

## Joint Statement from Palestine Solidarity Groups at Columbia University regarding the recent events in Palestine/Israel: Oppression Breeds Resistance.

The loss of a human life is a deeply painful and heartbreaking experience for loved ones, regardless of one's affiliation. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the individuals and communities at Columbia University affected by the tragic losses experienced by both Palestinians and Israelis. The sting of tears, the weight on our hearts, and the profound sense of loss are universal emotions that connect us all in grief and unify us by experience. As we mourn the loss of lives, let us come together as a Columbia community and fervently advocate for the universal human right to live in peace and seek justice. We also affirm that there can be no future of safety and freedom for all Israelis and Palestinians without holding the Israeli occupation accountable for its actions and putting an end to the untenable status quo of Israel's apartheid and colonial system.

**"When we revolt it's not for a particular culture. We revolt simply because, for many reasons, we can no longer breathe" - Frantz Fanon**

We cannot view the recent actions of Palestinian fighters in isolation. Gaza is an [open-air prison](#) that lacks the essential necessities such as food, clean water, medicine, and electricity. Palestinians in Gaza have endured five brutal wars and prolonged inhumane siege for 16 years depriving them of their most basic rights. The United Nations issued a [warning](#) in 2012 that Gaza would become uninhabitable by 2020 due to Israel's siege. Yet here we are in 2023, and the whole world is SILENT while Palestinians live in an open air prison and continue to suffer as a result of the siege and wars applied by a series of fascist, racist, and colonial Israeli governments.

Before the latest surge in violence, Israeli soldiers and settlers had already killed more than 250 Palestinians, including at least 47 children, across the occupied Palestinian territories just this year. Extremist Israeli colonial-settlers have also ramped up their attacks on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. What is also tragic is the blindness and deafness of the international community to the situation for over 75 years persistently turning a blind eye to decades of Palestinian oppression. Ignoring this grim context will undoubtedly contribute to further bloodshed and the cycle of murder.

**The weight of responsibility for the war and casualties undeniably lies with the Israeli extremist government and other Western governments, including the U.S. government, which fund and staunchly support Israeli aggression, apartheid and settler-colonization.** This issue of why this occurred now is not about timing. This is about root causes and a fundamental issue with Israeli occupation and the deprivation of human rights, including the lack of respect for the Palestinian people's legitimate right to self-determination. Every single political avenue available to Palestinians has been blocked, including the International Court of Justice.

**First**, we condemn the discrimination against Palestinians evident in **Bernard College's email** and **Columbia's school of General Studies emails** which were sent to the student body over the weekend as each school only addressed Israeli students alone, and not Palestinians. We see this as an attempt of a complete erasure of Palestinians and the decades of suffering occupation, ethnic cleansing, and colonization. We urge Columbia University to stand against such discrimination and issue a statement supporting all students.

**Second**, we urge Columbia University to stand firmly for accountability and end its ties with apartheid Israel, including discontinuing the Columbia Global Center in Tel Aviv and the Dual Degree Program with Tel Aviv University. The Columbia community must reassess its relationship with Israel in light of our core values of justice, peace, and human rights.

**Finally**, we remind Columbia students that the Palestinian struggle for freedom is rooted in international law, under which occupied peoples have the right to resist the occupation of their land. If every political avenue available to Palestinians is blocked, we should not be surprised when resistance and violence break out. The international community is quick to **affirm Israel's right to protect itself but does not extend this same right to Palestinians.** Israel does not have the right to defend its occupation, its apartheid state or its siege of Gaza. As an occupying power, the state of Israel has a responsibility to protect civilian life under its own occupation. The international judicial system must intervene and hold all parties, including the state of Israel, accountable for the violations it commits. We urge Columbia students to stand up for justice.

This statement is signed by:

- The Palestinian Student Union at Columbia University (DAR Columbia)
- SIPA's Palestine Working Group (PWG)
- Columbia Law Students for Palestine (CLSP)
- The National Lawyers Guild at Columbia Law School
- Columbia Law's Restorative Justice Collective
- Turath: the Arab Students Association at Columbia University
- Empowering Women of Color at Columbia Law School
- Muslim Student Association at Columbia University
- Middle Eastern Law Students Association at Columbia Law School (MELSA)
- Conflict Resolution Collective (CRC)
- Columbia Law Students Human Rights Association (CLSHRA)
- Parole Advocacy Project at Columbia Law School
- Suspension Representation Project (SRP) at Columbia Law School
- Muslim Law Students' Association (MLSA)
- South Asian Law Students Association
- SIPA Human Rights Working Group
- Jewish Voices for Peace at Columbia University
- Columbia Law and Political Economy Society
- Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
- Queer & Trans People of Color (QTPOC)
- Asian Pacific American Law Students Association (APALSA)
- Prison Healthcare Initiative (PHI)

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Name of the group/club/organization

Your answer

Name of the representative (will not be shown on the statement)

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