

Call for Abstracts: “Academic Freedom and Silencing in Times of Genocide” Workshop

Following what the International Court of Justice has described as a 'plausible' genocide that continues unabated in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, the restrictions and silencing of professors and researchers in academia who advocate and research on the question of Palestine have intensified significantly. Among others, this has raised an important question: *Did we ever truly have freedom of research, or did this freedom only exist when Palestinians were viewed as the 'perfect victims' (El-Kurd, 2025), and has it disappeared now that they are resisting their ongoing dehumanization?*

Against this backdrop and in light of an ongoing *scholasticide* where all universities in Gaza have been destroyed, academia cannot be a place detached from this reality nor a place where researchers doing their job should be silenced.

The **Centre for International Studies (CEI-Iscte) at the University Institute of Lisbon** is organizing a workshop in Lisbon on **April 29th and 30th**, focusing on “Academic Freedom and Silencing,” with a particular emphasis on Palestine (though not exclusively). This workshop is part of the Annual Palestine Studies Day, which will have as guest speaker Prof. Dina Matar (SOAS). The aim is to create a space for reflecting on these issues, sharing the challenges we have encountered as researchers in this field (or other contested contexts), and exploring potential collaborations. Additionally, we hope to use the presentations and debates from the workshop as the foundation for an edited volume.

This workshop is a valuable opportunity to expand and share perspectives/research projects and build connections with other researchers and academic institutions.

Possible topics and themes could include:

- Epistemic (In)Justices and Epistemicide in academia on Palestine Studies and beyond
- University campuses as a free space? Students’ encampments and silencing
- Academia and/as Activism: Science and Social Movements in the context of Palestine/Israel
- Navigating Repression: Pathways to Academic Freedom
- Institutional Responses: How can universities (or fail to) support scholars facing censorship or threat? Can we develop institutional frameworks to safeguard academic freedom?
- Academic Resilience: Addressing Mental Health and strategies for community care in academic settings
- Alternative Publishing and Modes of Dissemination in fully repressed spaces

Modalities

The workshop will be held on **April 29th and April 30th (both days in the morning)**. It is open to doctoral students, young or senior researchers, who have experienced censorship or silencing or would like to participate in reflections around these issues.

A short proposal (200 words) should be sent with a short biography note to the following address palestinstudies.cei@gmail.com until **February 24th**, with the **subject: WORKSHOP Academic Freedom/Silencing**. An answer can be expected by **February 28th**.

Please note that this is a closed workshop limited to approximately 10 participants. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide funding for travel or accommodation.

Our goal is to foster a space for meaningful reflection, open discussion, and the sharing of experiences. We welcome ideas from interdisciplinary backgrounds.

We look forward to your participation!

The organizing committee,

Giulia Daniele - Assistant Professor and Deputy Director CEI-Iscte

João Borralho - PhD Candidate in International Studies

Sophia Kelsch - PhD Candidate in International Studies

Lisbon, 30 January 2025