NEWS RELEASE
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USC Divest From Death Coalition to Begin Gaza Solidarity Occupation in University of Southern California Campus

LOS ANGELES. (April 24, 2023) — USC Divest From Death Coalition today announced their occupation of USC's Alumni Park, where the increasingly controversial 2024 Commencement is currently set to take place. The students taking part in the Gaza Solidarity Occupation are planning to occupy USC until their demands are met.

The coalition joins other students groups across the country in the National Students for Justice in Palestine's "Popular University for Gaza," a coordinated mass movement of students, faculty and staff that disrupts universities, creating climates that push universities to answer community and international calls for full divestment from the Zionist entity, and all of the industries that sustain it.

The USC Divest From Death Coalition's demands for USC are as follows:

1. **End War Profiteering and Investment in Genocide.** USC must fully disclose and divest its finances and endowment from companies and institutions that profit from Israeli apartheid, genocide, and occupation in Palestine, including the US Military and weapons manufacturing. USC must commit to accountability through full transparency of their financial investments.

2. **Complete Academic Boycott of Israel.** USC must end its study abroad programs at Hebrew University's Rothenberg International School and Reichman University and sever all academic ties and research cooperation with Israeli universities.

3. **Protect free speech on campus and provide full amnesty** to all students, staff, and faculty disciplined, penalized, or fired for their pro-Palestine activism. USC must abide by their self-proclaimed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion values and implement material policies protecting the safety of its marginalized students.

4. **Stop the Displacement, from South Central to Palestine.** No land grabs, whether in South Central, Tongva territory, or Palestine. Cease expansion, provide reparations, and support housing for low-income South Central residents. No development by USC without genuine community control.
5. **No Policing on Campus.** End the targeted repression and harassment of Black, Brown, and Palestinian students and their allies on and off campus, including through university disciplinary processes. Defund the Department of Public Safety and disclose and sever all ties with the LAPD.

6. **End the Silence on the Genocide in Palestine.** Release a public statement calling for an immediate, permanent ceasefire in Gaza, denouncing the ongoing genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people, and call on government officials to do so too.

"I'm participating in the Gaza Solidarity Occupation at USC to highlight and amplify the anti-zionist Jewish voice at USC and be in solidarity with the Palestinian fight for liberation," says a student organizer from USC's chapter of Jewish Voices for Palestine (JVP). "JVP USC feels our voice is especially important right now as many people at USC and across the country are equating zionism and Judaism, but we are here to say they are not the same! We stand by our belief of free speech, resistance to oppressive systems and solidarity with our valedictorian Asna and all other college campuses where pro-Palestine voices have been silenced."

The USC Divest From Death Coalition establishes the occupation most fundamentally in solidarity with the people of Palestine as they resist genocide and continue in their struggle for liberation. The occupation is also in resistance to attempts by USC and other universities to suppress the student movement for Palestine on its campuses, in resistance to the silencing of students that criticize the state of Israel, in resistance to the university administrators and boards of trustees who profit off the genocide of Palestinians; The students taking part are firm in their commitment to speaking out against the university's complicity in the genocide of the Palestinian people.

"USC's funding of the ongoing genocide perpetuated by the zionist entity is reflective of maintaining imperialist interests abroad, as well as solidifying the shared ideology of amerikan and zionist institutions in preserving racialized oppression," says a student organizer of the Gaza Solidarity Occupation. "To not stand in opposition to the expressly racist violence here and abroad is to ignore the calls for solidarity demanded by the majority of the world. USC acts in accordance with these oppressions, and to call against this is to recognize both the inhumanity of these systems and our own humanity in opposing them."

*We have chosen to use the word "occupation" instead of "encampment" to draw attention to USC as an occupying force on unceded Gabrieleno/Tongva land, an occupying force in South Central through its expansion into, gentrification of, and destruction of the existing community, and as a complicit power in Israeli occupation of Palestine.*

**About USC Divest From Death**

In joining the national "Cut Ties with Genocide: Divest from Death" campaign, USC Divest From Death pushes our institutions to divest from companies complicit in the genocide of Palestinians, in all its iterations, alongside thousands of campuses. The coalition's push for the
advancement of the key demand points on campus is the first steps towards the liberation of all people by ending the complicity of the University of Southern California in the violence enacted on our communities. Through the intentional act of coalition building, the students of USC realize that we are part of an interconnected fight for freedom taking place on campus, in our communities and homelands. We envision campuses free from militarism, occupation, and war through the implementation of divestment at USC.

**About National Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP)**

The student movement for the liberation of Palestine first began in the 1950s through the formation of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS). From the U.S. to Palestine, GUPS chapters galvanized thousands of students towards a liberated Palestine. The 90s’ wave of corrupt politicians and faulty deals changed the liberation movement as we knew it and many institutions, including the student movement, collapsed. In the absence of a Palestinian student movement, organizations such as Students for Justice in Palestine emerged across occupied Turtle Island (U.S. and Canada) as a way to educate, advocate, and mobilize in support for Palestinian liberation. Nearly two decades after the formation of the first Students for Justice in Palestine, the movement for Palestine has taken colleges and universities across North America by storm. With over 200 campus Palestine solidarity organizations across the continent, students have been leaders in uplifting demands for freedom, justice, and equality for the Palestinian people.

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