

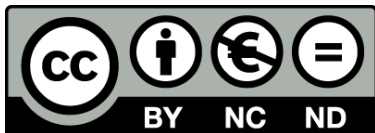
## Orienting Archaeology towards Peace: An Introduction

**FKA Editorial Collective**

### Zitiervorschlag

FKA Editorial Collective. 2026. Orienting Archaeology towards Peace: An Introduction Forum Kritische Archäologie 15, Theme Issue: Orienting Archaeology towards Peace: 1.

URL <https://www.kritischearchaeologie.de>  
DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/refubium-51886>  
ISSN 2194-346X



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The recent waves of violence engulfing major regions of the world did not start with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Sudanese civil war, Hamas' attack on Israel, or the Israeli bombardments of Gaza, Lebanon, or, more recently, Iran. But there is no question that these acts of aggression as well as the responses they have elicited have brought the planet ever closer to another world war. Attacks on civilians and non-military infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools, and water supplies, abound. Massive bombardments, including strikes on oil facilities and nuclear plants, add dramatically to environmental damage, global warming, and to the potential for a nuclear catastrophe.

We at *Forum Kritische Archäologie* are convinced that as archaeologists we cannot simply sit on the sidelines at times like these. With this set of contributions, we hope to initiate a discussion that reaches out widely into the community of archaeologists and cultural heritage specialists and does so without geographic limitations. We pose the question: how can archaeology and cultural heritage contribute to peace? We do so from the perspective that archaeology and cultural heritage have frequently been mobilized in ways that exacerbate conflict. Can we position these fields and the ways we work so as to promote peace and justice, bridging national, regional, ethnic, religious, and other borders? And if so, how?

To this end, we invited authors from different parts of the world to share their views with us. Our intention was to gather perspectives from scholars who are both directly and indirectly affected by war and violence as well as those who are currently on the periphery of war. Our hope was that this would yield different insights into the ways that archaeology and cultural heritage might contribute to peace in times and places that are dominated by war. At the same time, we are aware of what it means to solicit statements concerning contributions to peace. As we anticipated, many of those we asked did not feel able to contribute. The asymmetry between contributions from those living and working in safer areas and those from authors directly and personally affected by war is regrettable but perhaps not surprising. Writing a piece such as those we asked for is not likely to be a high priority when one's own life or that of one's family is affected. Moreover, emotional involvement is greater, so that responses may be more pessimistic. Although we were not able to achieve as wide a range of voices as we had initially hoped, the contributions published here do approach the topic from a variety of different perspectives. We do not view this collection of essays as the final word. Rather, we would like to see this as a forum that incorporates other voices and perspectives on the subject of how archaeology can contribute to peace.

Especially in light of the current escalation of the war of the US and Israel against Iran and Iran's military response, we believe this special issue is necessary: we cannot stand by silently.