

## **Humanitarian Statement on Supporting Peace and Protection of Human Dignity May 9, 2024**

This statement is an official statement of Division 45 and does not represent the position of the American Psychological Association (APA) or any of its other Divisions or subunits.

The Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity, and Race, Division 45, of the American Psychological Association, stands for peace, justice, humanity, and honor basic human rights. In this spirit, we call for a humanitarian ceasefire and an end to the senseless genocide in Gaza. We condemn the non-combatant attacks which have stolen over 34,000 innocent lives and wounded over 77,000. The safety of all civilians is intertwined and is NOT mutually exclusive. We advocate for all those who have endured the ravages of conflict, particularly the most vulnerable among us - innocent children, elders, and minoritized communities who have suffered at the hands of physical, psychological, and emotional violence. We mourn those who have been silenced, dehumanized, those who continue to be subjugated to oppressive systems that propagate innumerable harms, and innocent civilians who have perished.

Research derived from studying armed conflicts correlates with detrimental mental health impacts on children, communities, nations, and those involved in combat (e.g., Akbulut-Yuksel, 2014; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.). Baron and Abdullah (2015) underscore the profound and multifaceted impact of war and intergenerational trauma on children. Such trauma can precipitate a spectrum of psychological challenges, encompassing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, complicated grief, and various other mental health disorders. Moreover, children may succumb to learned helplessness, impeding their ability to envision a brighter future. These ramifications endure across generations, affecting not only those directly exposed to the trauma but also their descendants. As we know, a mother's tears for her child are the same across the world. This humanitarian call for ceasefire is not intended as support or opposition of those involved in the armed conflict; but instead calls for peace as a solution.

As psychologists and advocates of social justice everywhere, we must raise our voices in support of ending armed conflicts. Violence penetrates the fabric of life, families, and intergenerationally impacts successive generations. We stand against dehumanization, hate, oppression, and the killing of any kind. We are committed to working towards reducing hate in all forms, oppression, isms in all forms, and liberation. We all have a right to life, safety, and security, and it is our collective responsibility to safeguard these rights.

In solidarity with the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres's call in his appeal "for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, together with ... the delivery of relief at a level corresponding to the dramatic needs of the people in Gaza, where a humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding in front of our eyes." We emphasize peace and humanity in this statement because 1) the Palestine region has experienced historical and ongoing violence and 2) there is limited access to international support that would facilitate appropriate recovery.

There is an urgent need for immediate action to alleviate suffering and promote peace. We advocate for the psychological, emotional, and physical safety of those impacted by violence, war, and genocide. Together, we reaffirm our commitment to combating hate, oppression, and all forms of discrimination, while striving towards liberation and justice for all. Let us stand united in our pursuit of peace and the protection of human dignity.

### **References**

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