

5th Week Monday 20th May 2024

3. Motions

a. Solidarity with the Gaza Encampment

The JCR notes that:

- The present situation in Gaza is catastrophic; the International Court of Justice [1] has characterised it as plausibly amounting to genocide. Francesca Albanese, a UN expert on human rights, published a report in March titled 'The Anatomy of Genocide' stating: "Following nearly six months of unrelenting Israeli assault on occupied Gaza [...] There are reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating the commission of the crime of genocide ... has been met" [2]
 - The ongoing offensive in Gaza can only be properly understood in the context of Israel's ongoing apartheid regime against Palestinians [3], its illegal occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and settler violence there [4]. This past week (15/05) marks the 76th anniversary of the first Nakba (Arabic for 'catastrophe') marking the beginning of the ethnic cleansing [5] of Palestinians in former Mandatory Palestine.
 - There is a grave and urgent threat to the future of higher education across Gaza. Having turned the universities of Gaza into detention centres before demolishing them, with not a single school or university in Gaza remaining open [6], forcibly rendering Palestinian scholars, scientists, researchers, and students homeless, Israel's campaign of scholasticide has turned its attention to eliminating future independent Palestinian educational life in Gaza [7].
 - The University has called for the release of the Israeli hostages and for an end to the ongoing violence in Gaza, but fell short of calling for the release of Palestinian prisoners held under administrative detention in Israeli prisons, many of them arrested as children [8], or an end to the occupation.
 - A number of other common rooms from across the city have passed similar motions to this one, including St. Anne's, Balliol, Jesus and Wadham. An open letter has been signed by more than 550 staff members, and a similar one by more than 1650 students. Oxford Action for Palestine also has support from 14 trade unions.
- The JCR believes that:
- "Gaza solidarity encampments", such as the one that emerged at Columbia University where it persisted for two weeks, are rooted in a decades-long movement for the rights of Palestinians in their homelands, and to hold Israel accountable for its illegal occupation of Palestinian territories [9].
 - The Oxford Action for Palestine encampment, formed on the 6th of May at the Natural History Museum, should be interpreted as "a public-facing global education project". We hope that the University's leadership will treat this political expression as the opportunity for dialogue that it is.
 - The University of Oxford has responded to the encampment on the 14th of May in an email from Pro Vice Chancellor Irene Tracey, although many students believe that this statement didn't say anything of note, using vague and euphemistic language like "conflict" and "the events in Gaza", rather than acknowledging that Israel is carrying out a genocide and addressing the campaign's demands. [10]
 - The weaponization of antisemitism, which has been used to suppress these legitimate protests and shut down free speech on campus [11], is wholly at odds with the reality of these

encampments, which are a safe space for Jews, Muslims, and people of other faiths and none; where shabbat dinners are held alongside Jumamah prayers, and Passover prayer are heard alongside the Islamic adhan [12]

The JCR resolves to

• Reiterate the demands of Oxford Action for Palestine to the College, which are to:

1. DISCLOSE COLLEGE ASSETS

• Annually disclose a comprehensive account of College assets, including direct and indirect investments, land holdings, donations, and grants.

2. DIVEST COLLEGE ASSETS

• Immediately divest College direct and indirect holdings in all arms companies.

• Publicly pledge to completely divest College direct and indirect holdings in all companies that are complicit in Israeli genocide, apartheid, and occupation of Palestine within the next five years.

3. OVERHAUL INVESTMENT POLICY

• Expand the ethical restriction on arms manufacturers to cover direct and indirect investments in all arms and military technology companies.

• Add an ethical restriction to the Investment Policy on direct and indirect investments in companies that are complicit in Israeli genocide, apartheid, and occupation.

• Integrate community stakeholders in the College's ethical review processes to ensure that all investment decisions adhere to justice-based guidelines.

4. BOYCOTT INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

• End all institutional relationships with Israeli universities, including exchange programmes, joint projects, conferences, and other official links.

• Pledge not to enter into future institutional relationships with Israeli universities as long as Israeli genocide, apartheid, or occupation is ongoing.

• End research, career, and procurement partnerships with companies and institutions that are complicit in Israeli genocide, apartheid, or occupation.

5. DROP BARCLAYS

• In light of Barclays bank's extensive investments in companies supplying Israel with weapons and military technology, the College must stop banking with Barclays.

6. REBUILD AND REINVEST^{5th} Week Monday 20th May 2024

• Publicly commit to supporting, through financial and material means, the Palestinian-led rebuilding of the twelve universities that have been completely, or in part, destroyed by Israeli aggression in the last year.

• Establish and support a long-term task force composed of staff, students, and relevant Palestinian community members who will recommend how best to meet the call issued by Palestinian higher education institutions to rebuild the higher education sector in Gaza.

• Publicly commit to allocating resources in the interim to support scholars at risk in Palestine through initiatives such as, but not limited to, exchanges, joint projects, academic fellowships and partnerships, and scholarship programmes.

• This should be done with the co-operation of the JCR president in the Governing Body, as well as through Freedom of Information requests, as supported by the JCR.

• Release a statement in support of the people of Gaza, calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, as well as the release of hostages from both Israel and Gaza, and in support of the Oxford Action for Palestine Encampment, echoing their demands both on the university and college level. This statement could be done in conjunction with the MCR as well, as a number of MCR members have expressed interest in getting involved, although this is contingent on the MCR passing a similar motion.

[1] <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

[2] <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147976>

[3] <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

[4] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/state-backed-deadly-rampage-by-israeli-settlers-underscores-urgent-need-to-dismantle-apartheid/>

[5] Sabbagh-Khoury, Areej (2023). Colonizing Palestine: The Zionist Left and the Making of the

Palestinian Nakba, pp. 30, 65, 71, 81, 182, 193-194. Stanford University Press. ISBN 978-1-5036-3629-3.

[6] <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/24/how-israel-has-destroyed-gazas-schools-and-universities>

[7] <https://twitter.com/ScholarsForPal/status/1783849744776773670?t=mcRKJT-YIwvTuXPCq659GQ&s=08>

[8] https://www.btselem.org/administrative_detention

[9] [https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/4/we-wont-stop-how-columbias-students-etched-a-](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/4/we-wont-stop-how-columbias-students-etched-a-new-gaza-protest-legacy)

[new-gaza-protest-legacy](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/4/we-wont-stop-how-columbias-students-etched-a-new-gaza-protest-legacy)

[10] <https://newsletter.admin.ox.ac.uk/c/113jWczSJbTDTUkOmB8q89u661D>

[11] <https://wp.nyu.edu/davidluddenhomepage/2024/04/24/1805/>

[12] <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/opinion/2024/04/10/jewish-faculty-reject-the-weaponization-of-antisemitism/>

Proposed by: *****

Seconded by: *****