

## Ben-Gurion University Faculty Urge End to Gaza Military Operations

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**Beersheba, Israel** – Academics from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev have issued a public statement urging an immediate halt to Israeli military operations in Gaza, citing severe humanitarian consequences and a pressing need for a political alternative.

The signatories, all members of the university's Department of Middle East Studies, expressed grave concerns over the scale of destruction in Gaza, which they argue has

rendered the territory nearly uninhabitable. Citing figures from various human rights organisations, the professors referenced tens of thousands of civilian deaths, the destruction of hospitals and schools, and allegations of attacks on medical teams and restrictions on foreign media.

Their statement described the situation as a “catastrophic humanitarian crisis,” further claiming that the soaring mortality rate in Gaza may be contributing to what has been referred to as the largest orphan crisis in modern history.

The academics also condemned the 7 October 2023 attack by Hamas, in which 1,200 Israeli civilians and soldiers were killed and 251 were taken hostage. However, they questioned the proportionality of the Israeli response, criticising what they described as collective punishment that disproportionately affects civilians.

According to the faculty, diplomatic solutions had been available in the years leading up to the recent escalation. They suggest that Israeli authorities could have pursued non-military options, such as empowering the Palestinian Authority or involving international actors to stabilise the region. These alternatives, though not without risk, were framed as more sustainable than ongoing military operations.

The university, based in southern Israel, has itself been directly impacted by the conflict. The faculty noted that some students have lost family members or have had to pause their studies due to safety concerns. Despite the pressures, the department’s scholars said their motivation to speak out stems from their responsibility as educators and researchers committed to peace and the protection of human life.

In a public statement, the faculty wrote: “We are not indifferent to the suffering of any side, but the current course of military action is not a path to lasting peace or security.”

Their message concludes with a call for an immediate ceasefire, the release of Israeli hostages, and a renewed commitment to diplomacy to resolve the underlying issues. They urged the Israeli government to prioritise a solution that safeguards civilians and prevents further escalation in both Gaza and the West Bank.

While the statement has drawn attention within Israel’s academic and political spheres, the group maintains that their position reflects a professional and ethical obligation, not political activism.

This intervention from within Israel's own institutions adds a notable academic voice to the growing international concern over the consequences of prolonged conflict in the region.