

SCHOLASTICIDE IN GAZA

What is scholasticide?

Gaza is now the epitome of "scholasticide" - the systematic killing of academic intellectuals and destruction of an education system. It was first used to describe the targeted killing of over 400 Iraqi academics following the 2003 American invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq.

Throughout history, education and the flow of ideas have been the lifeblood of peoples struggling for self-determination. In the context of the struggle for Palestinian liberation, the importance of education cannot be overstated. Education is at the core of resistance, as it empowers and mobilises masses of people to challenge the status quo.

For this reason, education poses a threat to Israel's settler colonial project and has long been a target of destruction by Israel. Examples range from Israel's assassination of Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani in 1972 in a car bomb in Beirut, to the destruction of the Palestinian Research Centre in Lebanon in 1983, to raids on universities and demolitions of schools in the West Bank over the decades, to strikes on schools in Gaza in previous wars as well as the current onslaught.

Israel's attack on Palestinian education in Gaza has reached an unprecedented scale since October 2023:



Gaza's central archive, with precious historical documents, has been wiped out



Israel's bombardment has destroyed at least 346 schools



Every single university has been destroyed



Targeted Israeli airstrikes have killed over 94 professors and hundreds of teachers in their homes, often alongside their families



Every single child in Gaza has been out of school for half a year as all the schools have no longer been able to function since early November

By attacking the physical infrastructure and intellectual pioneers in Gaza's educational system, Israel is attempting to obliterate the current existence and future potential of the entire population. While Israel's scholasticide is clear, the spirit and power of Palestinian intellectuals lives on. As a notable example, Professor Refaat Alareer's moving poem "If I must die, let it be a tale".

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Israel killed Refaat, but people like him are very hard to die. Not only did he leave his words, poems, interviews, books, posts, and stories, but he also left behind him a generation of writers and activists who will carry on the powerful work he started and never be silenced.

Hala Alsafadi, Palestinian journalist and former student of Refaat Alareer

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