



Dear colleagues,

I would like to extend my thanks to Dr. Valeria Siniscalchi, President of the European Association of Social Anthropology (EASA), for providing me with the opportunity to address you with regard to the troubling issue of the exclusionary Israeli educational institutions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. I was greatly heartened to hear that the general assembly of EASA, convened in Stockholm last month, voted overwhelmingly to support the Israeli Anthropological Association (IAA), which I head, and the Israeli Sociological Association (ISA), in their common decision to denounce the regularization of these institutions through their admittance to the Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE), and our consequent decision to refuse cooperation with these institutions.

I assume that you are aware of the complications and difficulties resulting from the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israeli anthropology in general and the IAA in particular have a long history of opposing this occupation and demanding that the Israeli government negotiate in good faith with the representatives of the Palestinian people in order to achieve a just peace. What you may be less acutely aware of is what scholar Eyal Weizman calls the “civilian occupation” and anthropologist Jeff Halper calls the “matrix of control.”<sup>1</sup> This can be summarized as the use of a variety of means, including civilian populations and civilian infrastructure, in order to deepen and perpetuate Israeli control over the Palestinian territories, and to prevent a “two states solution”.

The Israeli academic institutions established in the West Bank, foremost among them Ariel University, are particular examples of this sort of violation. These institutions are not open to the Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories, but only to Israeli citizens (including those Israeli settlers living in the Occupied Territories). As such, they are exclusionary institutions, and beyond the pale of academic and anthropological ethics. The violation has recently been exacerbated by the right-wing Israeli government’s policy of “creeping annexation”, which seeks to apply Israeli sovereignty to the Occupied Territories piecemeal, while providing special “breaks” to these institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> Eyal Weizman, *A Civilian Occupation* (London: Verso, 2003); Jeff Halper, “The 94 Percent Solution: A Matrix of Control,” *Middle East Report*, no. 216 (2000): 14–19.

האגודה האנתרופולוגית הישראלית

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האגודה האנתרופולוגית הישראלית  
ISRAELI ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
الجمعية الإسرائيلية لعلم الإنسان والحضارة

The admittance of Ariel and two colleges in the Occupied Territories to Israel's Council of Higher Education at the beginning of this year was a clear step in this direction.<sup>2</sup> Since then, we have seen professional and ethical red lines repeatedly crossed over in the rush to establish a Faculty of Medicine at Ariel<sup>3</sup> and we have every reason to suspect that more such steps are in the works.

This February, the President of the ISA, Dr. Gili Drori, denounced the admittance of the institutions in the Occupied Territories to the CHE and pledged her association to non-cooperation with these institutions. In March, the Executive Board of the IAA also denounced the institutions' admittance to the CHE, and in June the membership of the IAA voted on a motion to refuse cooperation. The motion passed by a large majority. The motion specifies that students and faculty at these institutions remain welcome as members of the IAA. Our refusal is strictly limited to financial and organizational cooperation with the institutions themselves.

Your colleagues at the ISA and IAA have chosen to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people in general, and in particular with Palestinian students and academics whose right to an education is violated by the establishment and maintenance, in their own territories, of institutions which they are barred from attending. By voting so massively to support, EASA's general assembly has shown solidarity with both its Israeli and Palestinian colleagues. Those of you who were not present at the assembly now have the opportunity to ratify and amplify that expression of solidarity. I urge you to do so and thank you for your attention and solicitude.

Sincerely,

Prof. Nir Avieli

President, Israeli Anthropological Association

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<sup>2</sup> Yarden Zur, "Israel's Creeping Annexation: Knesset Votes to Extend Israeli Law to Academic Institutions in the West Bank," *Haaretz*, February 12, 2018, [tinyurl.com/zur-creep](https://www.tinyurl.com/zur-creep).

<sup>3</sup> Or Kashti, "Israeli University Heads Challenge Decision to Open Med School in West Bank Settlement," *Haaretz*, July 30, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israeli-uni-heads-challenge-decision-to-open-med-school-in-settlement-1.6319667>.

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