

DATE: 10 MAY 2024

OPEN LETTER TO THE INTERIM 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 Doran,

As a member of the TU Dublin University Executive Team (UET), you will already have seen our correspondence with former President David Fitzpatrick and his responses on the above issue.

We do not wish to add further work to your already challenging new role given the difficult financial state of our university, but the matter addressed herein is of grave importance and it can be expedited easily.

As you will know we requested the following in our initial letter:

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 (PACBI).***
- 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.***

You will be aware that President Fitzpatrick refused to make a public statement of any kind despite our persuasive pleas and our observation to him regarding the obvious double standards related to his prompt statement on the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Up to the time of our last correspondence with President Fitzpatrick only the President of Galway University, of all the universities in Ireland, had made a statement.

Hundreds of academic staff and student groups around Ireland have written to the leaders of universities and IoTs pleading with them to openly call for a ceasefire and to sanction and divest from Israel. In March 2024 Academics for Palestine AfP and many Students' Unions including TU Dublin SU wrote to the leaders of all HEIs in Ireland collectively calling on them to "take more meaningful positions and action in response to Israel's war on Gaza" and urging them "collectively and individually at this point to take a strong and principled position on the situation in Palestine, as was done in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine." You can read the letter [HERE](#).

Since President Fitzpatrick's last reply to us dated 27 March 2024 the following has happened:

- TU Dublin management has remained silent on this issue
- Thousands more Palestinian civilians have been murdered making the overall death toll now well over 40,000 and over 70,000 injured, many of them horribly so
- The education and health system in Gaza have been almost completely destroyed

- The largest hospital - Al Shifa – in Gaza city was bombarded and occupied for weeks by the Israeli military and since then three separate mass graves have been uncovered there with evidence of serious war crimes against medical staff and patients
- In recent weeks the Israeli Military has been bombing the city of Rafah, the last refuge for over 2/3rd of the 2.3 million people of Gaza, with so many of them living in makeshift tents having been displaced up to five times since 7th October 2023. Civilians in Rafah now flee for their lives again as Israel bombards the city and invades with tanks and ground troops. It has already taken over the Rafah crossing thus blocking a vital route for humanitarian aid to enter Gaza.
- In the last UNSC vote on a ceasefire the US Government at last decided not to veto it
- In the last week the US Government has halted a shipment of particular armaments to Israel
- Last week the UN declared a famine in North Gaza. In some parts of Gaza people have been dying of hunger for weeks
- The TUI passed solidarity motions at its conference in April that include the following instructions to the Executive “To write to all the Presidents of Technological Universities and Institutes of Technology in Ireland to request that they suspend any institutional partnerships or affiliations between their institutions and Israeli educational institutions”
- Student protests and occupations have occurred in the US and around the world in recent weeks – with many Jewish students partaking, and Jewish academic staff supporting - including in Trinity College Dublin and one today in Maynooth University.
- Managements of some universities in the US and here in Ireland have since made statements and acquiesced to the demands of students - the TCD Management statement is [HERE](#) and the UCC statement is [HERE](#)

It is a terrible indictment of the Irish Higher Education sector that it has taken protests by students to get some minimal critique and commitment from educational leaders about the Gaza genocide. In the TCD (8th May) and UCC (9th May) statements, these include the following:

- TCD supports the International Court of Justice's position that 'Israel must take all measures within its power to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide in relation to members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip
- TCD will complete a divestment from investments in Israeli companies that have activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and appear on the UN Blacklist in this regard
- TCD will endeavour to divest from investments in other Israeli companies. This issue will be considered by a taskforce that will also review Trinity's student exchanges with Israel. This taskforce will have an external chair and will include student and staff representatives.
- TCD commits to offering scholarships – with fees waived and accommodation offered – to 8 Palestinian students who wish to continue their education
- UCC is establishing a Palestine Emergency Response Working Group, involving SU representation
- UCC is committed to advocating within the IUA for a national, sector-wide approach to sustained support for displaced Palestinian students.
- UCC commits to divesting from one fund connected to an Israeli financial institution by the end of May 2024

While these commitments are welcome, they are minimal and, in our opinion, do not go far enough. Given the continued genocide in Gaza and the recent events noted above we appeal to you to make a statement along the lines requested in our first letter to the former President which are repeated at the start of this letter. Please note that the second request above refers also to any research programmes that TU Dublin is jointly engaged with that include Israeli Government funded institutions or companies.

In addition, we are also now requesting TU Dublin do the following:

1. Provide funding for scholarships for Palestinian students & subsequently put plans in place to become a formal University of Sanctuary.
2. Establish a TU Dublin Palestine Emergency Response Working Group, including an external Chairperson, and both SU & TUI representatives, to oversee TU Dublin's compliance with these requests.

We urge you now to take these positive steps to stand with the Palestinians at this horrific dangerous time for them.

We await your reply and confirm that we are available to meet you or any members of the UET to discuss our requests.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Jordan

President of TU Dublin SU

Janet Mc Kennedy

Chair TUI Dublin Colleges Branch

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