

To:

Executive Board members of the Reina Sofia Museum

Madrid, Spain

Subject: **Urgent Request for Program Title Revision and Clarification**

Dear Executive Board members of the Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid,

As a institutional members of ICOM, ICOM Israel is deeply concerned about your recent program titled "International Solidarity with Palestine" [\[link\]](#).

We are particularly troubled by your choice to label it "From the River to the Sea," a term highly contentious, especially given the current political climate. The framing of the slogan as a "Poetic motto," as explained in the program's introduction, is misleading. It is concerning that such a phrase is featured on your official webpage, especially considering its recent designation as "a genocidal call to violence to destroy the state of Israel" in countries like the USA [\[link\]](#) and outlawed by Germany [\[link\]](#).

"From the River to the Sea" can be traced back to the founding charter of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), adopted in 1964 (prior to 1967). The PLO's declaration was made in tandem with the negation of the Partitioning of Palestine and the establishment of Israel, effectively calling for the erasure of the state of Israel. It is worth noting that in this charter, the PLO does not claim sovereignty over the West Bank and over Gaza. Today, over 7 million Jewish people reside in this region within their lawful state, as determined by international agreements and resolutions, starting with UN Partition Plan (Resolution 181) and subsequent agreements.

Furthermore, your program references "the emergency situation that Gaza has been enduring since October 2023" without acknowledging or even hinting at the heinous act of terror and *massacre of innocent civilians* on October 7th, which transcended the Israel-Palestine conflict. Presently, 133 individuals, *kidnapped by Hamas*, including children, women, and elderly men, are held hostage in Gaza. Their release would undoubtedly bring relief to all people in the region.

The stated goals of the program include "creating collective spaces for critical thinking about the current complex geopolitical scenario and supporting Palestinian artists and curators to connect their struggles and experiences with international solidarity networks." Additionally, the program aims to "cry out for peace on all the planet." While noble causes, it is concerning since critical thinking and international solidarity networks cannot flourish in a one-sided discussion based on *unfounded information*, without truly grappling with the complexity of the situation. If peace and harmony are indeed the aspirations, this approach is flawed and falls short. It could be much more productive to be open to hearing about thoughtful acts of collaboration between Israeli and Palestinian people, artists, and collaborators aimed at building bridges to a better future rather than casting terror.

Until October 7th, a ceasefire was in effect between Israel and Gaza. While we share concerns for the region's future, the well-being of its people, and the preservation of cultural heritage, we are appalled by your program. As an internationally acclaimed institution, we also remind you of Article 4.2 of the code of ethics issued by ICOM museums mandates *providing well-founded information*. You should exercise responsibility, striving to uphold cultural values instead of fuelling tensions and provoking further animosity. We urge you to change the title and revise your program to genuinely reflect efforts for a better future for all people in the region. We will be happy to cooperate and help think together about steps that build trust.

We conclude with a call for the immediate and unconditional **release of all hostages**. We implore internationally acclaimed organizations like yours, grounded in humanist and democratic values, to condemn Hamas's heinous attack. The time for action is now.

Sincerely,

Raz Samira

Chairperson ICOM Israel