

## **Requisition Letter for a Special Meeting of the Academic Board on Supporting Palestinian Students and Academics**

Dear Nick

We the undersigned are writing to requisition a Special Meeting of the Academic Board, under Statute 7(6) of UCL's Charter and Statutes.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the below motion.

### **Description of Motion**

Motion for Academic Board arising out of engagement with UCL students and in support of their calls to support Palestinian students and academics.

### **Action Required of Academic Board**

We request that the view of the Academic Board on this motion be determined by vote at a Special Meeting. Each of the three resolutions should be taken and voted on in parts.

### **Prior Consideration**

None

### **Background**

Since the attacks of October 7th 2023, Israel has engaged in the destruction of academic and educational institutions in the occupied Gaza Strip:

- All 12 universities in Gaza have been destroyed by the Israeli military(1). On 17th January 2024, Al-Israa University was destroyed in a controlled demolition by Israeli forces(2).
- The United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued a report on 20th February 2024 stating the following(3):
  - “More than 625,000 students and nearly 23,000 teachers in the Gaza Strip have been affected by school closures and attacks on education, leaving them with no access to education or safe places... Some 394 schools (79.5 percent of the total school buildings in Gaza) have sustained damage, including 142 schools that sustained major damage or were destroyed.”
- On 18th April 2024, the UN Office of the High Commissioner released a statement of concern over ‘scholasticide’ in Gaza(4). It identified the following:
  - ‘After six months of military assault, more than 5,479 students, 261 teachers and 95 university professors have been killed in Gaza, and over 7,819 students and 756 teachers have been injured – with numbers growing each day. At least 60 per cent of educational facilities, including 13 public libraries, have been damaged or destroyed’

UCL currently offers no educational support to or engagement with Palestinian students and academics, however,

- In 2022 after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, UCL recognised its international obligations by pledging £250,000 to an Academic Sanctuary Fellowship Scheme to support Ukrainian academics(5), in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine
- Multiple UK universities already offer specific scholarships for Palestinian students, including St Andrews, Ulster, Sheffield, Exeter, and most recently Goldsmiths(6) (following the five week long student occupation of the Stuart Hall building).

UCL's connections to companies who supply weapons to Israel also carries significant reputational and legal risk:

- On 23rd February 2024, UN Human Rights experts warned that “any transfer of weapons or ammunition to Israel that would be used in Gaza is likely to violate international humanitarian law and must cease immediately”(7).
- More than 600 UK lawyers, including three former Supreme Court Justices have called for the suspension of arms sales to Israel and for the UK government to consider the imposition of sanctions on Israel(8).
- On May 1st, the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians (ICJP) wrote to eighty-two British universities(13), including UCL, alerting them of the potential risk of criminal liability over their complicity in Israel’s military campaign in Gaza.
- Despite this clear call, UCL maintains connections with a number of arms companies supplying the Israeli military according to a 2023 report from the UCL student group Demilitarise UCL(9).
  - To give just one example of many, UCL’s Centre for Systems Engineering is currently sponsored by BAE Systems. 97% of BAE’s revenue comes from the sale of arms(10). BAE manufactures components for the F-35 fighter jet(11). BAE also provides electronic missile launching kits and gunsight technology for F-16 fighters(12). Both planes are operated by Israel in support of its current bombing of Gaza.

**In light of the above, and to uphold UCL’s stance on academic freedom and the rights of fellow academics and higher education institutions around the world, Academic Board hereby:**

- a. Advises council to establish a review body to examine all of UCL’s ties with arms companies and other relevant industries involved in providing weapons to states under investigation for genocide or crimes against humanity, particularly where this involves the killing of academics and/or the targeting and destruction of academic institutions; and that this review body reports on its findings to Council and the Academic Board within 3 months.
- b. Advises council that a similar review and report is undertaken of UCL’s ties with or investment in organisations that actively support or facilitate human rights violations abroad, especially those engaged in the destruction of academic institutions and undermining the rights of academic freedom.
- c. Advises council to establish a scholarship and fellowship project for Palestinian students and academics respectively to visit and study at UCL.

## Sources

- 1) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/24/how-israel-has-destroyed-gazas-schools-and-universities#:~:text=Palestinian%20news%20agency%20Wafa%20reported,university%20in%20Gaza%20in%20stages>
- 2) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-68023080>
- 3) <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-122-enarhe#:~:text=Some%2092%20per%20cent%20of,major%20damage%20or%20were%20destroyed.>
- 4) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>
- 5) <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2022/mar/ucl-launches-new-fellowships-supporting-academics-displaced-conflict-ukraine>
- 6) <https://www.gold.ac.uk/about/responses-statements/g4p/>
- 7) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/arms-exports-israel-must-stop-immediately-un-experts#:~:text=The%20experts%20urged%20other%20States,increased%20since%207%20October%202023>
- 8) <https://lawyersletter.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Gaza-letter-FIN-3-April5.pdf>
- 9) [https://ugc.production.linktr.ee/bf4fd37b-9cff-4dcc-bbe8-c425799b0c00\\_University-Complicity-Report--1--update.pdf](https://ugc.production.linktr.ee/bf4fd37b-9cff-4dcc-bbe8-c425799b0c00_University-Complicity-Report--1--update.pdf)
- 10) <https://www.sipri.org/databases/armsindustry>
- 11) <https://caat.org.uk/data/companies/bae-systems>
- 12) <https://investigate.afsc.org/company/bae-systems>
- 13) <https://www.icjpalestine.com/2024/05/01/82-british-universities-alerted-of-potential-criminal-complicity-over-israeli-investments/#:~:text=London%2C%201st%20May%202024,arms%20companies%20and%20Israeli%20settlements>

## **STUDENT SIGNATORIES ON ACADEMIC BOARD**

1. Muhammad Shaban Chaudhary, SU Education Officer
2. Issy Smith, SU Postgraduate Officer

## **ACADEMIC SIGNATORIES**

1. Rachel Rosen, Professor of Sociology
2. Izzat Darwazeh, Professor of Electronic and Electrical Engineering
3. Matteo Tiratelli, Lecturer (Teaching) - elected
4. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Prof. of Migration and Refugee Studies
5. Claudia Lapping, Prof of Psychosocial Studies and Education
6. Helen Chatterjee, Professor of Human and Ecological Health
7. Kholoud Porter, Professor of Epidemiology
8. John Gray, Prof of Applied Linguistics and Education
9. Dr Katie Gaddini, Associate Prof of Sociology – elected
10. Diana Gibb, Professor of epidemiology
11. Adriana Allen, Professor of Development Planning and Urban Sustainability
12. Lee Grieveson, Professor of Media History
13. Mr. Adnan Ali – elected
14. Anisur Rahman, Professor of Rheumatology
15. Rebecca Rees, Professor of Social Policy
16. Eleanore Hargreaves, Professor of Learning and Pedagogy
17. Professor Jane Rendell, Co-Director Ethics, Bartlett School of Architecture
18. Xine Yao, Associate Professor in American Literature to 1900 – elected
19. Helene Neveu Kringelbach, Associate Professor in African Anthropology – elected
20. Tim Waterman, Professor of Landscape Theory
21. Barbara Lipietz, Professor of Urban Development Planning
22. Sophia Psarra, Professor of Architecture and Spatial Design
23. Mark Newman, Reader – elected
24. Katherine Twamley, Professor of Sociology
25. Thomas Kador, Lecturer in Creative Health – elected
26. John O'Regan, Professor of Critical Applied Linguistics
27. Ann Phoenix, Professor of Psychosocial Studies
28. Ab Babiker, Professor of Epidemiology and Medical Statistics
29. Jan Derry, Professor of Philosophy of Education
30. Haim Yacobi, Prof of Development Planning
31. Camillo Boano, Prof of Urban Design and Critical Theory
32. Amy Kulper, Professor of Architecture
33. Joshua Hollands, Lecturer (Teaching) in US History – elected
34. Colin Marx, Prof of Urban Development Planning
35. Tom Western, Lecturer in Social and Cultural Geography – elected
36. Elaine Chase, Professor Education, Wellbeing and International Development
37. Simon Lewis, Professor of Global Change Science
38. Johanna Waters, Professor of Human Geography
39. Claire Robins, Professor of Museology and Art
40. Nishat Awan, Professor of Architecture & Visual Culture
41. Johannes (Hans) van Wees, Grote Professor of Ancient History
42. Sandy Oliver, Professor of Public Policy
43. Susan Michie, Professor of Health Psychology
44. Julian Walker, Professor of Inclusive Social Policy

45. Saladin Meckled-Garcia, Associate Professor in Human Rights & Political Theory – elected
46. Lion Shahab, Professor of Health Psychology
47. Victoria Showunmi, Associate Professor – elected
48. Alaa Shehabi, Associate Professor (Teaching) of Middle East Politics
49. Nazif Alic, Professor of Ageing and Gene Regulation
50. Richard Goldstein, Professor of Infection & Immunity
51. Jens Kandt, Associate Professor in Urban Geography and Data Science – elected
52. Kristen Kreider, Professor in Fine Art
53. Amy Horton, Lecturer in Economic Geography
54. Tom Woodin, Prof of the social history of education
55. John Potter, Professor of media in education
56. Elaine Unterhalter, Professor of Education and International Development
57. Maurizio Marinelli, Professor of China and Global Prosperity
58. Eva Branscome, Professor of Architecture and Cultural Heritage