

Solidarity with Palestine and answering Palestinian HEIs' calls

Oxford UCU notes

1. The continuing escalation of violence in Gaza and the Occupied Territories. After more than 100 days of Israeli bombardment, [over 25,000 Palestinians have been killed, including at least 7,870 children](#). Over 65,000 Palestinians are injured and a further 7,780 are presumed dead under the rubble.
2. [The forced displacement of 1.7 million people](#) (75% of Gaza's population), the besiegement, imposed shortage of essential medicines, and the destruction of [more than half of all homes in Gaza](#). The destruction of food and water infrastructure, and hospitals, withholding the means of survival even in 'safe areas'. Starvation and disease threaten to cause [more civilian deaths than bombing](#) in Gaza. The crisis is urgent and unprecedented.
3. The Israeli military has [killed over 209 educators](#) and teachers in Gaza and injured more than 500 others, together with the unprecedented numbers of killings of Palestinian [journalists, medical staff](#), rescue workers, and [United Nations \(UN\) employees](#). It is reported that [94 Palestinian academics have been killed](#) in Gaza by the Israeli army, including [Sufian Tayeh](#) (a physicist and President of the Islamic University of Gaza), [Mohammad Eid Shabir](#) (a microbiologist and former President of the Islamic University of Gaza for fifteen years), [Naeem Baroud](#) (Professor of Geography and former Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the Islamic University of Gaza), and [Refaat Alareer](#) (a poet and Professor of English Literature and Creative Writing at the Islamic University of Gaza).
4. The targeted [destruction of all higher education buildings in Gaza](#), including the Islamic University of Gaza, Al-Azhar University, the North Gaza and Tubas branches of Al-Quds Open University, Al-Israa University and its [associated national museum, mosque, research laboratories, nursing labs, cafeteria, and the first and only university hospital in Gaza](#).
5. The destruction or damaging of [374 schools in Gaza](#) and the impossibility for any school-aged children to attend school.
6. As [detailed](#) in South Africa's Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the normalisation of dehumanising language and the egregious public use of genocidal rhetoric by Israeli state leaders, and the consequent legitimisation of the collective punishment of civilians and the degrading treatment of Palestinians by Israeli ground invasion forces.
7. The UK government's and many ministers' continued support for Israel's invasion and occupation, resulting in [criminal complaints](#) of complicity in war crimes submitted to Scotland Yard by the International Center of Justice for Palestinians and [similar planned complaints](#) announced by South African lawyers.
8. Attacks by ministers, UK media companies and some University leaders on dissenting voices, including [UCU members](#) and [students](#) expressing solidarity with Palestine.
9. The University of Oxford received £10m in research funding from the arms trade [during 2008-2013](#) and [£19m during 2013-2021](#). Oxford University Endowment Management Ltd. does not share details of investments nor any portfolio statement relating to the arms trade, meaning that the University of Oxford is unable to scrutinise whether either its Capital Fund or Endowment Fund are invested in companies profiting from human rights abuses, war crimes and illegal occupation in the Palestinian Territories. The PSC's "[University Complicity Database](#)" shows that the University also leads a research hub that includes Raytheon among its partners - a major supplier to Israel of [weapons systems, missiles and bombs used repeatedly to kill civilians in the course of war crimes](#).
10. UCU's [national policy](#) supporting the campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) and its [affiliation](#) with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC).

11. The [unified call for justice and freedom in Palestine](#) from Palestinian higher education institutions, calling on the international academic community to urgently take concrete actions for ending a genocidal war and the illegal settlements and siege.
11. The [call from over 30 Palestinian trade unions and professional associations](#) to end all complicity and to stop arming Israel.
12. The calls for an immediate ceasefire, the dismantling of Israel's blockade on Gaza, and the opening of a humanitarian corridor into Gaza, by many humanitarian and human rights organisations, educators and scholars, healthcare workers, student groups, and trade unions in Palestine, Israel, the UK and worldwide.
13. The calls for an immediate ceasefire from local organisations, including Oxford City Council, Oxford Palestine Society, Rhodes Scholars for Palestine, Oxford Brookes UCU and other local trade union branches.

Oxford UCU believes

1. Israel is conducting war crimes with genocidal outcomes and rhetoric in the Gaza Strip and must cease immediately.
2. The University of Oxford as a community of sanctuary must show moral leadership and commitment to halting this injury to our common humanity.
3. UK universities must end ties with entities involved in violations of human rights, including in the development of weapons and other military tools.
4. We must answer the call of Palestinian higher education institutions and trade unions, for the international academic community to promote truth and justice and to suspend normal relations and partnerships with complicit companies and Israeli universities.
5. We must stand with our colleagues in education and academia worldwide in promoting the endeavour of knowledge and construction, of human flourishing and co-operation; and stand resolutely against the destruction of places of learning and culture, and against the erasure of Palestinian academic, cultural, and intellectual life.
6. The targeting of academic organisations and individuals who speak up against genocide and in solidarity with the Palestinian people, is part of a systematic attack by the UK government on personal and academic freedoms. The University of Oxford must defend its members against these attacks and uphold its commitment to academic freedom of speech.
7. We must take an uncompromising position in standing for universal human rights, and against all forms of racism, including Islamophobia and antisemitism.

Oxford UCU resolves

1. To publicly and loudly call for an immediate UN-guaranteed ceasefire and immediate entry of sufficient life-saving humanitarian aid throughout all of Gaza, followed by UN protection of the population of Gaza without further forced displacement of people, and to call on the VC to do the same. In doing so, to call on the VC to respond to the specific demands made by the Rhodes Scholars for Palestine [petition](#), drafted alongside other local student groups, and (ii) the [joint call](#) from Palestinian higher education institutions.
2. To call on the VC to specifically condemn the destruction by the Israeli military of all of Gaza's universities and 80% of its schools, and the ongoing attacks on students, teachers, and academics, on behalf of the University of Oxford as an institution and a community of learning.
3. To work with Palestinian colleagues and organisations to support the research, teaching, and dissemination of Palestinian intellectual and cultural heritage.
4. To campaign against attempts to suppress or silence pro-Palestinian voices and organisers, and to call on the VC to publicly affirm the University of Oxford's commitment to protecting academic freedom and freedom of speech with regards to expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

5. To reiterate branch support for the campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions and to work with local organisations and student groups, to demand that the University of Oxford boycotts and divests from companies that are complicit in Israel's war on Gaza, and the wider occupation and dispossession of the Palestinian people, and to apply pressure on Universities UK (UUK) to do the same.
6. To call on the VC to commission a research ethics policy designed to end partnerships with companies that profit from arms export such as Lockheed Martin and Rolls-Royce, and to call on the University and on Oxford University Endowment Management Ltd. to urgently publish a portfolio review of OCF and OEF investments in arms companies (directly or secondarily) and to implement a robust policy of divestment from arms companies.
7. To work with colleagues, Oxford Palestine Society and other student groups, healthcare workers, and local trade union branches to organise initiatives (e.g., teach-ins, vigils, petitions, etc.) in support of Palestinian liberation, justice and an immediate ceasefire.
8. To build for the next national [Workplace Day of Action](#) on Wednesday 7th February 2024, by coordinating initiatives with students, local trade unions and other organisations.
9. To make a donation of £5,000 to [Medical Aid for Palestinians](#) (MAP) and a donation of £2,000 to the [Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association](#) from Oxford UCU's branch funds, and to encourage members to make individual donations.
10. To send the Oxford UCU branch banner to local and national demonstrations demanding an immediate ceasefire, such as those organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.