

Statement against the

Executive Committee decision to suspend the membership of the Israeli Sociological Society

(See: <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/about-isa/isa-human-rights-committee/ec-decision-israeli-sociological-society>)

In view of the war currently being conducted by Israel and Hamas in Gaza, a war which has shown the characteristics of a genocide from the first day, we appreciate why this decision has been made. However, we find the context and exact time of publishing it extremely problematic, just a few days before the ISA Forum in Morocco (from 6th July 2025). And we do not regard the suspending of the ISS as being likely to contribute to ending the conflict in Palestine.

We would like to explain our reasons for objecting to this decision.

Sociologists must, by definition, breach the discourse rules, including taboos and prohibited ideas, prevalent in their larger we-groups, of whatever kind, because otherwise they would not be able to carry out their work in an appropriate and professional manner. Not least, this applies to acceptance of the dominant version of the collective history of the we-group in question, regardless of whether it is a religious, ethnic, national, political, state or non-state, socio-cultural or kinship grouping. Thus, sociologists or other social and cultural scientists very often, and typically, find themselves caught between two "stools" or between two "fires". This means they can never do it "right": either they fail to show loyalty to the we-group from which they originate and to which they generally still belong, and wish to continue belonging to, or they fail to show impartiality in the scientific observation of facts and assessment of their interdependencies and meaning. They are therefore regularly caught in a kind of dilemma or painful impasse.

Not least, when they seek to act as strictly impartial scientists they must always reckon with very painful sanctions, exclusion and marginalization within their larger we-groups (such as their ethnic group, state, religious community, clan, local community, family, etc.). All this applies to our Israeli and Palestinian, Jewish, Christian and Muslim colleagues, who of course, just like other scientists in comparable situations, are confronted with these terrible dilemmas (we think for example of the articles published by Israeli colleagues in journals such as *Sociology*).

Therefore, like other scientists with similar problems, they ought to be able to depend on the solidarity of their professional colleagues when they come under attack from a broader public of their nation or in this case the world of states and the world of international politics. This solidarity should not (and cannot) apply only to single individuals, but (as a basic principle) also to the professional

organizations and associations or institutions to which they belong. The step being planned by the ISA is a refusal of what we see as the indispensable solidarity among scientists, especially sociologists and other social and cultural scientists. For us, this giving way to political, moral and naturally also social pressure is very understandable in human terms, but we cannot approve it or accept it. This is true also and especially in situations of extreme escalation of collective violent conflicts.

An important factor in this context is that the statement issued by the Executive Committee does not offer any transparent or precise reasons for their decision or any explanation of why their argument should pertain to the Israeli Sociological Society (ISS). To our knowledge the ISS is not a governmental organization or a political body or institution, and is not part of any chain of command in respect of the government's military actions.

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Gabriele Rosenthal & Artur Bogner