



March 3, 2021

Dear Professor Akhtar:

We are writing to you regarding your plan to deliver the Keynote address at the online event hosted by the Tel Aviv Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis on April 4, 2021.

We kindly request that you refrain from participating in this event.

This request is based in our support of the people of Palestine, who have called upon international scholars, celebrities, and entertainers to refrain from coming to Israel (<https://bdsmovement.net/>). In this spirit, our organization has joined mental health Networks in other countries to launch a number of “Don’t Go” initiatives targeting mental health conferences in Israel and asking colleagues not to attend.

Our website (<https://usapalmhn.com/>) and a recent article in the *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/aps.1630>) document these “Don’t Go” campaigns in detail.

Of course, some exceptional Israeli organizations such as B’Tselem (<https://www.btselem.org/>) do take a moral stand for the people of Palestine and therefore deserve our admiration. We do not view the Tel Aviv Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis as one of these exceptions, however.

Further, we observe that even participating in an online event hosted by an Israeli organization gives support to the state of Israel through endorsing the fiction of Israeli fair-mindedness and “openness to dialogue.” Participating in these events reinforces the Israeli *status quo* as normalcy and denies the elephant-in-the-room: collusion with the occupation and the violence inflicted on every aspect of daily life experienced by the Palestinian people.

We are reaching out to you personally because of your longstanding interest in human rights and because we believe that action on behalf of human rights lies at the center of our professionalism. Please join us.

We would be delighted to discuss this further by email, Skype, or telephone, and hope to hear from you.

Yours very truly,

The Steering Committee of the USA-Palestine Mental Health Network:

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