Scotland's International Poetry Festival

STATEMENT ON PALESTINE

As a literary festival that celebrates artists attuned to the world around them, we resist the normalisation of oppression, occupation, and the systemic violation of human rights and international law. As such, StAnza: Scotland's International Poetry Festival Festival condemns the ongoing genocide being committed against the Palestinian people by the state of Israel and wants to publicly state our support for the artists and activists who have been working for peace.

StAnza therefore pledges its support for both the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS) and the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) and calls for a meaningful ceasefire in Gaza. We want our representatives in Scotland and the UK to have the courage to stand up for fundamental human rights, and human dignity, as so many of the artists we work with have already done.

As stated in the PACBI guidelines, this is not a blanket boycott of individuals on the basis of identity or affiliation alone, but rather a boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions complicit in the oppression of the Palestinian people and/or the occupation of Palestinian land by the state of Israel. This complicity takes many forms, including accepting funding and/or commissions from official Israeli institutions, and the production of cultural outputs that take an apologist view of the genocidal actions of the state of Israel. Mere affiliation of Israeli cultural workers to an Israeli cultural institution is not, by itself, grounds for applying the boycott.

By refusing to platform cultural products that seek to invisibilise, justify, or else distract from the oppression of the Palestinian people by the state of Israel through 'rebranding' strategies, StAnza affirms its commitment to this mode of resistance.

In practical terms, this means that StAnza commits to the following actions:

- To boycott cultural products either commissioned by, or funded by, official Israeli institutions, including the Israeli Government and Israeli Embassy touring funding;

- To refuse participation in forms of cultural collaboration or cooperation with official Israeli institutions and their official representatives, including those who have been commissioned/recruited by those institutions to produce cultural outputs that do the work of whitewashing or 'rebranding';

- To refuse to host, promote, or endorse events or cultural products that seek to normalise oppression and occupation, promote 'two sides' narratives that imply equal responsibility for the ongoing genocide, or otherwise stipulate false parity between oppressor and oppressed; and

- To support and platform Palestinian cultural institutions without demanding that they partner with Israeli counterparts as a condition for such support.

In addition, StAnza pledges to take this opportunity to re-examine its other policies in the light of PACBI, and to take further action to minimise the risk of complicity in regimes of oppression. This process is now already underway, and includes updating our Safer Spaces policy and prioritising the completion of our Ethical Funding policy.

StAnza is profoundly grateful to the organisations who have paved the way for this statement by modelling what resistance looks like for small arts organisations carving out a space to operate according to their principles. We stand in solidarity with them and with Palestine.