



BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

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BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF) Statement on the Israeli Attack on the Lebanese University

The British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) Committee on Academic Freedom condemns the Israeli attack on Lebanon's only public institution of higher education, the Lebanese University (LU), on 12 March 2026. The attack resulted in the killing of two senior faculty members: Professor Hussein Bazi, Director of the Faculty of Sciences, and Professor Mortada Srour, Professor of Chemistry and Physics. This incident raises grave concerns regarding the protection of academic institutions, scholars, and intellectual life in contexts of armed conflict.

The attack took place at the University's Rafik Hariri campus in Hadath, Beirut. [Media reports](#), citing eyewitness accounts, indicate that an Israeli drone strike targeted the two professors while they were walking in the open courtyard of the Faculty of Sciences. Israeli media described the strike as a targeted assassination by the IDF, [alleging](#) that Professor Srour was a Hezbollah operative. We note that Israel has not provided any evidence for these claims. Even if such claims were accurate, Professor Srour was not engaged in military activity at the time of the attack and therefore would not constitute a lawful military target under international law. The targeting of individuals within educational settings represents a deeply troubling development, perpetuating a concerning pattern previously documented in Gaza.

As noted in a [statement](#) by the American University of Beirut (AUB)'s staff union, this attack constitutes a direct assault on Lebanon's academic institutions and intellectual life. It must be understood within a broader pattern described as [scholasticide](#), involving the systematic destruction of educational institutions, academic communities, and knowledge production, which Israel has long used as a weapon of war and domination against the Palestinian population.

This incident occurs amid an intensified wave of Israeli military operations in Lebanon beginning on 3 March 2026, which also includes a ground invasion. According to [media reports](#), these operations have resulted in more than 1,300 deaths, including 40 [health workers](#), as well as 2,141 wounded. The escalation has also displaced nearly one in five people across the country.

These events are unfolding within a wider regional escalation involving Israeli and American military aggression against Iran, which has triggered retaliatory actions affecting neighbouring countries. The attack on the Lebanese University as well as [universities in Iran](#) forms part of a broader pattern of destruction of civilian infrastructure, including universities, schools, research centres, libraries, and cultural institutions, previously documented in Gaza as part of Israel's military strategy.



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As assessed by UN bodies, attacks on educational institutions such as the Lebanese University may amount to [war crimes](#). More broadly, attacks on schools, universities, educators, academics, students, and institutions of knowledge are fundamentally attacks on the future itself, depriving young people of education and undermining the intellectual and cultural foundations of society. We condemn these actions in the strongest possible terms, stand in solidarity with Lebanon's academic community, and call for accountability for the targeting of academic institutions and personnel.

At this critical moment for the Middle East, with consequences that are reverberating globally, BRISMES CAF reaffirms its commitment to defending academic life, intellectual freedom, and the right of students and scholars to live, learn, and teach in conditions of safety and dignity. We call for an immediate end to US and Israeli aggression on Lebanon and Iran and a full arms embargo on Israel.

BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom

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