Call to boycott the forthcoming FEBS congress in Jerusalem

August 18, 2017

Association des Universitaires pour le Respect du Droit International en Palestine

<http://www.aurdip.fr/call-to-boycott-the-FEBS-congress.html?lang=fr>

Dear Colleagues,

We are a group of Palestinian, Israeli, and international scientists and academics, and we write to urge you to cancel your participation in the forthcoming congress in Jerusalem of the [Federation of European Biochemical Societies](https://2017.febscongress.org/) (FEBS), scheduled for 10-14 September. We would like to share with you a few of the reasons for this appeal.

Some attendees will be unaware of Israel’s direct attacks on Palestinians’ right to education, including the bombing of schools and universities, and the obstruction of access to educational sites. The restrictions Israel places on the teaching and research of our Palestinian colleagues have severe consequences not only on research and educational opportunities, but also on Palestinians’ health.

This is precisely why thousands of academics and many academic associations have endorsed the call by Palestinian academics and civil society at large for an [institutional academic boycott of Israel](https://bdsmovement.net/academic-boycott) until it respects international law. In 2013, [Stephen Hawking heeded appeals by Palestinian scientists and cancelled](http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/stephen-hawking-confirms-he-is-boycotting-israeli-conference-1.519951) his scheduled participation in an Israeli conference.

The biochemistry of cancer is one of the themes of the FEBS Congress. [The five-year survival rate for breast cancer](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49832106_Barriers_and_opportunities_for_early_detection_of_breast_cancer_in_Gaza_women) is as low as 30% in Gaza, which Israel has besieged for the past ten years, as compared to 86% in Israel. In 2016, only [44% of Gaza patients](http://www.emro.who.int/palestine-press-releases/2016/news-release-who-releases-latest-health-access-report-for-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-november-2016.html) who requested access to Israeli hospitals were admitted ; [more than half of those refused entry were cancer patients](http://mezan.org/en/post/21746/Palestinian%20Child%20Denied%20Access%20to%20Hospital%20by%20Israeli%20Authorities%20Dies).

The situation facing [Palestinian education](http://www.aurdip.fr/palestinian-universities-under.html) is no less [oppressive](http://www.usacbi.org/2011/06/barghouti-struggle-equal-right/). Israeli military authorities forbid students from Gaza to attend universities in the West Bank, and vice versa, and the system of Israeli checkpoints that crisscrosses the West Bank makes school attendance a matter of painful hardship for most Palestinian students.

In addition, Palestinian scholars and researchers are regularly denied permission to travel abroad to further their education, attend conferences and participate in joint projects. Within Israel, Palestinian students face [institutionalised discrimination](https://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/israel2/).

Israeli military forces have not hesitated to violently target educational and research institutions. In April 2002 the [Palestine Academy for Science and Technology](http://www.palestineacademy.org/main/en/2002-publication/62-a-report-on-the-israeli-destruction-of-the-palestinian-academic-and-scientific-institutions.html) in Ramallah suffered extensive destruction during the IDF’s incursion into the West Bank, as did most of West Bank university laboratories. [Regular invasions of their campuses](http://www.aurdip.fr/army-incursion-the-recent-attack.html) have now become a fact of life for Palestinian universities. [During the 2014 Israeli invasion of Gaza](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/overview-repair-and-reconstruction-schools-gaza), six public and private schools, eleven kindergartens and three higher education institutions were completely destroyed ; 450 additional educational facilities sustained serious damage.

The FEBS Congress is [sponsored](https://2017.febscongress.org/academic-sponsors) by Israeli academic institutions that are deeply complicit in Israel’s human rights violations. [Tel Aviv University](http://pacbi.org/pics/file/SOAS-Palestine-Society-Paper-TAU-Military-Complicity-Feb-2009.pdf) and [Technion](http://www.bricup.org.uk/documents/israel_unis/about-the-technion.pdf), for instance, have developed weapon systems and military doctrines employed in committing what [Amnesty International](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/07/gaza-cutting-edge-investigation-rafah/) and [Human Rights Watch](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-gaza-war-idUSKBN0H60XZ20140911) have condemned as war crimes, while the [Hebrew University’s Mount Scopus campus](http://www.aurdip.fr/campaign-to-boycott-the-oral.html) is partially built on illegally confiscated Palestinian land in occupied East Jerusalem.

To be clear, the [academic boycott of Israel](https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi/academic-boycott-guidelines) that Palestinians have called for respects the universal principle of [academic freedom](https://www.aaup.org/reports-publications/journal-academic-freedom/volume-4) as it is only directed at Israeli *institutions*, not individual academics. Despite the differences, it is inspired by the academic boycott of South Africa, which was called for in 1965 by 496 academics from 34 universities in the United Kingdom.

Last year, only one third of invited speakers confirmed their attendance to the FEBS conference scheduled to take place in Turkey. The conference was later canceled, after expressing “[solidarity with the Turkish scientific community](http://www.febs.org/document-uploads/FEBSNewsNovember2016.pdf)” which is facing the “curtailment of academic freedoms in Turkey.” We urge you to heed the call of Palestinian academics who have called for a boycott of Israel until their basic human rights are met, and to cancel your participation in the upcoming FEBS Congress in Jerusalem.

Refraining from lending one’s name to a system of injustice is not a charitable act ; it is a basic moral duty.

1. Ahmed Abbes, mathématicien, Directeur de recherche au CNRS, Paris, France
2. Giuseppe Acconcia, Dipartimento di Analisi delle Politiche e Management Pubblico, Bocconi University, Italy
3. Mona Baker, Professor of translation studies, University of Manchester, UK
4. Angelo Baracca, Retired Professor of Physics, University of Florence, Italy
5. Sherna Berger Gluck, Emerita, Departments of History and Women’s Studies, California State University, Long Beach, USA
6. Dr. Susan Blackwell, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherland
7. Prof. Haim Bresheeth, Professorial Research Associate, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, UK
8. Dr. Christopher Burns-Cox, Emeritus Clinical Lecturer Medicine, University of Bristol, UK
9. Sir Iain Chalmers, James Lind Initiative, UK
10. Iain Chambers, Studi Culturali e Postcoloniali del Mediterraneo, Sociologia dei processi culturali, Università di Napoli, Orientale, Italy
11. Claudine Chaouiya, Group leader, Systems Biology for Signaling Networks, Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência (IGC), Lisbon, Portugal
12. Christine Charretton, mathématicienne, Maîtresse de conférence honoraire, Université Lyon1-Claude Bernard, France
13. Lounès Chikhi, Population and Conservation Genetics, Senior Researcher, CNRS, Toulouse, France & Principal Investigator, Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência, Oeiras, Portugal
14. Yves Chilliard, Physiologie animale, Directeur de recherche à l’INRA, Clermont-Ferrand, France
15. Allan Christensen, Professor Emeritus of English Literature, John Cabot University, Rome, Italy
16. Dr Peter Collins, Senior Lecturer in history, St Mary’s University College, Belfast, UK
17. Laura Corradi, Researcher, Dipartimento Scienze Politiche e Sociali, Università della Calabria, Italy
18. Amedeo Cottino, professor of Sociology of Law, University of Turin, Italy
19. Sophie Cribier, Professeure de physique, Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris, France
20. Mike Cushman, Research Fellow (rtd) London School of Economics, UK
21. Dr. Hilla Dayan, sociologist, Lecturer at Amsterdam University College, Netherlands
22. Dr. Anne de Jong, Assistant professor of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
23. Alessandro Deiana, antropologo sociale, cultore della materia, Università di Cagliari, Italy
24. Federico Della Valle, Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Trieste, Italy
25. James Dickins, Professor of Arabic, University of Leeds, UK
26. Andrea Domenici, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Information Engineering, University of Pisa, Italy
27. Ivar Ekeland, mathématicien, ancien président de l’Université Paris-Dauphine, ancien président du Conseil Scientifique de l’École Normale Supérieure, Paris, France
28. Maria d’Erme, Dept. of Biochemical Sciences, Sapienza University, Rome, Italy
29. Emmanuel Farjoun, Professor of Mathematics, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
30. Moncef Feki, Doctor of biochemistry, Professor at the Faculty of Medicine of Tunis, Head of the Laboratory of Biochemistry at the Rabta Hospital of Tunis, Tunisia
31. Lia Forti, biophysicist, Assistant Professor, Università dell’Insubria, Italy
32. Cynthia Franklin, Professor of English, University of Hawai’i, Manoa, USA
33. Ferial Ghazoul, Dept. of English and Comparative Literature, The American University in Cairo, Egypt
34. Véronique Ginouvès, responsable de la phonothèque de la Maison méditerranéenne des sciences de l’homme, AMU-CNRS USR3125, Aix-en-Provence, France
35. Terri Ginsberg, Assistant Professor of film and director of the film program, The American University in Cairo, Egypt
36. Catherine Goldstein, mathématicienne, Directrice de recherche au CNRS, Paris, France
37. Hector Grad, Associate Professor, Social Anthropology, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Spain
38. Penny Green, Professor of Law and Globalisation, Queen Mary University of London, UK
39. Michael Harris, Professor of Mathematics, Columbia University, New York, USA
40. Yara Hawari, Doctoral Researcher, University of Exeter, UK
41. Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun, sociologue, Professeure émérite à l’Université Paris Diderot-Paris 7, France
42. Tom Hickey, Principal Lecturer in Philosophy and Aesthetics, University of Brighton, UK
43. Florence Janody, Ph.D., Principal investigator, Cell biology, Development and Cancer, Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência (IGC), Lisbon, Portugal
44. Ghada Karmi, Research Fellow, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, UK
45. David Klein, Professor of Mathematics, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, USA
46. Robert V. Lange, Physics Professor Emeritus, Brandeis University, USA
47. Dr Ronit Lentin, Retired Associate Professor of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin ; Chair, Academics for Palestine, Ireland
48. Dr Les Levidow, Open University, UK
49. Prof Malcolm H Levitt FRS FRSC, University of Southampton, UK
50. Jean-Marc Lévy-Leblond, physicien, Professeur émérite de l’université de Nice, France
51. Abby Lippman, PhD, Professor Emerita, Faculty of Medicine, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
52. David Lloyd, Distinguished Professor of English, University of California, Riverside, USA
53. Moshé Machover, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, University of London, UK
54. Sunaina Maira, Professor of Asian American Studies, University of California-Davis, US
55. Marco Mamone-Capria, Researcher, Dept. of Mathematics and Computer, Science, University of Perugia, Italy
56. Guillaume Marrelec, biomedical imaging, senior Inserm research associate, Paris, France
57. Dr. Anat Matar, Philosophy, Tel Aviv University, Israel
58. Jean-Pierre Mazat, Professeur Émérite, Institut de Biochimie et Génétique Cellulaires - CNRS UMR 5095 & Université de Bordeaux, France
59. Michel Mietton, géographe, Professeur émérite à l’Université Lyon 3 Jean Moulin, France
60. Régis Morelon, Directeur de recherche émérite au CNRS, ancien directeur de l’Institut Dominicain d’Études orientales du Caire (IDEO), France
61. Mara Nerbano, Docente di storia dello spettacolo, Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze, Italy
62. Elsa Oréal, égyptologue, CNRS, Paris, France
63. Angelo d’Orsi, Professor of History of Political Thought, Department of Historical Studies, University of Turin, Italy
64. Nella Prevete, Department of Translational Medical Sciences, University of Naples Federico II, Naples, Italy
65. Mazin Qumsiyeh, Biology Professor at Bethlehem and Birzeit Universities, Palestine
66. Amina Rachid, Professeur de littérature comparée, Université du Caire, Egypte
67. Prof. Paolo Ramazzotti, Economics, Universita’ di Macerata, Italy
68. Marwan Rashed, Professeur de philosophie, Sorbonne, Paris, France
69. Roshdi Rashed, historien des mathématiques, Directeur de recherche émérite au CNRS à Paris, Professeur honoraire à l’Université de Tokyo, France
70. Elisabeth Remy, mathématicienne, CNRS, Marseille, France
71. Pier Giorgio Righetti, Department of Chemistry, Materials and Chemical Engineering "Giulio Natta", Politecnico di Milano, Italy
72. Steven Rose, Emeritus professor of neuroscience, The Open University, UK
73. Jonathan Rosenhead, Emeritus Professor of Operational Research, London School of Economics, UK
74. C. Heike Schotten, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Massachusetts Boston, USA
75. Lionel Schwartz, mathématicien, Professeur émérite à l’Université Paris 13, France
76. Richard Seaford, Professor Emeritus of Ancient Greek, University of Exeter, UK
77. Simone Sibilio, Arabic Literature, Ca Foscari University, Italy
78. Élio Sucena, Departamento de Biologia Animal, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal
79. Annick Suzor-Weiner, physicienne, Professeure émérite, France
80. Dr Derek Summerfield, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King’s College, Univ of London, UK
81. Taoufiq Tahani, mathématicien, Maître de Conférences, Université de Lille 1, France
82. Jacques Thibiéroz, géologue, Maître de Conférences (en retraite), Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris, France.
83. Prof. Gabriele Usberti, Dipartimento di Scienze sociali, politiche e cognitive, Siena, Italy
84. Bernard Vandenbunder, biophysicist, Directeur de recherche émérite CNRS, Villeneuve d’Ascq, France
85. Dror Warschawski, biophysicist, CNRS, France
86. Sylvie Wolf, ingénieur de recherche, Université Paris 6 (UPMC), France
87. Professor John S Yudkin, MD FRCP, Clinical Scientist, Emeritus Professor of Medicine, University College London, UK
88. Hatem Zaag, mathématicien, Directeur de recherche au CNRS, Université Paris 13, Paris, France
89. Monica Zoppè, Inst. of Clinical Physiology, National Research Council, Pisa, Italy