

October 20, 2023

NAPAFASA Warns of Rising Hate amid the Crisis in Gaza

As an organization committed to health justice, cultural respect, youth empowerment, and reducing anti-Asian hate, NAPAFASA condemns the occupation of Palestine by the apartheid state of Israel, which has led to the death of thousands of innocent Palestinian and Israeli lives caught in the politics of military superpowers. We do not take this stance lightly. Our staff, interns, and Board of Directors scrutinized every word of this statement, understanding the delicate nature of this matter and how much suffering it has caused.

We grieve for the murder of Wade Al-Fayoume, a six-year-old child killed in a horrid act of Islamophobia. We grieve for Wade's mother, Hanaan Shahin, 32, who survived and witnessed this tragedy. We grieve with Wade's family, the Plainfield Township in Illinois, and the Muslim and Palestinian American community for this vile act of radicalized hate.

One cannot ignore that this act of hate comes in the wake of the present crisis between Israel and Palestine. On Tuesday, we watched the bombing of al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza, killing an estimated 471 Palestinians and injuring 314 others. Healthcare workers in Gaza denied evacuation orders issued earlier by the government of Israel, refusing to leave their patients. In a statement published on October 14, the World Health Organization condemned Israel's orders to evacuate 2,000 inpatients across 22 hospitals in northern Gaza, citing concern for the imminent death of the most critically-ill patients who would not survive the search for refuge. In just ten days, a staggering 1,400 Israeli and 3,478 Palestinian people had been killed, more than 6,000 bombs have been dropped on Gaza, and over one million people have been displaced. We do not yet know how many are buried under rubble. It is reported that 70% of Palestinian casualties are children, women, and the elderly.

At the very bones of this crisis is one of humanitarian, public health, and moral concern. We cannot decontextualize acts of American Islamophobia from U.S. involvement in crises overseas, the Middle East, Pacific Islands, and Asia included. The death and destruction that ensues when powerful states exercise their unbridled bravado is being shown to us today. Our communities understand too well the legacy of trauma that settler colonialism leaves behind. We know these truths through the people we serve, our loved ones here and abroad, and the daily struggle we engage in to convince people that this pain matters and hurts us all.

We reject the idea that this issue is too complicated to address, but we understand the confusion and hesitancy. We, as Americans, are complicit in this genocide through weaponry and by funding this war with taxpayer dollars, too many of us misled and unaware. If history has taught us anything, we will watch in horror as continued division among us fuels Islamophobia and anti-Semitism within our own borders. We have seen this before.

We fear for our Palestinian American, Arab American, Israeli American, Muslim, and Jewish loved ones and colleagues. This is a call for everyone to unpack the historical roots of the Israel-Palestine crisis. This is a call for mercy and ceasefire towards the People of Palestine. This is a call for community leaders and all Americans to demand that humanitarian aid be allowed into Gaza. We stand in solidarity with all those working towards a consciousness that honors the dignity of every human life. This will not be easy, but now is not the time to look away or take a privileged position of neutrality. We must act.

In community,



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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