

The University FROM Gaza: how to survive a genocide from science and research

La Universidad DESDE Gaza: cómo sobrevivir a un genocidio desde la ciencia y la investigación

A Universidade DE Gaza: como sobreviver a um genocídio através da ciência e da investigação

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Abstract

Gaza's universities have always been a target of the Israeli army. Nevertheless, since October 2023 the destruction has been total. We write about the destruction of Gaza's universities, and how -despite the immense shortcomings- Gaza's Higher Education System continues providing knowledge, and overcome challenges, where there was only desolation. They have taught online

classes in the absence of buildings, and they have organized themselves as much as possible to continue doing science and research in a war crime situation. A whole life lesson, of resilience that challenges our universities and the rest of the world, showing the importance of building links and alliances, moving forward together to build a better world.

Keywords: Science and research administration, university educational facilities and resources, blended learning, war crime, resilience, science policy, Palestine, Gaza.

Resumen

Las universidades de Gaza han sido siempre un objetivo del ejército israelí, si bien, desde octubre del 2023 la destrucción ha sido total. En este artículo presentamos la destrucción de las universidades de Gaza y cómo- a pesar de las inmensas carencias- el Sistema de Educación Superior de Gaza continúa ahora en 2026 proporcionando conocimiento y superando retos donde solo había desolación; han impartido clases online ante la falta de edificios, y se han organizado como ha sido posible para continuar cultivando la ciencia y a investigación en una situación en la que eran víctimas de crimen de guerra. Toda una lección de vida y de resiliencia que nos interpela a las universidades del resto del mundo, sobre la importancia de construir vínculos y alianzas, para avanzar juntos en la construcción de un mundo mejor.

Palabras clave: Administración de la ciencia y de la investigación, instalación y recursos educativos universitarios, aprendizaje semipresencial, crimen de guerra, resiliencia, política científica, Palestina, Gaza.

Resumo

As universidades de Gaza sempre foram alvo do exército israelense, embora desde outubro de 2023 a destruição tenha sido total. Neste artigo, apresentamos a destruição das universidades de Gaza e como – apesar das imensas limitações – o Sistema de Ensino Superior de Gaza continua agora, em 2026, a fornecer conhecimento e a superar desafios onde havia apenas desolação; Deram aulas online na ausência de edifícios e organizaram-se o máximo possível para continuar a administrar ciência e investigação em situações de crimes de guerra. Uma lição de vida inteira, de resiliência que nos desafia a universidades do resto do mundo, sobre a importância de construir laços e alianças, avançando juntos por um mundo melhor.

Palavras-chave: Ciência e administração da investigação, instalações e recursos educativos universitários, aprendizagem mista, crime de guerra, resiliência, política científica, Palestina, Gaza.

Introduction

We are aware of the importance of scientific exchange, inter-university collaboration and shared projects for university growth, even more so with those universities that face more adversity. In this context, the University of Seville has invited seven professors from Gaza within the framework of the Erasmus + programme, Key Action KA171, which finances the exchanges of scientific knowledge and research between European institutions and non-associated third countries (Spanish Service for the Internationalisation of Education, 2025).

In December 2025, the University of Seville offered the possibility of inviting teaching staff from the Middle East and Africa as part of this key action (University of Seville, 2025). Faced with this opportunity, a group of professors from the US -organised as PalestinUS (2024) and member of the Network of Spanish Universities for Palestine (RUXP, 2024)- requested Erasmus grants for seven professors from different areas of knowledge and with different institutional positions.

Two rectors were invited -Prof. Ayman Sobh, mathematician, Rector of Al Aqsa University, and Prof. Omar Melad, chemist and Rector of Al Azhar University-. A Vice-Rector -Dr. Ra'ed Hussein AlHajjar, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs-, a Dean -Dr. Radwan Aburukba, Dean of International Relations-, both from Al Aqsa University, and three lecturers: Mr. Hussam Saeed Musa, Lecturer of Computer Engineer, Mr. Nizar Abuselmiya, Lecturer of Economy -both at Al Aqsa University-, and Mr. Ameer Alareer, Teaching Assistant in Computer Engineering at Al Azhar University. All the visits were proposed to be carried out during the week of April 4 to 11, 2026, and all the applications were approved (University of Seville, 2026).

However, in May 3, 2026, none of these visits exists: being in a war crime zone constitutes a huge problem for academic mobility. Gaza is a clear example of this problem (Albanese, 2024; UNGA, 2025), the Erasmus scholarships are there, but there is no way to leave Gaza.

Since 30 January 2026, Israel has allowed a limited number of people to leave Gaza through the Rafah crossing (bordering Egypt) because they are sick, have dual nationality or are members of international humanitarian organisations, all under Israeli control (Fabian, 2026). However, the Rafah border crossing operates only when Israel allows it, which is almost never. In fact, it has been closed since April 20, 2026, leaving almost 20,000 patients waiting to reach a hospital (Xinhua, 2026). For Israel, academic and university exchanges are not even a category worth considering when it comes to Palestinian academics, so they cannot even be requested.

Other possibilities remain, for example, exit through the Erez Pass in northern Gaza, which operates under extreme military restrictions, and allows the very occasional passage of diplomats or foreign missions. In this case, everything depends on an Israeli military body that manages civil affairs in Gaza and the West Bank (Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories [COGAT], 2023). The exit through this crossing is very difficult, but on December 17, 2025, six Erasmus students from Gaza arrived at Spanish universities by this route, that is, they were evacuated through the Erez crossing for academic reasons; they arrived by bus in Jordan, and from there to Madrid (Martín, 2026).

To achieve this milestone, it is necessary to coordinate with the Spanish Consulate in Jerusalem, and they are the ones who send an evacuation list to the COGAT, which finally decides whether to open the way or not, whether who can leave or not. We made contacts, and the invited Gazan professors were placed on an evacuation list for academic reasons. However, the crossing is still closed, three of the professors invited are in Gaza.

Some teachers were able to leave and escape the genocide in Gaza and are displaced in Egypt, in this case the problem is getting a visa to travel to Spain. As a first requirement to process the application, the embassy requires them to certify that they are living in Egypt; consular staff seem to be unaware that the Egyptian government classifies all Palestinians as "foreigners" and they cannot officially reside there, then they are left in a legal limbo (The New Arab, 2023) that prevents them from applying for a residency certificate (Yee, 2024). The Spanish Embassy in Cairo has not responded to our messages explaining the exceptional nature of the situation; it seems that Spanish diplomacy in Egypt does not contemplate the category of academic and university exchanges when it comes to Palestinian professors either. Four of the guest professors are in this situation.

Under these circumstances, we decided, as PalestinUS, to organize an online conference with all our guests. Five of them agreed to participate, but one due to health problems and another due for agenda reasons finally declined the invitation. Three presented their papers, one from Egypt and two from Gaza, which we present below (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Poster announcing the University conference FROM Gaza



Lecture 1: Impact of the War on Higher Education in Gaza

Dr. Hussein AlHajjar is Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Acting Dean of Post-Graduate Studies, Former Dean of Planning and Quality Assurance, Associate Professor of Educational Administration at the Faculty of Education, at the University of Al Aqsa. His research interests are educational leadership, quality assurance, crisis management, and organizational behaviour. As a manager and expert in educational administration, his participation was key in the leadership of the online learning system that was developed in Gaza during the war, which made academic continuity possible during the crisis.

To convey to us how higher education is in Gaza at the moment, Professor AlHajjar divided his talk into four parts, taking a tour of education before 2023, the damage caused by the war, the challenges it has posed to the higher education system in Gaza, and how higher education is projected in the future. Professor Al Hajar connected from Egypt.

Higher education in Gaza by 7 October 2023

There are 18 institutions of higher education in Gaza, of which seven are universities, which were among the most prestigious in the Middle East (see Figures 2 to 8), and the rest other institutions of higher education, including the Alquds Open University. The total number of students was over 150,000.

Figure 1

University of Al Aqsa



<https://www.alaqsa.edu.ps/>

Figure 2

Islamic University of Gaza



<https://www.iugaza.edu.ps/>

Figure 3

University of Al Azhar



<https://www.alazhar.edu.ps/>

Figure 4

University of Al Israa



<https://main.israa.edu.ps/>

Figure 5

University of Palestine, Gaza



<https://up.edu.ps/ar/>

Figure 6

Gaza University



<https://www.gu.edu.ps/ar>

Figure 7

Al-Quds Open University



<https://www.qou.edu/>

Loss and Damage during the War

Human losses

All the universities were physically destroyed. In addition, more than 200 teachers and 2,000 students were intentionally sought and killed (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2024), what is called as escholasticide (García Archila & Ixtamer, 2024). Professor Toda, who works as a translator in this talk, recalls that, at the University of Seville, PalestinUS made a list of names and CVs of some of these victims, many of them with very brilliant careers. It should be remembered that universities were one of the first targets of the bombings, and the most brilliant professors were the preferred target of their murders. The losses have been immense and irrecoverable.

In addition to the fatalities, there are thousands of wounded, many of whom have suffered traumatic mutilations as the only way to save their lives, and the large number of students and teachers arrested and held in the terrible Israeli prisons. In addition, university infrastructures, laboratories and libraries were all razed.

Material losses

In the first months of the war, the total destruction of Palestinian universities took place (see Figures 9 to 12).

Figure 8

Islamic University of Gaza, October 11, 2023



Figure 9

Al-Quds Open University, November 15, 2023



Figure 10

Al Azhar University, November 4, 2023



Figure 11

Al Aqsa University, January 2024



Challenges of distance learning during the war

Since June 2025, constant attempts to resume classes by overcoming difficulties. For the university community, as for everyone in Gaza, it has been two years of constant insecurity, psychological stress, with a lack of buildings not only to study, but to live. In addition, food and water shortages have required a lot of time spent waiting in long queues to meet these basic

needs. There were no computers suitable for online teaching, many technological devices (mobiles, tablets, laptops) were lost during the bombings and forced displacements, in addition to not having stable Internet, and when it arrived the signal was too weak and slow to work. On the other hand, the lack of income has prevented families from paying fees, so teachers have been paid little or not paid at all.

University administration and management was difficult, with weak communication given that students were often unable to attend classes, nor could faculty meet to plan teaching, in addition to the immense loss of life, with so many faculty and rectoral and dean's teams killed. Only the theoretical part of the subjects has been taught, the practical part, essential in science or medicine careers, no. He also recalled that taking online exams makes the evaluation more complex as well, as happened to us during the confinement due to COVID. The economic capacity of universities is ruined.

The technological challenges that had to be faced were equally immense: the lack of servers and computers, the loss of data, information and records, was compounded by the fact that university websites stopped working, and exams could not be taken due to the lack of electricity.

The development of research also had to overcome enormous challenges: without access to libraries and with all laboratories destroyed, students could not finish their research or their theses and research activity had to be interrupted.

Professor AlHajjar stressed that despite the extraordinarily difficult circumstances, the motivation to continue studying was a matter of resilience and psychological resilience.

The Future of Higher Education

Although the attacks have not ended, a situation is currently posed as if they were in the post-war period. In the short term, 1-3 years, the goal is hybrid teaching, in which it is intended to resume theoretical teaching in face-to-face classes and begin practical teaching by conducting simple experiments in temporary facilities until the construction of university buildings begins.

It is essential to have equipment, instruments and materials for scientific laboratories such as chemistry, biology, physics, medical laboratory sciences, nursing and computer science. It is extremely necessary that prefabricated units or caravans arrive, as temporary measures.

Financial aid is also essential so that students can pay their tuition, and teachers receive their salaries.

In the medium to long term, in about four years, the goal is to return to face-to-face education in universities, classrooms, laboratories, equipment, etc., with everything rebuilt thanks to strong financial support.

This teacher recalls again that, despite the circumstances and having to face great difficulties, in addition to the enormous psychological burden: "we have the firm determination to continue with Higher Education in Palestine."

Lecture 2: Education without borders: a message from Gaza

Ameer Nasser Alareer is a MP Software Engineering Student at the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology at Al-Azhar University in Gaza. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in Artificial Intelligence and cybersecurity, whose final master's thesis was there last April. He received the National Award for Excellence in Research by Palestinian universities in 2022. Ameer, 25, presents his presentation from Gaza.

Speaking from within the war, neither from before nor after

Why do I dedicate myself to Artificial Intelligence and cybersecurity? My field, my mission

Ameer's dedication to AI and cybersecurity is motivated by the lack of experts on these topics in Gaza and in Palestine in general, which leads to a dangerously vulnerable Palestinian digital infrastructure. The absence of local experts means that all institutions are exposed. and that cybersecurity is a problem more than a real one.

When everything around you is destroyed, you understand that knowledge is the only thing that cannot be taken away from you. That is why I chose this field, and that is why I am not going to stop. Knowledge as resistance.

Once he defends his Master's Thesis, his goal is to do a doctoral thesis in cybersecurity and AI, not only to advance knowledge, but to transfer it to Gaza and collaborate in closing this gap and building an entire generation of Palestinian researchers. This is their mission.

The University: Al-Azhar – Resilience and Action

The university was completely razed to the ground (see figures 13 and 14), yet twice as many students have enrolled this semester as before the war, despite living in tents or in ruins as 70% of Gaza's homes were totally destroyed. In these difficult times, the university never abandoned its students. One example was the University's response to fourth-, fifth- and sixth-year medical students who were able to leave Gaza at the start of the war: far from abandoning them, the university arranged scholarships through partner institutions so that they could continue their

studies, undertaking clinical internships and working as resident medical interns in South Africa and Pakistan. They did not lose their academic year. They were not far behind. This is a great example of "Gaza is not lacking in talent, but in lack of access." When access is created, Palestinian students do not waste a single day.

Figure 12

Al Azhar University



Figure 13

Bombing of Al Azhar University, November 4, 2023



The classes: photographs from April 2026

The photos -taken on April 2, 2026- show classrooms with hundreds of students, many of them women, in which, despite having a single laptop for the whole class, they attest that the future continues. The walls and ceilings are made of metal, and have been rebuilt from the material of the rubble, after everything has been destroyed (Figures 15-17).

Figure 14

Hundreds of students in the classrooms



Figure 15

One laptop, one whole class



Figure 16

Metal ceilings and walls



This is not a story of what we have lost, but it is a story of refusing to give up

My research: the Master's Thesis in progress

Ameer's research focuses on using large language models (AI) to reduce false positives in real-world DevSecOps (the development of secure operations) contexts. He participates weekly in meetings with the international research institute of Ireland on the LERO educational software, and deepens his research.

What is DevSecOps? (Development, Security, and Operations) is a modern approach to software engineering that integrates computer security into all phases of the development cycle, from initial design to production, rather than treating it as a final or separate stage. It is based on three fundamental principles: (1) continuous security validation throughout the process; (2) the automation of security testing within development pipelines (called CI/CD pipelines); and (3) the principle of shift-left security (Microsoft Security, 2024). This paradigm is consolidated both in the technology industry and in international academic research, where it is described as a key evolution towards secure and resilient software systems (Rajapakse et al., 2021; 2022; OWASP 2024).

One of the main operational challenges in DevSecOps environments is the high volume of automatically generated security alerts and, in particular, the high proportion of false positives: signals that the system flags as threats when in fact they are harmless.

Studies indicate that between 40% and 70% of all security alerts in production environments are false positives, causing what is known as "security team alert fatigue" (SOC): analysts, overwhelmed by noise, can lose sight of real threats (Emanuel, 2026).

Ameer's research directly addresses this problem by applying Large Language Models (LLMs, the same family of AI that underpins tools such as ChatGPT) to accurately distinguish genuine alerts from false positives in real time, improving the reliability of automated vulnerability detection systems. The work is carried out in real production environments -not simulated-, which gives it significant applied value and direct relevance to the global technology industry.

What is LERO? LERO (Research Ireland Centre for Software) is Ireland's national centre for software research, ranked as the second-best software research centre in the world for citation impact. Founded in 2005 and based at the University of Limerick, it brings together more than 250 active researchers from nine Irish universities -including Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin- and collaborates with more than 50 industrial partners, including four of the ten

largest technology companies in the world. His lines of research cover artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, software engineering, fintech and digital health (Lero, 2026).

Ameer's collaboration with LERO is articulated through regular research meetings where they work on recent publications in AI and cybersecurity, discuss current DevSecOps challenges, and receive feedback on design and research advances. This collaboration has been maintained uninterrupted during the war, entirely through online connections from Gaza, and is aligned with Professor Liliana Pasquale's line of work on adaptive systems and AI-powered security (Emanuel, 2026).

Ameer presents us with the current paradox of how, on the one hand, he collaborates in the development of artificial intelligence systems, while in his daily life he has to fight to get fire and be able to cook (Figure 18).

Figure 17

Building Intelligence Systems, while fighting for fire.



Note. Image created with the help of the Gemenis AI

Resilience is not something we study, it's something we live.

My students, at war

He explains that, despite the fact that everything was destroyed, classes have continued in a hybrid format, face-to-face or only online. Throughout the war, Ameer oversaw more than 30 teams of students who continued to work, build, and create projects, not because the conditions

were right, but because they refused to wait for them to be. He found them wherever he could: in camps for displaced people, among tents, in the queues for bread and water. His first and only question was always the same: what do you need? And the answer was always the same: we want to keep learning.

Ameer recounts a moment that sums up the reality of teaching under war. One week, a student did not turn in the work that showed the progress in his project. He sent her a message apologizing for the delay. The reason: they had just pulled him out from under the rubble. Alive. Wounded. In pain. And his first thought -his first message- was to apologize for not being able to turn in the work. He did not ask for compassion. He did not ask for an extension. He asked for only one thing: the right to continue.

In Gaza, education is a choice that is made every day, against all possible obstacles.

Behind every chair is a student who has chosen education over desperation.

How we deal with it and what we need: transparency and partnerships

This education, in spite of everything, faces many obstacles -which they try to overcome in all possible ways-, here are some examples:

- (1) To offer online education when there are no buildings standing.
- (2) When it is not possible due to the lack of Internet, they go to tents and organize face-to-face classes.
- (3) Metal structures are recycled to create spaces and furniture.
- (4) They optimize the use of a laptop, even in four different locations.
- (5) They continue to carry out research within the framework of international cooperation by participating in weekly research meetings with LERO.
- (6) Little by little they are trying to return to face-to-face education, even this first semester (2026).

The most immediate needs are access to raw materials for the reconstruction of the buildings and the most basic furniture. The Israeli occupying forces control every entry point and do not allow the arrival of furniture or basic equipment. The reconstruction of classrooms is very expensive, as it requires infrastructure. They depend on the support of their partners, but the needs are greater than the help that arrives. To cooperate is not a matter of charity, but of infrastructure.

When you support us -through research agreements, faculty development, student programs- you are not helping us survive. You are helping us to build something more, something that will last much longer than all this.

What do we ask for? Our requirement, it's not sympathy, it's alliances

Ameer proposes us to apply for joint projects and research in AI and cybersecurity with real environments in Gaza that no laboratory can simulate.

We have the researchers, the ideas and the context of the real world. We need academic bridges.

Apply for Teacher Training and Development projects, such as Erasmus+ and similar programmes, to help our educators grow, train and come back stronger.

Strong faculty means stronger students, and a stronger future.

Offer opportunities for students: Scholarships, co-supervised theses and academic exchanges.
Our students are determined: let us give them a gateway to the world and they won't waste the opportunity

Spread and expand: Spread the message of Gaza, encourage colleagues from Spanish universities to interact with us. One conversation leads to another. An agreement opens many doors.

We are still teaching

We're still learning

We are still rebuilding

In spite of everything... We move on.

Lecture 3: Teaching and Learning under War

Dr. Radwan Aburukba is a Dean of International Relations at Al-Aqsa University and Associate Professor of Psychology. He is a leading academic and researcher specializing in psychological trauma and people with disabilities and a member of the International Emergency Committee that supports universities in Gaza. He has managed numerous local, regional and international projects, especially Erasmus+ projects under the European Union. He has also made academic visits to Spain, the United Kingdom and Italy, giving lectures in the fields of psychotherapy, both individual and group, and child development.

During the war in Gaza, Dr. Aburukba conducted several collaborative studies with European researchers in the field of psychological trauma, one of which (Abudayya et al. 2023) was recognized as Research of the Year and awarded the Best Research award by the *Journal of Mental Health and Prevention* (Mental Health & Prevention, 2024) .

Dr. Aburukba's Introduction

He begins by greeting us from Gaza, and with the people of Gaza who are currently displaced in camps, with special greetings to the university students in Gaza who are suffering from this devastating war. His message comes from the heart of Gaza, which is the symbol of peace, love and freedom.

Dr. Aburukba puts us in the situation, and urges us to imagine attending a class without electricity, without stable internet, and sometimes without a safe place to study. For many students in Gaza, this is not an exception, but the everyday reality. To better understand the challenges facing higher education in Gaza, he has told us two true stories, selected from many that occurred during the war.

The first story is about a 22-year-old female student named Sally. Before the war, Sally was a college student like any other, full of dreams and aspirations. But with the outbreak of war, those dreams were suddenly shattered. One day, her family's home was bombed by a sudden attack and she lost them all. Sally survived alone and later lived with relatives in displacement camps. When universities resumed online learning after a year of war, she decided to continue her study. She only had a mobile phone. Every day she went out to look for a weak internet signal, just to attend his classes. She had lost everything: her home, her belongings, and even access to basic technological tools. However, thanks to that small device, she completed all the courses she had left and even worked on her graduation project. On the day of her thesis defence, Sally sat on the ground of the street, connected to the internet, and presented her work. It was a painful moment, but also a moment of dignity and achievement. That day, she graduated. Congratulations to Sally.

The second story is about Aya, a graphic design student in her last semester. Aya used to go daily to an internet café in Deir al-Balah to complete her graduation project, as it was one of the few places where she could access stable internet. The cafeteria used to be full of students, all trying to continue their education under difficult circumstances. One day, April 26, 2025, while she was there finishing her project, the café was suddenly bombed by the Israeli army (The Palestinian Information Center, 2025). Aya, along with many other students, lost her life; she was buried, and with her, all her dreams.

These are not isolated stories. They reflect the reality of many university students in Gaza. This is how they study. That's how they hold on to their dreams. And sometimes, that's how those dreams get lost. Students in Gaza are not just looking for education; They are struggling to preserve hope in the most difficult circumstances.

He quotes Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darweesh:

On this earth life is worth living,

On this earth, mistress of the earth,

Mother of beginnings and mother of ends,

It was called Palestine,

It was renamed Palestine,

My lady, I deserve, because you are my lady, I deserve life. (Darwish, 2005).

Main challenges facing higher education during the war

He lists the main challenges they face:

1. Destruction of infrastructure: All universities in Gaza have been attacked, causing partial or total destruction of buildings, laboratories and libraries.
2. Significant human losses: Teachers, academics and qualified professionals have been killed, as well as thousands of students.
3. Loss of records and documentation: University and ministry files have been destroyed, making it difficult to verify and document students' academic progress.
4. Disruption of the educational process and forced transition: Face-to-face education has come to a complete halt, forcing a shift towards online learning, which remains largely inaccessible due to power and internet outages, along with a humanitarian situation where survival is the priority.
5. Displacement and forced migration: Students and teachers have been displaced from their homes, making communication and academic continuity extremely difficult.
6. Psychological and social challenges: Students and educators suffer severe psychological trauma that affects their ability to teach and learn effectively.
7. Lack of educational resources: The loss of books, devices, and learning materials has significantly affected academic performance.

If the war ended today, complete healing and a full return to face-to-face education would take five to seven years.

Developing International Cooperation Through the *Healing Through Learning* Project

Despite these difficult circumstances, Dr. Redwan has presented The *Healing Through Learning* to the European Commission, in the call ERASMUS-EDU-2026-CBHE (Capacity Building in Higher Education), which a date of May 2026 is still under evaluation (Al-Aqsa University, 2026). This project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Palestinian education system to respond to the psychosocial needs of learners affected by conflict through digitally enabled trauma-informed education. The project focuses on building the capacities of teachers and educational professionals through flexible, low-bandwidth training programmes. It develops a validated trauma-informed education framework supported by accessible digital platforms and tools adapted to crisis contexts. Dedicated digital platforms host training modules, resources, and

guidance to ensure continuity, scalability, and accessibility. The project is implemented through a collaborative partnership involving Al-Aqsa University, four European partners -including the University of Seville- and three Palestinian partner institutions. Project outputs are piloted and validated in real school settings to ensure relevance and effectiveness. In the long term, the project aims to achieve sustainable institutional impact and provide a transferable model for other crisis-affected contexts.

Conclusions

These three presentations have allowed us to learn first-hand about the high number of universities and students in Gaza, as well as its recognized level of excellence. These high standards in the administration of science and knowledge explain the recovery of Higher Education, despite the unthinkable level of destruction, classes resumed in June 2025 and the system continues and plans for its future.

We list below the three main conclusions that emerge from the presentations presented.

The first conclusion is the state of shock and destruction. The physical demolition of all university infrastructure and fabric has been intentional, planned and systematic. The losses have not only been physical; the murder of hundreds of academics, the most brilliant, has also left a human loss impossible to replace. These attacks on all educational facilities and resources had two objectives: to destroy the administrative capacity of scientific and research development in Gaza, and to traumatize the entire educational community.

The second conclusion is that science education and research have continued in Gaza: first online, then blended and in this semester -2026- in person. Despite all the destruction, students have managed to continue their studies from the heart of the greatest war crime in modern history, have submitted their Graduation Projects, and have graduated. The administrative capacity of scientific development is maintained.

The third conclusion is that this continuity of the Educational System has been possible due to the determination of the university community to achieve it. In a scenario of destruction and death, education has become a source of self-improvement and resilience. The educational community has transformed any place into a university classroom, whether it was in reclaimed buildings, tents, or just with mobile devices. Science and research provide challenges, projects, activities and a path of learning and growth for the betterment of society; just the necessary elements to facilitate resilience and psychological growth, and for trauma to be less affected (Lera & Abulakibash, 2022).

The University FROM Gaza shows us that knowledge and science are excellent resources to help us move forward even in the most adverse conditions. But to continue to be this great resource, it must continue with the reconstruction and the advancement of knowledge, and this task cannot be carried out alone.

These conclusions challenge us as universities in at least two major areas: the need for research and collaboration.

The destruction of Gaza's entire physical and human university system cannot be forgotten. The bombs dropped on universities were hybrid weapons programmed with software developed in Israeli universities and research centres (Wind, 2024), and which work thanks to the collaboration and resources provided by large technology companies such as Microsoft, Amazon, or Google (Albanese, 2025). The use of this technology was also crucial in the murder of academics; one case was Professor Refaat al-Areer, who was killed along with his closest family on 8 December 2023. It was an attack specifically aimed at his apartment located on the third floor of the building, only his flat was bombed, everyone was killed. It was the second time, and in 2014 they also bombed his house, killing 30 relatives who were there (Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, 2023). This is one of the examples of the hundreds of teachers killed in Gaza. None of this has yet been investigated.

For Gaza's universities to continue to advance in their reconstruction, and to continue to produce science and knowledge, university collaboration is necessary. It is essential to sign agreements, projects, exchanges, research seminars, doctoral programmes, publications, support to continue studies, financial and logistical support, etc., all collaboration is essential, for Gaza and for the rest of the world.

Gaza challenges us, it is up to us to act.

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