

Statement on the Genocide in Gaza

Professional affiliation with a political party or foundation tends to come with expectations of loyalty: a willingness to toe the collective line where sensitive matters of public policy are concerned; to observe diplomatic silence where one disagrees with official positions. At times, the strategic case for such discipline is strong - for instance, where larger political goals are at stake, or where it makes sense to pursue advocacy in closed settings.

No such silence can be justified in respect of what is unfolding in Palestine.

Speaking out is a democratic right, a matter of conscience, and an obligation for anyone who believes in respect for human rights, peace, justice and equality. Or indeed anyone with a modicum of pragmatic reason, who believes the world is better off with what little remains of the rules-based international order than without.

For an employee of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, which is affiliated with the German Green Party, making my position known is particularly important. Both have, in different ways, voiced strong opinions on the 'conflict' itself, and responded to commentary surrounding it through [statements](#) by their leaderships. Silence on my part could be interpreted as tacit acceptance of these views, which I do not share.

For a researcher such as myself, who makes a living in the field of migration and displacement governance, making explicit my opposition to the crimes committed by Israel in Palestine is a professional obligation, as well one that is political and intensely personal. Failure to do so would strip my past, present and future work of meaning. It would result in an inability to take myself seriously when I speak of the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, or indeed any other issue relating to my political commitments, above all those relating to anti-racism and anti-imperialism.

So let me be clear: Israel's military assault against a defenceless civilian population in Gaza amounts to ethnic cleansing and genocide. It is among the worst crimes against humanity of our time. It has brought unspeakable horror to Palestinians, traumatized decent people everywhere, and spells calamity for global security for years to come. Decision-makers who have driven and enabled this catastrophe are ultimately responsible. But organizations and highly placed individuals who have taken the incomprehensible stance of opposition to an immediate ceasefire have played a key role in facilitating Israel's gruesome campaign of extermination. Their position is akin to the callous obstinacy of those who opposed the end of colonialism, the abolition of slavery, and the end of apartheid in South Africa. History will remember them as such.

Ali Nobil Ahmad, Nairobi, March 1st, 2024