GEORGETOWN SJP DEMANDS UNIVERSITY UPHOLD SAFETY AND JUSTICE FOR PALESTINIANS

Georgetown University | Occupied Piscataway and Nacotchtank Land

We, Georgetown Students for Justice in Palestine, demand that Georgetown University use its institutional power and influence to call for a ceasefire in Gaza, advocate for sustainable peace in Palestine through the dismantling of systems of injustice, protect Palestinian students on campus, end its complicity in the Israeli occupation and apartheid, and above all to uphold its Jesuit values of cura personalis and people for others as they apply to Palestinian human dignity in service of a more just world for all.

1. **We demand that Georgetown University call for an immediate ceasefire, and for an end to Israel's crimes of blockade, apartheid, and occupation against the Palestinian people.**

Over 70 International organizations, including the WHO, OCHA, UNRWA, Médecins Sans Frontières, Amnesty International, the UN General Assembly, and the UN Secretary General, have repeatedly called for a ceasefire and condemned Israel’s war crimes and violations of international law. The families of Israeli hostages have taken to the streets in Tel Aviv to demand a ceasefire and the return of their family members in exchange for a release of the thousands of Palestinian prisoners – state-sanctioned hostages held without charge or trial, including hundreds of Palestinian children. Director of the New York Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Craig Mokhiber, resigned, citing that this is “a textbook case of genocide” in which “the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and much of Europe, are wholly complicit.”

**We demand that Georgetown University acknowledge and call for an end to Israel's 16-year-long illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip.** The blockade denies Palestinians in Gaza freedom of movement and limits the import of food and other basic necessities, effectively creating the world’s largest open-air prison according to Human Rights Watch and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely-populated regions in the world, with half of its population being children.

**We demand that Georgetown University acknowledge and call for an end to Israel's illegal apartheid system.** The world's leading human rights
scholars and institutions are in consensus concerning the question of whether Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people constitute apartheid. The United Nations, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and leading Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem have all released comprehensive investigations corroborating the findings of apartheid.

We demand that Georgetown University acknowledge and call for an end to Israel's illegal occupation of the Gaza Strip, West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan Heights.

2. We demand that Georgetown University commit to serve as a sanctuary school for Students for Justice in Palestine.

We demand that Georgetown University protect the status of Georgetown Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) as a university-recognized student organization, the organization's right to freedom of speech and assembly, and the safety of its members.

We remind the administration that SJP serves as a community space for many Palestinian students who are under increased threat of violence, as well as students of color from many diverse ethnic backgrounds and faiths. In the wake of baseless and racist slander from media and politicians, SJP chapters across the country have faced unwarranted and unjustified surveillance and institutional aggression, with multiple chapters being formally disbanded by university administrations in clear acts of discrimination and attacks on students' freedom of speech and assembly. SJP chapter members and their community have faced harassment, eviction, and job losses in schools across the country. Georgetown SJP has also been subject to baseless libel online, and members of the organization have received death threats, experienced attempted doxxing, and survived verbal and physical harassment. We emphasize our administration's responsibility to protect its students. We demand that the administration hold those who engage in the aforementioned attacks against SJP accountable for their actions, while centering the safety and inclusion of Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim students through a working group.

We demand that Georgetown University actively refuse to engage in the McCarthyist attacks that SJP chapters at other universities have faced, and stand firmly in line with its commitment to upholding free speech by committing to serve as a sanctuary university for Students for Justice in Palestine.
3. **We demand the creation of a working group on Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim safety and inclusion.**

Our community has internally documented over 20 anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim bias incidents and hate crimes in the Georgetown community since October 7th. Georgetown University has demonstrated blatant disregard for the sanctity of Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim lives. This university, and our local and federal governments, have deigned to recognize or condemn the violence being perpetuated against our community. Palestinian students had to organize protests on campus amid our grief to convince the administration to merely recognize the loss of innocent Palestinian life. The administration still has provided Palestinians nothing but institutional silence regarding the military occupation and genocide that our families are living and dying under, despite openly naming and condemning the violence and injustice other groups of people have been subject to in the past. Georgetown University holds a double standard that tells Palestinians that *our lives do not matter.*

Given the gap between institutional structure to safeguard students, and the increasing rate of anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim hate crimes in this country, our university must immediately set precedent for our protection and inclusion. We propose a working group that will put forward mechanisms and scaffolding to build support for impacted students and communities. This working group must be faculty, staff, and student-led, and Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim community members must be included to the fullest extent in its designing and formation process. We demand that Georgetown University immediately begin the process of forming such a working group for Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim safety and inclusion.

4. **We demand that Georgetown University completely divest from Alphabet and Amazon.**

On November 14th, Georgetown reported investing over $28.4 million in Alphabet and Amazon. In 2021, Google and Amazon jointly entered into a contract to build a cloud computing system for the Israeli government and military, including AI technology for facial detection, enhancing Israel's unlawful surveillance infrastructure of Palestinians, and facilitating the expansion of illegal Israeli settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Through these investments, largely funded by our tuition money, Georgetown is complicit in the violent occupation, apartheid, and genocide in Palestine. As students who value Georgetown’s missions of service and justice, we cannot sit idly by as our tuition dollars fund the slaughter and brutalization of the
Palestinian people — including many of our own family members. We demand that Georgetown fully divest from Alphabet and Amazon immediately.

5. We demand that Georgetown University suspend its study abroad program at Tel Aviv University and institute a PalTrek program.

We demand that Georgetown suspend the study abroad program at Tel Aviv University and introduce a PalTrek program. Not only is it unethical to host a study abroad program in an apartheid state engaging in illegal military occupation and regularly committing war crimes, but Tel Aviv University itself has a disturbing record of collaborating with military contractors complicit in Israel’s crimes against humanity, especially the notorious Elbit Systems. Georgetown University holds “academic excellence” and “service to the world” to be “at the core of [its] global identity.” Its study abroad program at Tel Aviv University is deeply unaligned with these values.

PalTrek is an immersive study abroad experience centered on social justice that allows students to come face-to-face with the injustices Israel perpetrates against Palestinians and puts students in conversation with those working to establish justice and sustainable peace in the region. PalTrek programs have proven successful at other universities, including Columbia University and the University of California Berkeley.

Signed,

Georgetown University Students for Justice in Palestine