

This resolution was defeated by the ALA Council on Tuesday, February 3, 2015

Resolution on the Destruction of Libraries and Schools in Gaza in 2014

Whereas the American Library Association (ALA) “deplores the destruction of libraries, library collections, and property, and the disruption of educational process by that act, whether it be done by individuals or groups of individuals, and whether it be done in the name of honest dissent, the desire to control or limit thought or ideas, or for any other purpose” (ALA Policy B 2.8);

Whereas on June 19, 2002 ALA Council passed a “Resolution on the Destruction of Palestinian Libraries, Archives, and other Cultural Institutions” (CD#18.8 of 2001-2002), in which the ALA deplored the destruction of Palestinian libraries and cultural resources in the spring of 2002, and called “upon the government of the United States, as well as other governments, intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations to prevent further destruction of libraries and cultural resources and to provide material assistance for the reconstruction and restoration of these resources”;

Whereas on January 28, 2009 ALA Council passed a “Resolution on the Connection Between the Recent Gaza Conflict and Libraries” (CD#18.1 of 2008-2009) in which the American Library Association called for the “protection of libraries and archives in Gaza and Israel” and urged “the US Government to support the United States Committee of the Blue Shield in upholding the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict”;

Whereas on July 18, 2014 Israeli military forces bombed the al-Ataa Charitable Society in Beit Hounan, Gaza, destroying the library of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) housed in that building; and on July 28, 2014 Israeli forces again bombed the building of the al-Ataa Charitable Society completely destroying it;

Whereas both IBBY and the Tamer Institute for Community Education have reported additional damage inflicted upon libraries in Gaza by Israeli forces during the conflict in 2014;

Whereas, according to Mr. Mustafa El Sawaf, Assistant Undersecretary of Gaza’s Ministry of Culture, two public libraries were completely destroyed, five public libraries were partially destroyed, and there was full or partial destruction of 175 school libraries and 85 private libraries by Israeli forces in 2014;

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Whereas according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), during 2014 twenty-two schools in Gaza “were completely destroyed”; according to the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, “at least 244 schools were damaged or destroyed by Israel’s armed forces during recent fighting”; and according to UNESCO 133 kindergartens were damaged and eleven totally destroyed;

Whereas at least 75 schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), housing displaced civilians, were attacked, leading to great loss of life and injuries; and

Whereas UNRWA had repeatedly given the coordinates of these schools to the Israeli Defense Forces; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA)

1. deploras the destruction and damage of cultural institutions, including schools and libraries, in Gaza during the recent conflict there;
2. again calls for the protection of libraries and cultural resources in Gaza, and urges the US Government to support the United States Committee of the Blue Shield in upholding the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict”; and
3. calls upon the government of the United States, as well as other governments, intergovernmental organizations, and nongovernmental organizations to provide material assistance for the reconstruction and restoration of these libraries and schools.

Mover: Jane Glasby, Councilor-at-Large, 510-206-8614

Secunder: Al Kagan, SRRT Councilor, 217-819-9975

Revised 2/2/2015

Sources for Resolution on the Destruction of Libraries and Schools in Gaza in 2014

ALA Policies

ALA Policy B2.8

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/53intellfreedom#B.2.8>

CD#18.8 of 2001-2002 <http://www.ala.org/offices/iro/awardsactivities/resolutiondestruction>

CD#18.1 of 2008-2009 <http://www.ala.org/offices/iro/awardsactivities/resolutiongazaconflict>

Information on Destruction of Cultural Resources in Gaza in 2014

Alray, Palestinian Media Agency, "Israel attack depleted books in Gaza," Sept. 17, 2014, <http://alray.ps/en/index.php?act=post&id=5401>

International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), "2014 Appeal to rebuild the IBBY Libraries in Gaza," October 2014, <http://www.ibby.org/index.php?id=1398>

International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), "The Situation of the two Libraries in Gaza after the Israeli Aggression & Progress Report," October 2014. Report provided to SRRT, January 2015.

Maysa Jalbout, Sarah Dryden-Peterson and Kevin Watkins, "The Destruction of Gaza's Schools and the Future of Palestinian Children," Brookings Institution, August 4, 2014, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/education-plus-development/posts/2014/08/04-gaza-school-palestinian-children-jalbout-dryden-peterson-watkins>

"Rapid Assessment of Higher Education Institutions in Gaza: Data Analysis Report," UNESCO <http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/UNESCO%20HEI%20Assessment%20Gaza%20Report%20FINAL-January%202015.pdf>

Terrence McCoy, "How Israeli attacks have decimated Gaza's schools," Washington Post, August 6, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/08/06/how-israeli-attacks-have-decimated-gazas-schools/>

Report from the Tamer Institute on damage to libraries in Gaza in 2014 provided to SRRT, January 2015.

“Security Council Told of Indiscriminate, Brutal Killings Children Face in Conflict” Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict
<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/security-council-children-conflict/>

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), “Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Emergency Situation Report (as of 4 September 2014, 08:00 hrs.),”
http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sitrep_04_09_2014.pdf

UN Office of the Secretary General’s Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, “Security Council Told of Indiscriminate, Brutal Killings Children Face in Conflict”, September 8, 2014, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/security-council-children-conflict/>