness to tragedy functions not only as a form of record-keeping but also as a form of resistance. Palestinian writers of resistance document the horrors of the past so that they will not be erased by hegemonic narratives. The threat of censorship and the formative role of algorithms on social media platforms have led some Palestinians to adapt their communication strategies when documenting life under violent military occupation.

This paper adopts a post-phenomenological lens to study the mediating role that algorithms play in Palestinians' Instagram practices in Gaza after October 7, 2023. The Instagram accounts of social media influencers Mohammed Hatem—a 19-year-old Gazan bodybuilder—and Renad Attallah—an 11-year-old chef in Gaza—tell the story of a suffering population to Western audiences through short-form video content intended for niche Instagram communities. Professional journalist Bisan Owda interweaves journalistic truth and personal testimony on her Instagram account through livestreamed videos and short-form content.

These case studies reflect social media's formative role in shaping Palestinian narratives of resistance. In particular, analysis of their Instagram content reveals how algorithmic content moderation shapes the moral frameworks through which war and tragedy in Gaza are understood, while also demonstrating Palestinian Instagram users' creativity in resisting such moderation.

Farah Aryan is a PhD candidate in Science, Technology, and Society at Virginia Tech. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering and a Master's degree in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Florida. Her research interests focus on environmental justice, engineering infrastructures, and the study of apartheid regime systems.

Nicholas Karides

IMME, Universitas Foundation

*Media Coverage of the War in Gaza:
The Case of Cyprus*

Like most media across the globe, Cypriot media were constrained to process the war in Gaza using information that did not come from independent—let alone their own—journalists inside Gaza. Israel's ban on media access to the Strip, combined with the sustained control it has exercised over the narrative surrounding the situation of the Palestinians, created a highly problematic context for reporting. There was an overabundance of information but not a plurality of perspectives; within that abundance, disinformation proliferated, obscuring and distorting the truth about events on the ground. Some media outlets willingly capitulated to this context, others were unaware of it, while some worked around it or attempted to break from it.

Although public interest in developments in Gaza was strong and coverage was, overall, continuous and extensive, the emphasis quickly shifted toward Cyprus-centric narratives: Cyprus's role and initiatives, the war's effects on the Cypriot economy, its diplomatic standing, and the unresolved political problem. Over time, these frames functioned as a distraction, obscuring the fact that verifiable information was not emerging from Gaza and pushing the deteriorating situation into the background. As a result, the war and the suffering it entailed were transformed into a distant spectacle, effectively de-humanizing an entire people.

The study examines how this coverage unfolded, identifying its strengths, weaknesses, and structural obstacles. It seeks to explain why coverage took this form and what it reveals about Cyprus, its public sphere, and its media ecosystem. Finally, it considers whether the media—by failing to press sufficiently for verified facts, to draw clear distinctions, and to foreground the obligations of political leadership and the international community—may have facilitated, and ultimately normalized, what happened to the Palestinians.

Nicholas Karides is the Director of the Institute for Mass Media (IMME), a non-profit research organization at the Universitas Foundation. He was born in Britain, went to school in Cyprus, and studied at Pennsylvania State University, Middlesex Polytechnic, and the London School of Journalism. After a period as a journalist in London, he served as Head of the Press Section at the

European Commission's delegation in Nicosia until Cyprus's accession to the EU. He then established Ampersand Public Affairs and was later among the founders and contributing editors of the online news outlet *Offsite*.

He is the author of *Knowing One's Place* (2017), a collection of essays on journalism, history, diplomacy, and football, as well as two research studies published by IMME: one on Cypriot media coverage of the war in Ukraine (2023) and another on the obligation of states to promote news literacy in schools (2025). He is a member of the team drafting the annual Media Pluralism Report on Cyprus for the EU's Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom and serves as a member of the Advisory Board of the Cyprus Investigative Reporting Network (CIReN).

SESSION VI
EDUCATION, DISCOURSE, AND COUNTER-NARRATIVES

Amel Eid

Independent Researcher, Taiwan

*Storytelling as a Culturally Informed Psychological Intervention
with Palestinian Families*

This presentation explores the psychological impact of protracted occupation, displacement, and intergenerational trauma on Palestinian families, drawing on clinical work with individuals and relatives across Gaza and the diaspora. Palestinians' lived experiences reflect collective suffering and resilience, shaped by historical and ongoing sociopolitical violence. Standard Western psychological models often fail to fully capture these realities, as they are culturally specific and assume universality.

In my practice, I employ storytelling as a therapeutic technique, facilitating the sharing of family narratives to connect individuals with their collective history, identity, and coping strategies. This approach enables clients to process trauma within a culturally resonant framework, strengthening resilience while honoring their unique lived experiences. By situating psychological care within the context of Palestinian cultural practices, this method emphasizes relational healing and the transmission of meaning across generations.

Through illustrative cases, I demonstrate how storytelling can support mental health by validating experiences, promoting emotional expression, and fostering empowerment. This work underscores the importance of culturally informed psychological interventions that respond to the particular needs of Palestinians, moving beyond imported Western frameworks toward approaches that recognize and leverage the strengths embedded in their historical and social contexts.

Amel Eid, PhD, is a clinical psychologist specializing in trauma, attachment, and cross-cultural mental health. She holds a PhD in Clinical Psychology and a master's degree in Psychology, with experience in psychotherapy, research, and university teaching. Her work focuses on trauma, migration, identity, and early maladaptive schemas, with particular attention to culturally sensitive and holistic therapeutic approaches. Dr Eid has worked with diverse populations, including refugees and immigrants, and currently provides psychotherapy both in person and online. Her research interests include trauma, identity formation, schema therapy, and somatic approaches to mental health.

Saleh Albalawi

University of Auckland, New Zealand

*Teaching as Sumud: Reframing Teacher Wellbeing and Resilience
in Gaza under Genocidal Conditions*

This paper critically examines the wellbeing and resilience of Palestinian teachers in Gaza amidst genocidal conditions, arguing that global frameworks fail to capture the political, cultural, and existential dimensions of their lived experiences. Drawing on a decolonial and context-sensitive literature review, the study interrogates dominant models—particularly individual and socioecological approaches—used in humanitarian and educational discourses. While these models offer valuable insights into psychological and systemic factors, they often depoliticize trauma and erase the structural violence of settler-colonial occupation.

Through the lens of *sumud*—Palestinian steadfastness—the paper reframes teacher wellbeing as a form of epistemic resistance and collective survival. Teachers in Gaza do not merely cope; they enact resilience by transforming schools into shelters, assuming roles as emergency responders, and preserving cultural identity through education. These practices challenge narrow definitions of wellbeing rooted in Western psychology and call for a reimagining of educational resilience as relational, political, and culturally embedded.

The study contributes to the conference's objectives by documenting the impact of genocide on Palestinian educators, exposing the limitations of global wellbeing frameworks, and proposing a localized model grounded in *sumud*. It also offers comparative insights from other post-conflict contexts while advocating for justice-oriented, participatory approaches to educational reconstruction in Palestine.

Saleh Albalawi is a Palestinian educator and genocide survivor from Gaza City, with over a decade of experience in education, protection, and humanitarian programming across Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon, including roles with UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO, UNRWA, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and ACTED. He is currently a PhD candidate in Critical Studies in Education at the University of Auckland, where his research and conference paper, "*Teaching as Sumud: Reframing Teacher Wellbeing and Resilience in Gaza under Genocidal Conditions*," examine how Palestinian teachers' wellbeing and resilience under blockade, displacement, and scholasticide can be

understood through *sumud* as a form of epistemic resistance and collective survival.

Academically, he holds a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Education in Emergencies for the Middle East and Eastern Europe from the University of Geneva, a master's degree in International Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, an MBA, and a BSc in Computer Engineering. His broader research interests include teacher wellbeing in protracted crises, decolonial and critical pedagogies, and justice-oriented approaches to educational reconstruction in Palestine.

Abeer R. Musleh

Bethlehem University

Weaving Life through Stories: Lamlamah – The Art of Gathering and Uplifting “Ourselves”

This article explores youth initiatives amid the genocidal war and examines their internal dynamics in gathering fragmented selves, memories, and feelings through *lamlamah*. *Lamlamah* reflects the process of building a collective through youth work, in which counter-storytelling creates a medium of resilience and collective power. The article explains the concept and how it is shaped within youth group practice. It further explores how the dynamics of youth initiatives provide a space that gathers fragmented stories, emotions, and selves in order to build a collective counter-story.

The article's analysis draws on youth experiences at the Tamer Institute for Community Education in Gaza and their understanding of engagement amid war. Counter-storytelling emerges as an approach to building collective resilience and strength; it is a practice of resisting colonial erasure. The youth leading this work are third- and fourth-generation Nakba survivors, a positionality that shapes their understanding and narration of the genocide.

Abeer R. Musleh is an Assistant Professor at Bethlehem University, Palestine, and Chairperson of the Department of Social Sciences. She is a youth worker in practice and a researcher specializing in youth engagement and development. Her research interests focus on youth engagement and community development in Arab countries, with particular emphasis on youth collective agency, alternative models of action, and mobilization for social change, especially among young women and youth in colonized contexts.

Her latest research focuses on young women's mobilization and action, as well as youth agricultural cooperatives as alternative spaces for building agency and activism. As Vice President of RC34 (Sociology of Youth) within the International Sociological Association, she works with a network of Arab researchers to enhance critical youth research in the region and to advance youth studies across Arab countries.

SESSION VII
*REIMAGINING PALESTINE:
GEOPOLITICS, DECOLONISATION,
AND FUTURE VISIONS*

Costas M. Constantinou

University of Cyprus

Peace Diplomacy in the Age of Trump

This presentation examines peace diplomacy during the Trump era as a critical juncture marked by disruption, personalization, and transactional logic in international relations. Departing from multilateral norms and established diplomatic conventions, the Trump administration reframed diplomacy through deal-making, coercive leverage, and symbolic gestures that privileged short-term gains over sustainable peace architectures. Initiatives such as the Abraham Accords reflected a reconfiguration of peace diplomacy toward normalization without resolution, sidestepping the root causes of conflict in favour of strategic alignment and economic incentives. This approach challenged foundational principles of inclusive dialogue and international law, while accelerating a shift from process-oriented diplomacy to spectacle and media-driven engagement. The presentation situates these dynamics within the enduring crisis of peace in Gaza, underscoring the urgent need to reclaim diplomacy oriented toward justice, historical responsibility, and the protection of human life.

Costas M. Constantinou is Professor of International Relations at the University of Cyprus, with research interests in diplomacy, conflict, international theory, and the legal and normative aspects of international relations. He completed his PhD with an Overseas Research Scholarship at Lancaster University and has taught at the Universities of Hull, Keele, Lancaster, and Nicosia, as well as serving as a visiting academic at Taras Shevchenko University, Kyiv, and the Middle East Technical University, Ankara. He was a Visiting Fellow at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and, in addition to Cyprus, has conducted fieldwork in India, Nepal, Lebanon, Israel, Turkey, and Kenya.

His work has received international awards and distinctions, as well as funding from, among others, the Leverhulme Trust, the EU Seventh Framework Programme, EEA Grants, and the Leventis Foundation. He has served as an external assessor at universities in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Australia, and on several editorial boards, including *Diplomatica*, *International Political Sociology*, *Politics, Religion and Ideology*, and *Review of International Studies*.

Alaa Aldeek

Institute of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy (SISU), China

*Israel and the Region:
Normalisation and Restructuring*

This study aims to analyze Israel's position in the Middle East through two interrelated tracks: normalization and the restructuring of the region, particularly in the aftermath of October 7, 2023. The study adopts a content analysis approach in order to generate empirically grounded findings that reflect current realities, future prospects, and their implications for resolving the Palestinian issue under the framework of the “two-state solution.”

The study concludes that Israel's position in the Middle East is likely to remain strong in the short term, contrary to prevailing assumptions that its regional standing has declined following the recent cessation of hostilities. In fact, Israel's regional status has, in several respects, been reinforced since the events of October 7, despite the severing of diplomatic relations and the imposition of unilateral sanctions by certain Western, Latin American, South Asian, and regional states that continue to refuse normalization or the establishment of direct relations with Israel.

Palestinian political actors welcomed the “Peace Council” initiative announced by U.S. President Trump. In addition, the Palestinian Authority welcomed the UN Security Council's decision approving the U.S. proposal to deploy international enforcement forces in Gaza. Through these initiatives, the U.S. project and its Western partners aim to restore Israel's regional standing, strengthen normalization with Arab and Islamic states, and promote the formation of a new Middle East grounded in developmental peace rather than political settlement.

Accordingly, the trajectory of President Trump's plan and his proposed initiatives toward Gaza is expected to achieve strategic objectives for Israel without direct confrontation with the Palestinians, thereby preserving Israel's status and effective regional role as a partner state rather than a colonial power.

Alaa Aldeek, PhD, is a Senior Research Associate at the International Security Forum–Cyprus (since 2025) and a Researcher at the Research Institute of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy at Shanghai International Studies University (SISU). He is a Shanghai-based expert on China's international relations and holds a PhD in Politics, specializing in Chinese Studies, from Shanghai

International Studies University. He earned an MA in Democracy and Human Rights from Birzeit University and a BA in Political Sociology.

Dr Aldeek has published extensively on Chinese affairs and Middle East studies, with a particular focus on the impact of Chinese diplomacy on the Palestinian issue. He has long-standing experience in political and social work, international relations, and policy analysis. His research interests lie primarily in governance, justice, peacebuilding, and reconciliation.

Nicos Trimikliniotis

University of Nicosia

*Decolonising Palestine and Cyprus:
Rethinking the Past, Present, and Future after Trump*

This paper advances a comparative, decolonial analysis of Palestine and Cyprus in order to interrogate contemporary forms of imperial alignment, settler colonialism, and geopolitical complicity. Framed against Israel's ongoing genocidal assault on Gaza and the geopolitical legacy of Trumpism, the paper examines how Palestine and Cyprus have been differently—but structurally—positioned within Western imperial strategies in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Drawing on Edward Said's critique of nationalism, settler colonialism, and imperialism, the paper contrasts two colonial models: Israel's settler-colonial logic of land seizure and displacement in Palestine, and South Africa's apartheid system of labour exploitation without mass expulsion. It highlights Israel's distinctive integration into U.S. military-industrial and security architectures, situating this relationship within Trump's "peace plan" and the broader geopolitics of authoritarian realism. Against this backdrop, the paper critically examines the role of Greek Cypriot security elites and commentators who legitimate alignment with Israel and the United States as geopolitical "realism."

Empirically, the paper documents Cyprus's abandonment of its historic support for Palestinian self-determination and opposition to occupation, tracing its shift toward military, energy, and intelligence cooperation with Israel, including the facilitation of regional operations through the British Sovereign Base Areas. This realignment, it is argued, entrenches Cyprus's postcolonial dependency and normalizes complicity in war crimes and violations of international law.

The paper concludes that transforming Cyprus into a "Western outpost" deepens partition and risks a form of recolonization, subordinating the island to Israel's strategic needs. Against the fallacy of "strategic upgrading," it calls for strategic liberation: the demilitarization and decolonization of Cyprus as a bridge for peace in the Eastern Mediterranean—alongside, not against, the liberation of Palestine.

Nicos Trimikliniotis is Professor of Sociology, Social Sciences and Law and Head of the Centre for Fundamental Rights at the University of Nicosia. He leads *Digital Transitions & Society* (DIGITS), an interdisciplinary research initiative that critically examines the implications of emerging technologies

for cultural and political systems. His research spans conflict, state theory, transitional justice and reconciliation, citizenship, border regimes, discrimination, labour law, social transformation, migration and asylum law, as well as numerous expert reports on fundamental rights in Cyprus.

He is also a Barrister and an Associate Member of Garden Court Chambers. He serves as the national expert for the Independent Network on Labour Migration, an expert for the Odysseus Network on immigration and asylum, and for the Global Citizenship Observatory (GLOBALCIT).

Selected Publications:

- *Scripting of Defiance: Four Sociological Vignettes* (Tulika Press / Columbia University Press).
- *Migration and the Refugee Dissensus in Europe: Borders, Security and Austerity* (Routledge, 2020).
- *Mobile Commons, Migrant Digitalities and the Right to the City* (Palgrave, 2015).
- Nicos Trimikliniotis & Umut Bozkurt (eds.), *Beyond a Divided Cyprus: State and Society in Transformation* (Palgrave, 2012).
- *Rethinking the Free Movement of Workers: The European Challenges Ahead* (University of Nijmegen, 2009).
- *The Nation-State Dialectic and the State of Exception: Constitutional and Sociological Studies on the Euro-Cypriot Conjuncture and the National Question* (Savalas, Athens, 2010).

Nicos Peristianis

Universitas Foundation

*Rethinking Conflict Resolution in Divided Societies:
Heterogeneity, External Interests, and Alternative Governance
Models in Ukraine, Cyprus, and Israel–Palestine*

This presentation begins by examining the enduring role of heterogeneity—ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity—as both a source of conflict and a potential foundation for sustainable peace in three deeply divided societies: Ukraine, Cyprus, and Israel–Palestine. It argues that violent conflict in each case emerged not simply from diversity itself, but from the ways in which state systems mishandled it—often through enforced centralization, the marginalization of minorities, or the imposition of exclusionary national identities. It further contends that fair and inclusive political solutions were repeatedly undermined not only by internal resistance but also by the vested geopolitical interests of powerful third parties—Russia in Ukraine, Turkey in Cyprus, and the United States in Israel–Palestine. These actors have frequently acted as spoilers, enabling one side while obstructing mutual compromise.

The presentation briefly reviews the principal governance frameworks proposed in each case—such as decentralization, federalism, consociationalism, and autonomy arrangements. It becomes apparent that pathways toward resolving entrenched identity conflicts require acknowledging both the permanence of heterogeneity and the limitations of rigid state sovereignty. Lasting peace depends on institutionalized power-sharing, mutual recognition, and a shift in the role of external actors toward neutral and facilitative engagement rather than strategic intervention. Ultimately, successful conflict resolution in these contexts demands both a reconceptualization of political community and a pragmatic embrace of governance models that reflect the complex and intertwined realities on the ground.

Nicos Peristianis holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Economics (University of Kent, UK), a Master's degree in Education (M.Ed., Trenton State, USA), and a PhD in Sociology (Middlesex University, UK). His work has focused on knowledge production and dissemination, as well as on the strengthening of civil society and NGOs through the creation and support of key educational and research institutions.

Following the completion of his studies, he became actively involved in higher education in Cyprus and, in 1981, assumed leadership of the newly founded Intercollege, guiding its development into the largest non-state tertiary institution in the country. He subsequently led the establishment of the University of Nicosia, where he served as Founding President of the University (2007–2016).

He has also played a central role in founding and developing several research institutes and NGOs, including the Institute of Mass Media (IMME) and the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS). A sociologist by training, he has been actively engaged in research and public debate, served as the first President of the Cyprus Sociological Association (1996–2009), and is Chairman of the Universitas Foundation.

SESSION VIII
REBUILDING PALESTINE AND ITS FUTURE STATE
[URBANISM]

Dalal Iriqat

Arab American University (AAUP), Palestine

*Beyond the Rubble:
Reconstruction as State-Building, Not Aid*

This paper examines the question of Palestinian reconstruction not merely as a post-conflict technical exercise, but as a deeply political, legal, and ethical process unfolding under an ongoing illegal military occupation marked by genocide, systematic violence, and profound collective trauma. It argues that any serious effort to reimagine and rebuild Palestine must begin by confronting the root cause of Palestinian suffering: Israel's prolonged occupation and the structures of domination it sustains.

Drawing on international law, political theory, and contemporary diplomatic practice, the paper situates the current moment within a broader historical continuum of settler colonialism and structural violence. It demonstrates how practices of apartheid, widespread killings, mass detentions, forced displacement, and other war crimes are not isolated events but integral features of an illegal occupation that has denied Palestinians their right to self-determination. These violations have devastated Palestinian social, economic, and cultural life, producing layered and intergenerational trauma that cannot be addressed through humanitarian or technocratic responses alone.

The presentation critically assesses prevailing international discourses on “reconstruction” and “the day after,” revealing how depoliticized approaches risk normalizing occupation and reproducing conditions of dependency and control. Instead, it advances a framework for reconstruction grounded in justice, accountability, and sovereignty, anchored in international law and reinforced by recent developments, including UN General Assembly resolutions and the 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

The paper concludes that rebuilding Palestine is inseparable from reimagining the Palestinian nation-state itself—not as a conditional or externally managed entity, but as a rights-based political project rooted in dignity, freedom, and collective healing. Meaningful reconstruction, it argues, is impossible without ending the occupation, dismantling its apartheid structures, and restoring Palestinian agency over their land, institutions, and future.

Dalal Iriqat is an Associate Professor of Diplomacy, Conflict Resolution, and Strategic Planning at the Arab American University Palestine (AAUP).

In April 2025, she became a member of the National and Central Councils of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). She has been a weekly columnist at *Al-Quds* newspaper since 2016. She is a founding member of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN), a board member of the AAUP Conflict Studies Center, and the founding president of the Business and Professional Women Network (BPW) Palestine. She also serves as a board member of PADICO Holding.

Dalal Iriqat was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum (YGL) in 2021.

Recognized as a leading analyst, activist, and scholar, Dr Iriqat has served as Senior Advisor on Strategic Communications at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). She previously held the position of Vice President at AAUP and served as Senior Policy Consultant for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), contributing to the Human Development Report for Palestine.

Dr Iriqat holds a PhD in Public Administration from Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University (2011), a master's degree in Diplomatic Studies from the University of Westminster, London (2004), and a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Jordan (2003). She also holds a professional executive degree in Sustainability from Stanford University and completed a Harvard Executive Diploma in Global Leadership, Public Policy, and Negotiations. Her research focuses on diplomacy, nation branding, Palestinian state-building, coercive diplomacy, public diplomacy, soft power, mediation, and conflict resolution.

Raphael Pinheiro Cavalcanti Guimarães

Universidade de Fortaleza, Brazil

*Refounding Gaza:
Initial Thoughts on the Bureaucratic
Redesign of a Destroyed State*

Reflecting on the reconstruction of Gaza compels us to consider the region's millennia-old history of occupation, as well as the recent events that have devastated the area at an immeasurable cost in human lives—events that compromise the worldview and future of all those affected. This abstract proposes a bureaucratic framework to guide reconstruction, the healing of wounds, and the pacification of Gaza.

At the outset, it is imperative to confront painful realities, including the decimation of entire families, the total destruction of homes, and the short-term uninhabitability of certain areas. These facts underscore the need for the state to act both as a regulator and as an economic driver in order to ensure a solid reconstruction of society, with the aim of enabling the viable creation of a new state.

The study proposes the development of plans for a new state through the structuring of critical databases for long-term planning. These include, initially, registries of individuals and families, real estate (including use and ownership), and vehicles, as well as the creation of a digital government platform to facilitate communication between citizens and the state. This framework is grounded in principles of security and the use of decentralized, open-source interoperability standards.

Establishing these registries is fundamental to understanding the functioning of society, as well as to territorial planning and tax collection in the new state. The study will present international case studies on citizen and family registration, along with successful examples of land and property registries. Such systems enable the use of real estate as financial collateral in long-term banking contracts. Together with vehicle registries, this information can be consolidated within a single governmental platform.

Raphael Pinheiro Cavalcanti Guimarães is a Notary and Real Estate Registrar in Brazil and a PhD student at the University of Fortaleza. He conducts research on georeferencing, land cadastre, and property registration, with a focus on property regularization aimed at expanding access to real estate

credit. He participated in the 10th edition of the *Université du Notariat Mondial* and is a member of the National Operator of the Electronic Real Estate Registry System (ONR). In addition, he serves as a member of the Permanent Group for Land Regularization of Informal Urban Settlements and Favelas in the State of Ceará.

Stavros Stavrides

National Technical University of Athens

*From the Systematicity of Annihilation to the Hope of Restoring
Urban Commoning in Palestine*

Systematic efforts to efface the Palestinian presence from Palestine characterize the Zionist program. Despite the heroic resistance of a courageous Jewish minority, this program remains dominant in the policies of the contemporary Israeli state. Systematicity represents the endpoint of an industrial rationality grounded in meticulous planning, transforming it into a murderous machine. Instrumental rationality has been criticized since the 1920s as a perverted version of the emancipatory promises of reason. Rather than humanity being liberated by escaping the dark entanglements of prejudice and superstition, instrumental reason re-enchants the future through domination.

Urbicide is a term coined to describe military campaigns that destroy entire cities by targeting urban infrastructure and housing areas, along with prominent symbolic buildings. Systematicity—this defining characteristic of instrumental reason—targets not only the places in which Palestinians lived, but also the symbolic geography of their presence: the condensers of collective memory, the material evidence of their right to exist there, as well as the means necessary to sustain life, such as cultivated land and a broad spectrum of subsistence infrastructure. Urbicide and “landcide” thus constitute another dimension of genocide. Moreover, they destroy the very possibility of future coexistence between Jews and Palestinians in a society liberated from all forms of racist and religious fundamentalism.

An experimental open design studio held at the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens from 12–15 January 2011 aimed to produce proposals for a model of self-built temporary housing for those whose homes had been destroyed. The current conditions in Palestine are, of course, far more severe than at that time due to ongoing Israeli bombardments. Nevertheless, the question remains: can we envisage forms of immediate reconstruction that provide shelter to Palestinians while simultaneously developing ways to support the urban infrastructures necessary for a life grounded in traditions of urban commoning?

Stavros Stavrides, architect and activist, is Emeritus Professor at the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA),

Greece, where he currently teaches a postgraduate course on the meaning of metropolitan experience and research methodologies.

He is a member of the NTUA Laboratory for Architectural Design and Communication, as well as of the independent Laboratory for the Urban Commons.

He has conducted extensive fieldwork research in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, and Mexico, focusing on housing-as-commons and urban struggles for self-management.

His recent publications include *The Politics of Urban Potentiality* (London, 2024); *Housing as Commons* (co-edited with Penny Travlou, London, 2023); *Common Spaces of Urban Emancipation* (Manchester, 2019); *Common Space: The City as Commons* (London, 2016; Istanbul, 2016; Athens, 2019; Lisbon, 2021; Milan, 2022; Bucharest, 2024; Seoul, 2024); *Towards the City of Thresholds* (Trento, 2010; Madrid, 2016; Istanbul, 2016; New York, 2019); *Suspended Spaces of Alterity* (Athens, 2010); and *From the City-as-Screen to the City-as-Stage* (Athens, 2002; National Book Award), as well as numerous articles on spatial theory and the culture of urban commoning.

He has lectured at universities across Europe, as well as North and South America, on urban struggles and practices of urban commoning.

Socrates Stratis

University of Cyprus

*Architecture as Transformative Urban Practice:
Supporting the Commons in
Post-Conflict Urban Reconstruction*

The author offers insights into how architecture, as a transformative urban practice, can gain relevance for the commons of the post-conflict reconstructed city. He unpacks the “practice turn” in architectural scholarship—the bedrock of this approach—in order to address three main challenges.

The first challenge is to make visible, and thus public, the often consolidating role of architecture alongside hegemonic powers and their unjust spatial modes of urban reconstruction. In other words, to expose how complex relationships among political and urban actors, their agendas, and their capital interests instrumentalize master plans and urban policies in order to impose colonial power dynamics on the city’s inhabitants.

The second challenge is to clarify that any discussion of post-conflict urban reconstruction must go hand in hand with the creation of democratic institutions—that is, a political framework capable of providing, among other things, urban infrastructures for solidarity and reconciliation. Can architecture create safe spaces in which rehearsals for democracy can take place?

The third challenge is to recognize that any attempt to support the commons in post-conflict reconstruction processes must take the form of a tactful collective struggle against neo-colonial peacemaking and urban planning. Architecture, as a transformative urban practice, can support collective processes of imagining alternative urban futures in common, as a tactic for claiming the present.

Socrates Stratis draws on his ongoing work as a researcher, teacher, and activist to offer tangible examples of how architecture operates as a transformative urban practice in the constructive transformation of the more than half-century-old frozen Cypriot conflict. He argues that such a practice can support collective processes of unlearning, translating, and dreaming, thereby subverting the imaginaries of the status quo. Collective action, he concludes, must be at the heart of any democratic and emancipatory process for claiming the commons before any urban reconstruction begins.

The paper ultimately asks whether such an approach to architectural scholarship can offer new modes of collaboration with other fields of knowledge in post-conflict urban reconstruction, bridging the gap between the

humanities, the social sciences, and design. Finally, it asks whether such a discussion can offer tools for the Palestinian people to claim their future.

Socrates Stratis is an urbanist, architect, and activist for the urban commons. He is Professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Cyprus, co-founder of the critical urban practice agency AA&U, Cyprus, and Director of LUCY (Laboratory of Urbanism, University of Cyprus). His research focuses on the social and political agencies of architecture and urban design, as well as their strategic and territorial value. He recently published *Urban Design on the Move: Five Stories for Implementing a Winning European Project* (Berlin: Jovis, 2024). Socrates Stratis is a member of the Scientific Committee of European Europe and of the Steering Committee of the Horizon 2020 research project *Spatial Practices for Empathetic Exchange in the City*.

Yiorgos Hadjichristou

University of Nicosia

“The Commoning Home”

The Commoning Home, a first-year studio at the Department of Architecture of the University of Nicosia, responded to the genocide in Palestine, orchestrated by the government of Israel and supported by Europe and the USA, while the second-year studio will focus on the regeneration of Gaza. This generated an urgent need within academia to critically reflect on the question of Gaza’s regeneration.

We are witnessing a “continuum of displacement,” systematic human rights violations, and recurrent military assaults. Through live streaming, we observe the erasure of civilians, communities, and social structures; the destruction of infrastructure, cultural landscapes, and cultural heritage; and the production of massive pollution resulting from incessant bombardment. The simultaneous destruction of humanity and the environment underscores the necessity of reconstruction processes that interweave cultural and environmental dimensions in an inseparable manner.

The Commoning Home urges students to foreground the notion of the commons as a driving force, while also opening opportunities for scholars to envision new forms of society beyond the powers of capitalism and neoliberalism—precisely the forces that devour cultures and ecologies and activate mechanisms of genocide and colonialism. This moment may constitute an opportunity for a substantive socio-environmental sustainability approach to the built environment, in which dominant notions of property and power are fundamentally challenged.

The proposal does not focus on the mere recovery of communities and cultures, but rather on mechanisms that ensure the evolution of Palestinian identity, strengthened and materially embedded within the built environment and cultural heritage. It draws inspiration from the communities of the Zapatistas, who operate through horizontal structures and cultivate care for the Earth and for their interwoven collective identity—an experience echoed in the woven Palestinian flags encountered at Encuentro 2025, prepared to journey to Palestine as an expression of practical solidarity with Gaza.

Yiorgos Hadjichristou is an architect, Professor at the University of Nicosia, and a member of the NGO Urban Gorillas. He is co-editor of five books and

the author of *Reverberating in the Dormant Lands*. He co-curated the Cyprus Pavilion at the Milan Triennale (2016) and at the Venice Architecture Biennale (2018). He has also curated various festivals, cultural activities, exhibitions, and workshops in Cyprus and abroad.

He is the recipient of numerous national and international awards and distinctions, including honours from the International Union of Architects (UIA), the Architects' Council of Europe, and the Italian Union of Architecture and Criticism, among others, for his architectural work. His projects have represented Cyprus at the Mies van der Rohe Awards on nine occasions, while four of his projects have been selected for the State Architecture Award. Among other topics, his research focuses on the social and environmental dimensions of the built environment, ephemeral urbanism, and inclusive and participatory cities. Activism and community engagement are integral to his architectural and academic approach.

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