

## SA invitation to Israeli academics withdrawn

Seven academics from three Israeli universities have had their invitations to attend a conference at the University of Stellenbosch withdrawn. A report on the [IoL](#) site notes that the aim of the conference themed 'Recognition, Reparation, Reconciliation: The Light and Shadow of Historical Trauma' is to deepen understanding of trans-generational trauma and to develop strategies to deal with the repercussions of genocide and colonial oppression. As previously reported in [Legalbrief Today](#), **18 solidarity groups called on the conference's organisers, speakers, participants and sponsors to withdraw Israeli participation.** 'When it was learned that Israeli academics, as well as Palestinian academic and peace activist Professor Mohammed Dajani, were scheduled to speak on the programme, the organisers were subjected to mounting pressure, including threats to disrupt the event, from Boycotts, Disinvestment and Sanctions-aligned factions. Instead of taking a firm stand against this bullying tactic, the organisers of the conference caved in by unilaterally cancelling the sessions at which Dajani had been scheduled to speak,' said the SA Jewish Board of Deputies. It added that the organisers should have stood firm and not 'surrender to intimidation'. The co-ordinator of the conference, Professor Pumla Goboda-Madikizela, confirmed that all seven academics from three Israeli institutions had 'rescinded their participation' in the conference. Critics of the academic boycott claim it threatens academic freedom while pro-Palestine groups argue that academic freedom does not take automatic precedence over human rights.