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Statement on Academic Freedom by Gleider Hernández, President of the European Society of International Law

The European Society of International Law (ESIL) has an unwavering commitment to academic freedom and open scholarly debate. As the President of our Society, I am deeply concerned by the recent cancellation of a public event at Freie Universität Berlin (FU)—the site of our next Annual Conference—at which Francesca Albanese and Eyal Weizman had been scheduled to speak. Many in our community have expressed grave reservations about the circumstances surrounding this decision and its broader effects on scholarly discourse. I share these concerns.

As a learned society, our role is to ensure and to safeguard rigorous intellectual exchange and critique, even—and especially—on deeply contested questions. The Society must remain a space where difficult and pressing legal questions can be debated openly, without external intimidation or institutional self-censorship.

Our Programme Chairs, Heike Krieger and Helmut Aust, have publicly opposed the decision of the FU. I have complete confidence in them to organise the 2025 ESIL Annual Conference in line with our shared commitment to academic freedom and open debate. In close consultation with them, the ESIL Board will convene soon to decide together on the path forward. Together, we will take all necessary measures so that the Society remains a forum for open and independent legal scholarship, both in Berlin and beyond.

Gleider Hernández
President of the European Society of International Law