



INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARLY CONFERENCE

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



Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου
University of Cyprus

30 – 31 January 2026
University of Cyprus Campus

PRESS RELEASE

International Scholarly Conference

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

30–31 January 2026 | University of Cyprus, Nicosia

The Universitas Foundation, in collaboration with the University of Cyprus, announces the convening of the International Scholarly Conference entitled *Reimagining and Rebuilding Palestine: Genocide, Trauma, and the Future of a Suffering Nation*, to be held on 30 and 31 January 2026 at the University of Cyprus in Nicosia.

The conference will be held over two full days (09:00–19:30) in Room 010 ("Evi Sofianou"), Social Facilities Centre Building 07 (SFC07), on the University of Cyprus campus. Admission is free and open to the public, in accordance with the organisers' commitment to academic integrity, institutional openness, and rigorous scholarly dialogue.

A Rigorous Interdisciplinary Forum

This international academic gathering is conceived as a rigorous, interdisciplinary forum for critical scholarly inquiry into the contemporary Palestinian condition. It addresses, in a systematic and analytically grounded manner, some of the most urgent and complex questions raised by the ongoing destruction of Palestinian society, including genocide, ethnic cleansing, and prolonged subjugation; mass, collective, and intergenerational trauma; forced displacement and political violence; colonial and para-colonial governance structures; cultural destruction, epistemic erasure, and scholasticide; international law, human rights, and global responsibility; memory, heritage, and cultural genocide; and reconstruction, justice, and future-oriented institutional design.

The conference brings together established scholars and researchers from a broad range of disciplines, including history, political science, international law, sociology, social work, psychology, philosophy, media studies, cultural and trauma studies, archaeology, heritage studies, urbanism, and architecture. Through this interdisciplinary engagement, the conference seeks to foster analytically rigorous dialogue that combines empirical research, theoretical reflection, and normative critique.

Programme Structure and Scholarly Scope

The conference programme comprises keynote lectures, thematic panels, plenary discussions, and cultural interventions, carefully structured to allow sustained scholarly exchange while situating academic analysis within its broader social, political, and cultural contexts. Across its eight thematic sessions, the conference examines, among others, the legal, philosophical, and political dimensions of genocide and crimes against humanity; the selective application of international norms and the geopolitics of humanitarianism; colonialist and far-right settler discourses in comparative perspective; trauma, memory, and processes of dehumanisation and rehumanisation; media representations, truth construction, and epistemic violence; education, storytelling, and counter-narratives under conditions of destruction; decolonisation, diplomacy, and future political imaginaries; and post-war reconstruction as a question of state-building, urban commoning, and institutional re-foundation. By situating Palestine within broader comparative and global frameworks—including Cyprus and other deeply divided or post-conflict societies—the conference contributes to ongoing debates on heterogeneity, political equality, institutional resilience, and justice-oriented reconstruction.

Cultural Programme and Public Engagement

In parallel with its academic sessions, the conference incorporates a carefully curated cultural programme, underscoring the fundamental interconnection between scholarly inquiry, collective memory, and artistic expression in contexts marked by extreme violence and loss. Within the framework of the conference, a series of cultural events will be organised, including a photographic exhibition, presented with the support of UNHCR and the Universitas Foundation, documenting displacement, survival, and everyday life under conditions of destruction; a theatrical reading of *The Slaughterhouse* by Ilan Hatzor, offering a profound dramatic exploration of violence, moral collapse, and human vulnerability; poetry readings by a Palestinian poet and a Cypriot poet, creating a dialogical space of shared memory, resistance, and solidarity; and a musical programme by composer Giorgos Kalogirou, contributing a sonic and affective dimension to the themes of mourning, endurance, and collective reflection.

These cultural interventions are not conceived as ancillary events, but as integral components of the conference's intellectual architecture, engaging affect, memory, and imagination alongside scholarly analysis and critical reflection.

Institutional Support and Organisation

The conference is organised with the support of the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW), the Cyprus Academic Dialogue, and the Diplomatic Academy, as well as the Departments of Social and Political Sciences, Education, Law, Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies, and English Studies of the University of Cyprus.

The Scientific Committee comprises Nicos Peristianis (Universitas Foundation), Stavros Tombazos (University of Cyprus), Ioannis Ioannou (University of Cyprus), and Katerina Hadjistylli (Universitas Foundation). The Organising Committee is led by Katerina Hadjistylli, Conference Coordinator (Universitas Foundation), with the support of Amalia Gregoriadou.

Public Invitation

By convening scholars, practitioners, artists, and members of the wider public, *Reimagining and Rebuilding Palestine* aims not only to document and critically analyse processes of destruction, but also to rigorously examine the ethical, political, and institutional conditions under which justice, dignity, and future-oriented reconstruction may become conceivable and attainable.



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