

# “Jaws, speak now before your heads become skulls!”

## Global Africa




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**T**he African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA) has issued a statement on the current war in Palestine. It calls for a two-state solution, respect for international law, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission underpinned by the principles of “Teranga, Ubuntu, Ujamaa and Kizuna”, the release of all illegally detained civilians, and an end to the war through mediation and dialogue, recognition of the dignity and right to existence of all, and absolute and unconditional respect for the humanity and human rights of all.

ASAA is a founding member of the Global Africa consortium. In publishing its declaration in full, we endorse its concerns and appeals in this editorial. Our position as committed intellectuals from the South and the North, and the worldview that inspires us, forbid us to remain indifferent or silent in the face of the dramatic course of events in Palestine, and particularly in the Gaza Strip, as a result of the devastating war launched by the Israeli government in response to the murderous attack perpetrated by Hamas. In the african tradition, speaking the truth is the responsibility of the living. Hence the Bantu injunction: “Jaws, speak now before your heads become skulls!”

### How to cite this paper:

Global Africa, (2023). “Jaws, speak now before your heads become skulls!”. *Global Africa*, (4), pp. 10-12.  
<https://doi.org/10.57832/6w6v-5z51>

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Mankind has indeed acquired enough experience to know without a shadow of a doubt that, in the face of tyranny, silence or indifference is tantamount to death. Timely speech is the first step in shaking the fortresses of injustice and domination.

What has been going on for decades in this part of the world, including the climax of recent weeks, cannot but resonate for Global Africa, and in particular for this fourth issue, whose theme is “Theorizing the present and the future: Africa, knowledge production and global issues”. Indeed, the tragedy of the Middle East today, for the worse, is staged by figures of the other who are incapable of thinking about the scale of time and the global inscription of these dramas localized over a few thousand square kilometers.

Yet in the intellectual, analytical and comparative register that guides the researchers who have contributed to this issue, as well as the magazine itself, it is constantly a question of putting things into perspective, of opening up reflections and therefore passions. This work of transcending thought and multiplying frames of reference is essential if we are to understand the world today and, in this world and not outside it, what is to be understood in this part of the world. All things being equal, this is the aim of this issue, which examines the plurality of modernities and worlds, and - as Global Africa aims to do - from the perspective of Africa and its experiences, historically determined by tragedy, rejection and intolerance.

**STATEMENT AND CALL FOR ACTION BY THE AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF AFRICA ON THE WAR IN PALESTINE AND THE ASSAULT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

**Wednesday, 22 November 2023**

1. [The African Studies Association of Africa](#) (ASAA) is a membership-organisation of scholars, practitioners and activists of the African continent and her Diaspora. We are an association strongly committed to upholding the sanctity and dignity of life, particularly of Black people on the African continent, the African Diaspora and African people globally. We are united by a brutal common experience of relentless structural violence and racism. Our mission is to promote Africa’s own specific contributions to the advancement of knowledge about the peoples and cultures of Africa and the Diaspora.
2. ASAA was launched in Accra, Ghana, in 2013 as an Africa-led, Africa-centred and Africa-focused convening of African Studies scholars globally. ASAA is grounded in the Pan African ethos of many movements formed at the cusp of self-rule, following many decades of brutality, which resulted from the annexation of African territories decided at the 1884-85 Berlin Conference and the consolidation of colonial regimes, which emerged at the end of World War 1.
3. We are gravely concerned by the escalation of violence in Palestine and the savagery that has accompanied it, unleashing untold suffering on already vulnerable populations, essential services, infrastructure and all life forms.

4. We locate the ongoing crisis in a long and entangled history of dehumanisation that is built upon Slavery, Colonisation, the Holocaust, Apartheid, global state and non-state Terrorism, Genocide, Ethnic-cleansing, and the global loss of lives that results from the denial of cross-border mobility. As a community, we understand and have documented the violence of colonisation, the savage crimes that enable its persistence, the destructive effects of the fight against colonial powers, and the devastatingly lasting impact on annexed peoples. We therefore call on the global community to declare colonisation as a crime against humanity.

5. We strongly condemn all acts of violence that have resulted in the loss of life and the destruction of property and public services and have unleashed a deepening humanitarian crisis.

6. We call on all parties: a) To unequivocally respect International Humanitarian Law; b) To establish humanitarian corridors; c) To engage in a cease fire now; d) To release all civilian hostages; e) To work immediately toward a negotiated two-state solution, consistent with United Nations' resolutions.

7. We call on the global community: a) To respect International Law; b) To support the two state principle and the accompanying peace process; c) To establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission underpinned by the principles of Teranga, Ubuntu, Ujamaa and Kizuna; d) Through the United Nations and the International Court of Justice, to conduct a full investigation of the conflict and to establish a Special Court to prosecute the crimes committed against humanity, including through the complicity of the global community; e) To establish and furnish a Global Reconstruction Fund Facility for Palestine (GRFFP).

8. We strongly condemn the assault on academic freedom globally. We observe that governments, universities and other bodies are currently censoring speech and policing thought around the crisis in Palestine. We stand with our colleagues around the world who are facing attacks on academic freedom as a result of their reflections on the ongoing global crisis in Palestine. We call on universities worldwide to reaffirm their commitment to academic freedom, resist the pressure to embrace censorship and put in place measures to support persecuted students and scholars. We equally urge students and scholars to exercise the privileges of Academic Freedom with responsibility.

9. The current crisis in Palestine is a reminder of the dangerous nature of ethno-nationalism, bigotry, all forms of discrimination and the many neglected ongoing violent conflicts that continue to unleash suffering on vulnerable people across the world. We call for an equal dedication and commitment by the global community to bring an end to these sufferings.