



Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI)

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31 October 2025

To:

Prof Antoinette Lombard

President: International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)

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ASASWEI Follow-up Statement to IASSW on the Genocide in Gaza

Dear Prof Lombard,

In October 2023, the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI) addressed a formal statement to the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), urging the Association to take a principled stand on the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe and the long-standing occupation in Palestine. Regrettably, to date, that statement has not received any formal acknowledgment or response from IASSW. For ease of reference and continuity, a copy of the 2023 statement is [attached to this correspondence](#).

Since that correspondence, the atrocities in Gaza have worsened beyond comprehension. The situation has now been unequivocally confirmed by the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel as constituting war crimes and genocide. As Commissioner Navi Pillay stated, “It is clear that there is an intent to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza through acts that meet the criteria set forth in the Geneva Convention.”

The continued bombardment of civilians, the deliberate destruction of schools, universities, hospitals, and refugee shelters, and the use of starvation as a weapon of war all constitute gross violations of international humanitarian law. As educators and practitioners bound by the Global Definition of Social Work and its accompanying ethical code, we are compelled to speak out, engage in, as well as lobby actions aligned to social justice.

We are further troubled that despite overwhelming global condemnation, the Israeli Association of Schools and Departments of Social Work has maintained its silence yet continues to retain representation within IASSW's structures. This silence is inconsistent with the moral and ethical responsibilities of social work institutions globally. Furthermore, based on the recently articulated strategy (email dated 30 October 2025) as well as the undertaking given at the ASASWEI conference by the IASSW presidency (in a plenary session), to consult the regional presidents, identify representatives, then constitute a task team to deliberate on making a statement, is not productive in this instance due to the forceful nature of war and the atrocities of genocide. We denounce this liberal posture, which is tantamount to complicity with the architects of genocide. Therefore, this is not an approach that we can agree to as the ASASWEI collective.

We recognize and deeply mourn the loss of life in both Gaza and Israel and extend our solidarity and compassion to all affected communities, particularly civilians, children, and older persons. Guided by the social work mission, we affirm our duty to stand with and speak out for all who are subjected to injustice and human rights violations, wherever they occur.

ASASWEI, therefore, has adopted the following resolutions for immediate communication to IASSW:

1. Demand accountability and solidarity:

Request that the Israeli Association of Schools and Departments of Social Work publicly denounce the genocide and atrocities committed against Palestinians, and demonstrate a commitment to justice, human rights, and peace for both Palestine and Israel, within a clearly defined timeframe established by IASSW.

2. Institute suspension for non-compliance:

Should the Israeli Association fail to comply with the above, IASSW must immediately suspend its membership until it can demonstrate adherence to the ethical principles of social work.

3. Issue a public declaration:

IASSW must make a public declaration in support of the people of Palestine, just as it did in response to the invasion of Ukraine. Neutrality in the face of genocide is not an ethical stance; it is complicity.

4. Recognize consequences for inaction:

Should IASSW fail to act upon these resolutions within four weeks of receipt of this letter, ASASWEI will be compelled to reconsider its membership and participation in IASSW until such time as the Association demonstrates its commitment to human rights and social justice.

As South African institutions of Social Work education, we are deeply mindful of the history and residue of colonialism and apartheid in our own country. Similarly, we remain conscious of the international solidarity that contributed to the liberation of South Africa. We, therefore, cannot, in good conscience, be silent and inactive while human beings, including social work academics and students, endure systematic dehumanization and extermination.

In the spirit of constructive engagement and solidarity within the global social work community, ASASWEI remains open to urgent and decisive dialogue with the IASSW Executive to discuss this matter further. It is our belief that such a meeting, rooted in our shared professional ethics, is essential to advancing collective accountability and action in response to injustice and human suffering.

ASASWEI reaffirms its unwavering support for the people of Palestine and for all social workers, students, educators, and practitioners who are risking their lives to uphold our



profession's values in the face of oppression and dehumanisation.

Sincerely,

Mpumelelo Ncube

Prof Mpumelelo Ncube

President: Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions

*For and on behalf of the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions
(ASASWEI)*