



TU Dublin Students' Union
Bradogue, Grangegorman
Technological University Dublin
D07 E3HW

15th February, 2024

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY DUBLIN (TU DUBLIN) AND THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE TEAM (UET) FROM TU DUBLIN STUDENTS' UNION (TU DUBLIN SU) AND THE TEACHER'S UNION OF IRELAND, CITY, TALLAGHT & BLANCHARDSTOWN BRANCHES (TUI), ON THE SYSTEMATIC GENOCIDE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE BY THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Dear President Fitzpatrick,

TU Dublin SU and the TUI are writing this letter to you on behalf of the staff and students within TU Dublin, to address the ongoing silence of TU Dublin on the systematic genocide of the Palestinian people by the State of Israel. For months, the state of Israel has murdered tens of thousands of civilians within Gaza, 70% of them women and children, and yet, TU Dublin has remained silent, despite an earlier request from the TUI. This is in stark contrast to the swift statement made by you following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

We believe that students, educators, and the institutions they inhabit, must all speak out against the appalling war crimes being committed against Palestinians. We believe that you in particular, as President of the University, must speak out. We believe that TU Dublin should be an exemplar of solidarity for global justice and reflect the views of its students and staff. As such, we therefore jointly request that you carry out the following actions:

1) Release a Statement, on behalf of TU Dublin:

- Acknowledging Israel's genocidal war against the People of Palestine
- Demanding that the Irish Government take a far stronger stance in defence of the Palestinian People, including the support of the Genocide case by South Africa at the International Court of Justice
- Calling for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages held in Gaza and in Israeli jails, entry of life-saving humanitarian aid into Gaza, UN protection for the 2.3 Palestinian Civilians trapped under Israeli siege in Gaza, and development & enhancement of links with Palestinian Universities in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem

2) Suspend all academic links between TU Dublin and complicit Israeli Academic Institutions, following the guidelines from the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel.

3) Adopt a University-wide BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) Policy that, in particular, withdraws support from all Israeli and international companies engaged in violations of Palestinian human rights.

Context / Background

The response by the Israeli Government and its military to the actions on 7th October is beyond any semblance of defence and is in fact a declared genocidal act of mass murder and ethnic cleansing against the people of Gaza which has resulted in over 100,000 Palestinians being killed or injured so far. Israeli forces



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killed more civilians within the first 30 days of this war than Russian forces have killed within over 600 days of their brutal war in Ukraine. 40% of all bombs dropped on Gaza have been indiscriminate so-called Dumb Bombs, many supplied by the US, Britain, and European Governments.

Palestinian children have suffered especially with now almost 14,000 killed and many more brutally injured, causing Antonio Guterres to stress that the level of civilian killing is 'unparalleled and unprecedented'. He has described Gaza as a 'graveyard for children'.

At the time of writing the updated casualty figures from the Swizz-based human rights organisation Euro-Med Monitor on 11th February, give an estimate of 35,880 Gazans killed so far, including 13,880 children and 7,910 women. Since the historic International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling on 26th January, which ruled that there is a plausible case of Israel committing genocide and a factual case of Israeli leaders having expressed genocidal intent, Israel has killed - according to Euro-Med Monitor - 1,864 Palestinians, including 690 children 441 women, and injured over 2,933. The killing spree continues as Israel ignores international humanitarian law and the ruling of the world's highest court of justice.

At the time of writing the Israeli military is poised to invade the city of Rafah near the Egyptian border where over one million displaced, terrified, and starving Gazans have gathered in inhumane conditions for their safety. Humanitarian agencies and many governments around the world are warning that this will create a further catastrophe for an already displaced and traumatised population.

This war represents a new low in the history of warfare with Palestinians being able to record in real-time their genocide while Israeli soldiers post videos on social media of their humiliating, torturing, and killing of Palestinian civilians thus flagrantly flaunting a celebratory culture of violence that permeates Israeli society.

As educators and students, we condemn in particular the destruction of the Palestinian education system through carpet bombing, controlled explosions, targeted assassinations, and forced closures. An open letter dated 25 January 2024 from the US-based Middle East Studies Association (MESA) details the attack on education in Gaza.

All 12 universities in Gaza have either been wholly or partially destroyed. Academics have been purposefully targeted and killed, including 3 university presidents, 7 deans and 94 professors. These include the internationally respected physicist and researcher, President of the Islamic University of Gaza, Dr. SofyanTaya, killed with his wife and two children while sleeping. Poet and writer, Prof. Fefaaf Alareer, who the Israeli military telephoned and told him they were going to kill him, then proceeded to do so through a targeted missile strike, along with his father, his sister, and four of her children.

90% of schools in Gaza have been damaged in some way, with 29% completely or partially demolished. A report compiled by UNICEF and Save the Children International on 8th January 2024 noted that 433,000 students and 16,000 staff have been affected by damaged schools, 4,275 students and 227 teachers have been killed with 7,777 students and 756 teachers injured. 272 public schools and 100 UNRWA schools have



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been damaged in some form. It is beyond doubt that the statistics noted herein are already out of date.

We recognise that this exceptional violence against a largely unarmed civilian population can only occur because of decades of impunity granted to Israel since 1948. We note Israel has been declared guilty of the crime of apartheid by several respected human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Israeli human rights group B'tselem. We recognise also that it is this structural apparatus of apartheid that is the root cause of the continued violence and so only by working to dismantle Israel's apartheid system can the violence be ended.

Conclusion

It has been the policy of the TUI since 2013 to support the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination, human rights, and justice. This includes support for the Academic Boycott of Israeli educational institutions. TU Dublin SU, similarly, has for years-maintained Union policy that supports the defence of the Palestinian people. This year alone, TU Dublin SU passed an extensive policy on behalf of its students denouncing the ongoing genocide in Gaza, as well as enforcing a strict BDS policy within the Union. We jointly acknowledge that BDS actions, including academic boycott, have been called for by Palestinian civil society, Palestinian Universities, and academic organizations, including the Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUUEP).

We clarify here that the BDS campaign does not mean boycotting individual Israelis based on their nationality, and it never involves boycotting anyone based on their religion. We reject and condemn any form of racism, including antisemitism and islamophobia. We stress our commitment to justice and equal rights for all who live in Palestine and Israel. We abhor all violence against civilians and we express grief for all innocent lives taken. We extend sympathy to all students and staff in TU Dublin, from all backgrounds, who have been affected by the current war between Israel and Gaza.

We conclude by repeating the following statement: We believe that students, educators, and the institutions they inhabit, must all speak out against the appalling war crimes being committed against Palestinians. We believe that you in particular, as President of the University, must speak out. We believe that TU Dublin should be an exemplar of solidarity for global justice and reflect the views of its students and staff.

We appeal for you to do what is right, even at this late stage.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Jordan

President of TU Dublin SU

Janet Mc Kennedy

Chair TUI Dublin Colleges Branch

Jim Roche

Vice Chair TUI Dublin Colleges Branch

Liam Mc Glynn

TUI Blanchardstown Branch

Noel Gorman

TUI Tallaght Branch



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