

(NEWS AND VIEWS) FORUM

*This second News and Views forum
features a set of linked statements on
Gaza offered by a group of transnational
feminist scholars located across
US institutions.*

The Genocidal Assault on Palestine:
A Transnational Feminist Call
to End Colonialism and War

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Reproductive Justice from Turtle Island to Palestine

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APRIL WARD, mother of incarcerated Mickiael Ward,¹ a survivor of psychological police torture, struggles each day, wondering if, as she puts it, her baby is going to live or die and whether she will ever be reunited with him again:

I also have two nephews. When they walk out of the house, I don't know if the police are going to harm them—if they're coming back. It doesn't matter what they do—the cops are going to harass them and pull out their guns even before they pat them down. These kids—twelve, thirteen years old—have to experience this trauma even before entering high school.

April's son Mickiael is locked up with hundreds of indefinitely incarcerated survivors of police torture and frame-ups by a police force whose members have trained with the same Israeli military currently massacring Palestinians en masse. US and Israeli state reproductive injustices are not merely similar—they are interconnected and mutually reinforce and intensify one another. Israel's killing of more than four thousand children in one month continues its same settler-colonial legacies that pressure Jewish Israelis to reproduce while obstructing Palestinian birthing—whether by blocking pregnant Palestinian women in labor at checkpoints from reaching medical facilities, or Israeli state practices that deny Palestinians the right to bury their children. Israel's long-standing practice of holding captive Palestinian children's bodies in cemeteries or freezers² also entails a form of psychological torture, leaving Palestinian family members to wonder—sometimes for decades—whether their child is even really dead.

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1. Gov. Pritzker Is Failing Imprisoned People in Illinois," MAMAS Collective, Medium, December 7, 2020, <https://motheringisradical.medium.com/gov-pritzker-is-failing-imprisoned-people-in-illinois-a-reflection-from-mama-april-ward-11aebb4ad662>.
 2. Shatha Hammad, "Israel's Policy of Withholding Bodies Leaves Palestinian Families in Limbo," *Middle East Eye*, August 8, 2021, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/palestine-israel-policy-withholding-bodies-families-limbo>.

From Turtle Island to Palestine, we can no longer separate contexts like the Oakland cops in riot gear who evicted houseless moms from the abandoned home where they were staying with a SWAT team and tanks in 2022; the United States's forced hysterectomies of migrant and Puerto Rican women; police killings of Black mothers like Korryn Gaines; and the invisible histories of US medical violence against Black mothers, which take us back to the rape and sexual assault of enslaved women as a means of reproducing enslaved people in service of white capital.

As perfect allies, the US and Israel depend upon violating mothering and caregiving to accelerate the progress of settler-colonialism — positioning Black, Indigenous (including Palestinian) and people of color mothers/caregivers in a dual struggle to protect themselves from the same state apparatus which they are fighting to protect their loved ones.

Right now, our reproductive justice movements should be shrieking:

Free Gaza!

Free Palestine!

To all Palestinian mothers and caregivers, my heart is fused with yours forever.