The right to education is regarded as a fundamental social right, as stipulated in various monumental international human rights conventions. It is closely related to the recognized notions of human dignity, personal development, and societal advancement. This is attributed to the consideration that exercising the right to education and accessing education affects the capacity to enjoy other fundamental human rights. Education further assumes a unique position as a means of reinforcing a people’s heritage and national identity.

The right to education is indispensable and guaranteed in international law, particularly in human rights law as well as international covenants and conventions. The most of important of these include:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 13 and 14)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28 and 29)
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (Article 10 and 14)
- Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Article 22)

In addition to human rights law, a number of treaties in international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, delineate the right to education’s applicability in times of war and armed conflict. It specifically outlines the duties of the occupying power to protect the right to education and ensure that protected civilian persons are able to exercise this right, even during times of armed conflict.

“The most potent weapon of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.”

Freedom fighter- South Africa
In the **Palestine** context, where the Palestinian people are subjected to the Zionist-Israeli apartheid-colonial enterprise and forced displacement, the Palestinian education sector on both sides of the Green Line is confronted with a multitude of impediments in the form of colonial policies and practices. Although these policies vary depending on the region of Mandatory Palestine, the targeted Palestinian population, and the respective extent of colonial control, they all aim at:

- Suppressing historical facts through imposing the Zionist-Israeli narrative and negating the Palestinian narrative.
- Dismantling the Palestinian collective national identity through policies of Israelization and alienation.
- Reinforcing the fragmentation of the Palestinian people and the provisions of Zionist-Israeli colonial control.

Since its creation in 1948, Israel has sought to fully control the Palestinian population inside the Green Line by implementing policies that seek to dissolve the Palestinian people’s national identity and heritage. Such policies and practices simultaneously aim to perpetuate the Zionist-Israeli colonial narrative and sensibility. Education constitutes a pivotal means that Israel uses to achieve these goals through:

- Imposing the Israeli curriculum on schools in Palestinian villages and cities.
- Imposing Zionist-Israeli concepts, values, and narrative in the curriculum.
- Omitting any recognition of the Palestinian people’s presence in the land prior to Israel’s creation and distorting the facts about their current existence.
- Diminishing the Palestinian people’s national culture by undermining the Arabic language and negating and/or distorting their moral and behavioral heritage.
- Propagating conceptions of defeat and the futility of trying to resist the existing colonial regime.
- Exploiting schools and educational programs to perpetuate the normalization of the Israeli colonial system and coercing Palestinian children to prove loyalty to the same entity that oppresses their people.
Jerusalem

Since its de jure annexation in 1967, east Jerusalem has confronted a series of systematic Israeli policies aimed at Judaizing the city, concealing its Palestinian character, isolating the Palestinian population and obliterating their Palestinian national identity. Considering this context, the Palestinian education sector in Jerusalem faces many difficulties, namely:

- Israeli attempts to impose the Israeli curriculum on Palestinian schools by offering financial incentives.
- Stifling and impoverishing schools and educational institutions that implement the Palestinian curriculum.
- Censoring the Palestinian curriculum by excluding any lesson or content that highlights the Palestinian narrative or shows historical facts that contradict the Zionist-Israeli narrative.
- Denying construction licenses for additional Palestinian schools and educational facilities despite the shortage of classrooms evident in the city.
- Obstructing students’ access to universities in the West Bank, and not recognizing Palestinian university degrees for most majors or setting impracticable conditions to equate them with Israeli university degrees.
- Arresting, suppressing and targeting school and university students.
Statistics on the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip in 2014 indicate that it engaged in:

- The complete destruction of 6 public and private schools, 11 kindergartens, and 3 higher education institutions.
- The slight, partial or severe damage of 450 educational establishments (176 public and private schools, 263 private kindergartens, and 11 higher education institutions).
- The damage of 83 United Nations Relief and Works Agency schools.

The West Bank and Gaza Strip

The education sector in the West Bank and Gaza Strip faces many restrictions, which can be summarized in the following points:

- Direct physical attacks on educational facilities and arresting students.
- Demolishing educational facilities, including schools.
- Monitoring the content of the Palestinian Authority’s curriculum and providing interpretations of it that falsely construct any discussion on the Palestinian narrative and guaranteed rights as anti-Semitic, inciting violence, and inconsistent with peace.
- Coercing the Palestinian Ministry of Education to remove the Palestinian people’s national identity from the curriculum and subsequently replacing it with a narrative that is consistent with the Zionist-Israeli ideology.
- Pressuring donor countries to impose fundamental changes on the Palestinian curriculum which subvert the Palestinian people’s collective identity and their right to self-determination.
- Prohibiting construction and expansion of educational facilities in Area C.

The right of colonized peoples to educate their children about their culture, rights, and resisting oppression:

Article 29 (1) (c) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that education aims at:
“The development of respect for the child's [...] own cultural identity, language and values, [...] and the country from which he or she may originate [...].”

Article 15 (1) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that:
“Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.”

The Gaza Strip

In addition to the aforementioned policies, the Gaza Strip suffers from a heightened crisis as a result of Israel’s repeated wars and the ongoing blockade, the most important of which are:

- Bombing and destroying a number of educational facilities in various areas of the Gaza Strip.
- Acute shortage of supplies for schools and universities.
- Severe overcrowding in public and United Nations Relief and Works Agency schools.
- Imposing restrictions on the movement of students to and from the Gaza Strip.

The Gaza Strip