

This SRC notes that:

1. The ongoing military occupation of Palestine,¹ the continued escalation(s) of violence, and the attack on Gaza by the Israeli state have culminated in:
 - a. A total of 32,246 Palestinians being killed in the Gaza Strip as of 19 January 2024. Of these, 29,720 (92%) were civilians, 12,660 (39%) were reported to be children and 6,860 (21%) were women.²
 - b. 341 Palestinians being killed and 3,400+ people arrested by the Israeli state in the occupied West Bank.³
 - c. The humanitarian crisis inflicted upon more than two million people by cutting off water, food supplies, fuel, communications, and humanitarian aid in clear violation of international law.⁴
 - d. The bombing of civilian infrastructure including homes, bakeries, universities, schools, libraries, ambulances and hospitals, and the intentional targeting of journalists.⁵
 - e. The destruction of higher education buildings, including those belonging to the Islamic University of Gaza, Al-Azhar University, the North Gaza and Tubas branches of Al-Quds Open University, and An-Najah National University located at Palestine Technical University Kadoorie, and the subjection of Birzeit University in the occupied West Bank to raids and vandalism by the Israeli forces.⁶
 - f. The complete obstruction of educational provision at all 19 higher education institutions in Gaza, impacting 88,000 students; and the continuing disruptions in access to higher education for a further 138,800 students in the West Bank.⁷
 - g. The detonation and demolition of the last university in Gaza, Al-Israa University, on 17 January 2023 by the Israeli military.⁸
2. The Nakba, the violent dispossession of Palestinian people from their land by Israel, has been ongoing since 1948. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank have been living under Israeli military occupation since 1967, whilst Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been living under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade since 2007.
3. The actions of the Israeli state in Gaza beginning in October 2023 mark an illegal response to the October 7th Hamas terrorist attacks in which 1200 Israeli soldiers and civilians were killed and 250 people abducted, including 34 children.⁹
4. On 21 November 2023 this council passed motion R-23-23a, “Motion for Advocating for Ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza Conflict”, in which the members of this council acknowledged the conditions of the Palestinian people, the importance of ceasing military activity, and the “significant influence and ethical responsibilities” of this University.¹⁰
5. Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, B’Tselem, Al-Haq and the past four out of five UN Special Rapporteurs on the state of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, have stated that Palestinians are living under a regime of apartheid.¹¹ On 25 May 2022, in a statement to the UN Human Rights Council on discussions of the human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, the International Commission of Jurists stated that “the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) strongly condemns Israel’s laws, policies and practices of racial segregation, persecution and apartheid against the indigenous Palestinian population in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT),

comprising the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and against Palestinian refugees.”¹²

6. On 29 December 2023 the Republic of South Africa filed an application instituting proceedings against the Israeli State before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, concerning alleged violations by Israel of its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the “Genocide Convention”) in relation to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.¹³
7. On 26 January 2024 the International Court of Justice delivered a preliminary ruling on the request of the Republic of South Africa finding “plausible” cause to retain this suit and to request preliminary measures;¹⁴ the court stated:
 - a. “the military operation conducted by Israel after 7 October 2023 has resulted, *inter alia*, in tens of thousands of deaths and injuries and the destruction of homes, schools, medical facilities and other vital infrastructure, as well as displacement on a massive scale... The Court notes that the operation is ongoing and that the Prime Minister of Israel announced on 18 January 2024 that the war “will take many more long months”. At present, many Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have no access to the most basic foodstuffs, potable water, electricity, essential medicines or heating.”¹⁵
 - b. “Israel must, in accordance with its obligations under the Genocide Convention, in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II of [the] Convention, in particular: (a) killing members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; and (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.”¹⁶
 - c. “to take all measures within its power to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide in relation to members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip.”¹⁷
 - d. “take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.”¹⁸
8. On 15 February 2024 the International Court of Justice noted the following:
 - a. “the most recent developments in the Gaza Strip, and in Rafah in particular, ‘would exponentially increase what is already a humanitarian nightmare with untold regional consequences’, as stated by the United Nations Secretary-General (Remarks to the General Assembly on priorities for 2024 (7 Feb. 2024)). This perilous situation demands immediate and effective implementation of the provisional measures indicated by the Court in its Order of 26 January 2024, which are applicable throughout the Gaza Strip, including in Rafah... the Court emphasizes that the State of Israel remains bound to fully comply with its obligations under the Genocide Convention and with the said Order, including by ensuring the safety and security of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.”¹⁹
9. Israeli state officials have been named in suits of war crimes before the International Criminal Court (ICC), which “investigates and, where warranted, tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.”²⁰ The Mexican and Chilean governments have filed a joint request to the Prosecutor of the ICC to investigate Israeli

officials for war crimes against the Palestinian people pertaining to the ongoing conflict in Gaza.²¹

10. From 19 February 2024 to 26 February 2024, the ICJ will hold public hearings on the request for an advisory opinion in respect of the *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*. Fifty-two States and three international organisations have expressed their intention to participate in oral proceedings before the Court in which the ICJ, pursuant to Article 65 of the Statute of the Court, is requested to give an advisory opinion on the following:
 - a. “(a) What are the legal consequences arising from the ongoing violation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, from its prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and from its adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures? (b) How do the policies and practices of Israel referred to in paragraph 18 (a) above affect the legal status of the occupation, and what are the legal consequences that arise for all States and the United Nations from this status?”²²
11. The Israeli state has systematically attacked and undermined education in Palestine for decades. This includes the bombing and destruction of schools and universities, as well as the arrest, torture and kidnapping of students and lecturers, and the raiding of campuses.²³
12. A coalition of Palestinian trade unions has called for university workers and students worldwide to “to end all forms of complicity with Israel’s crimes – most urgently halting the arms trade with Israel, as well as all funding and military research.”²⁴ According to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, the University of St Andrews has nearly £1.8 million invested in companies complicit in Israel’s violations of international law.²⁵
13. Narratives articulated by Israeli state officials which use dehumanising language to describe Palestinians as intrinsic enemies of the Israeli state and as the enemy of all Jewish people by extension, include categorising Palestinians as ‘barbarians,’ ‘animals,’ ‘terrorists,’ and ‘seed of Amalek,’²⁶ and are at odds with the position taken by several Jewish groups such as Na’Amod: British Jews Against Occupation, who have stated that “our liberation is bound up with the liberation of others, rather than in competition. We do not need to oppress others to feel safe, and [we] work to build bridges and stand in solidarity against all systems of racism and discrimination.”²⁷
14. There has been an increase in anti-Palestinian racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia in schools and universities in the UK and internationally since the 7 October 2023.²⁸
15. Recent attacks on academic freedom and the right to protest, with particular worrying attacks on Palestinian academics, workers, students, and their supporters, by the British state, university managements, and the media. Attacks on academic freedom have included the cancellation and postponement of organised pro-Palestinian lectures, events, and Palestinian speakers.²⁹ At the University of St Andrews, Rector Stella Maris has been attacked for calling for a ceasefire, both from within and outside of the university.
16. Students and staff at the University of St Andrews have been affected either directly by the ongoing violence, or indirectly from their own experiences with global conflicts or the tensions that this has produced on campus. Students and representative groups have reported

experiencing hostility and threats of violence, and are therefore feeling unsafe in and around campus.

17. Various diverse student groups connected to the Students' Association have called for a ceasefire and brought attention to the wider history of the ongoing colonial violence inflicted by the Israeli state on Palestinians. Student groups have also requested action from community leaders. See:
 1. BSN Statement, 'Statement on the Situation in Israel-Palestine'³⁰
 2. MENA Statement, 'Our statement on ongoing events in Gaza, Palestine, and Israel'³¹
 3. STAMSA Statement, 'Our Statement on the ongoing events in Palestine and Israel'³²
 4. ACS Statement, 'Letter to the African Caribbean Society' (ACS)³³
 5. Amnesty St Andrews, 'Statement on ongoing events in Gaza, Palestine, and Israel'³⁴
18. Principal and Vice Chancellor, Professor Dame Sally Mapstone, was contacted formally by a "global group of genocide experts" on 29 November 2023, who clarified that Rector Maris' use of the terms, 'occupation,' 'apartheid,' and 'genocide' were justified and correct.-The letter called for Professor Dame Sally Mapstone to "rescind [her] statement and issue an apology to Stella Maris alongside a clearer commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression that will be circulated to St Andrews University staff."³⁵
19. 124 concerned members of staff from within the University of St Andrews also sent an open letter to Professor Dame Sally Mapstone in late November 2023, communicating their "emphatic disagreement" of the Senior Leadership Team's stance and conveying staff support of Rector Maris.³⁶
20. Professor Dame Sally Mapstone previously issued an apology on behalf of the university in acknowledgement of its historical responsibility for having 'let down' BAME students and staff.³⁷
21. It is not unprecedented for student groups in the University of St Andrews to advocate for institutional change as demonstrated in previous global events such as the BLM Movement, Mahsa Amini protests and solidarity with Ukraine, all backed by the St Andrews Students' Association.

This SRC believes that:

1. The ongoing violence in Palestine, which is being waged with the military and financial support of the UK government, moves us to reaffirm an unambiguous position of solidarity with Palestinians in line with the ICJ preliminary ruling that Israel, "in accordance with its obligations under the Genocide Convention, in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II of [the Genocide] Convention."³⁸
2. Israel's response to the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023 is a disproportionate military offensive which constitutes collective punishment.
3. Cutting off water, food supplies, fuel, communications, and humanitarian aid in clear violation of international law constitutes collective punishment.³⁹
4. The crime against humanity, which Amnesty international has identified as 'apartheid,' is being committed by the Israeli state against the Palestinian people.⁴⁰
5. All members of our community have the right to feel safe, supported, and heard.⁴¹
6. We are a student body who cares about humanity and that we must take tangible action to demonstrate that all lives are equally valued and worthy of support. The humanitarian crisis

- in Gaza is a feminist and reproductive rights issue,⁴² disability rights issue,⁴³ and racial equity issue.
7. It is necessary to support any student and staff member who is grieving as a consequence of the current situation, especially the loss of life, as we grapple with the combined commitments of solidarity with Palestine and of care for all students and staff members.
 8. Student Associations, as in the case of South African Apartheid, must be a forward-thinking bodies capable of enacting change; and that our Students' Association should likewise be the forefront of student action and the unaltered voice of student members.
 9. The Students' Association and the University must maintain an uncompromising position against all forms of racism, including antisemitism and Islamophobia.
 10. UK universities, including the University of St Andrews, must not be complicit in war crimes and crimes against humanity, and must immediately end all ties with entities involved in the perpetration of grave violations of human rights, including developing weaponry, military doctrines, and legal justifications for the mass targeting of Palestinians.
 11. Dame Professor Sally Mapstone should be held accountable by the university community and student leaders to the statements and apologies she made about and towards students of colour.
 12. Dame Professor Sally Mapstone should apologise for her communications in which she:
 - a. downplays the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza and disregards the ongoing genocide;
 - b. implicitly conflates support for a ceasefire with support for a terrorist organisation,⁴⁴ thereby contributing to hostility towards, primarily, MENA students and students of colour advocating for an end to the violence – putting their safety on campus at risk.
 13. The University of St Andrews as a research and teaching body should promote and defend academic freedoms globally. A palpable portion of this conflict, the intentional targeting of educational infrastructure in Gaza, is directly relevant to our community as an academic space.
 14. Academic freedom is under strain. The University should be a place where students' preconceived notions are challenged, not suppressed.
 15. We believe in the right of academics, students, commentators, workers, and activists to voice solidarity with Palestinians and contextualise the unfolding violence – a right which the Department of Education has attempted to suppress, and which the Senior Leadership Team at the University of St Andrews has also attempted to suppress.⁴⁵
 16. Advocating for justice, accountability, and the liberation of Palestinian lands, and opposing apartheid systems of any kind, aligns with the core principles of 'Decoloniality'. This school of thought is widely recognized and taught at St Andrews' School of International Relations, the top IR school in the UK, which encourages critical thinking and decolonial perspectives.

This SRC resolves that:

1. Students' Representative Council (SRC) recognises the evidence presented by the Republic of South Africa in the International Court of Justice which charges the State of Israel with violating the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The SRC will therefore act in accordance with its charitable objective (1) "ii. Providing its members with educational resources about issues relevant to them"⁴⁶ by informing the student body of this recognition.

2. The Students' Representative Council recognises the preliminary rulings of the International Court of Justice which find plausible cause that the State of Israel is violating the rights of Palestinian peoples pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The SRC will therefore act in accordance with its charitable objective "to promote and maintain good relations between its members, the local community, and the wider world"⁴⁷ by informing the student body of this recognition.
3. The Students' Representative Council hereby establishes or reaffirms its commitment to the principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression.
4. Officers of the Students' Representative Council commit to protecting academic freedom and freedom of speech with regards to expressions of solidarity with Palestinians, and ensure that Sabbatical Officers encourage Universities UK, of which Dame Professor Sally Mapstone is the president, and the UK government, to do the same.
5. The Students' Representative Council encourages Dame Professor Sally Mapstone to release a statement in apology for previous statements made by the Principle downplaying the impact of the Israeli genocide in Gaza on Palestinian students, in the spirit of her apology to the BAME community.
6. The Students' Representative Council hereby establishes or reaffirms support for students and staff in their right to dissent and protest in accordance with UK law, and provide assistance as needed to students and staff who are censored, harassed, intimidated and/or disciplined for expressions of solidarity with Palestine, in line with the University of St Andrews' "Commitment to Social Policy" on academic freedom as Outlined in the "University of St Andrews Strategy 2022-2027" policy document.⁴⁸
7. The SRC, in accordance with its charitable objective (1.iii) to represent the interests of the student body, which it was democratically elected to represent, condemns attempts to intimidate or limit the student voice.⁴⁹
8. The Students' Representative Council will support, share, or amplify student voices who call for an end to the conflict and call for accountability of violent actors.
9. The Students' Representative Council will share perspectives and amplify the voices of students and staff affected by the conflict. This will include, but is not limited to, consultations and collaborations with the Palestine Solidarity Society, and any other Students' Association-affiliated groups that support communities affected by the conflict.
10. The Students' Representative Council (through the Sabbatical team) will update the student body on the conflict while it remains urgent to do so.
11. The Students' Representative Council, in accordance with its charitable objectives (2) and (3),⁵⁰ will promote and facilitate educational events and resources about the history and present status of the conflict. These efforts may include, but are not limited to, BSN Teach-Ins, conferences, and creative projects organised by the Palestine Solidarity Society and/or the University College Union (UCU).
12. Officers of the Students' Representative Council, concurrent to "Motion for Advocating for a Ceasefire" support all efforts to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire to the extent allowed within the remits of the SRC's charitable objectives.
13. Along with the UCU, the Student's Representative Council will support students calling for the suspension of the UK government's political and military support to Israel.⁵¹ These efforts may include, but are not limited to, teach-outs, walk-outs, petitions, protests, and support in promoting such events to the extent allowed by their obligations under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

14. The Students' Representative Council commits, to the best of its ability, to supporting Palestinian academics and knowledge workers during this time of crisis, and to facilitate knowledge exchange through co-organising invited talks, workshops, seminars, and ongoing collaborations with the Palestinian Solidarity Society. Once a permanent ceasefire is implemented, commits to twinning with universities or university departments in Gaza, raising funds to help rebuild libraries and universities in Gaza, and advocating for the University to offer additional scholarships under the STEPS programme.
15. The Students' Representative Council will advocate for increased support systems within university infrastructure to keep students safe. This will include advocating for trauma informed support to be provided by the university to students and staff affected by violent conflicts, or the publication of guidelines for how students can participate in legal and safe affirmative action, with explicit condemnation of any incitement to hatred in accordance with UK law.

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⁴ HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. 2023b. *Israel: Unlawful Gaza Blockade Deadly for Children* [Online]. Available:

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⁵ UN OCHA. 2023a. *Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #35 [EN/AR/HE]* [Online]. Available: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-35-enarhe> [Accessed 19/01/24].;

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⁶ FRIENDS OF BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY. 2023. *The War on Gaza: The assault on Palestinian higher education*, Dec 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://fobzu.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Fobzu-Briefing-No.1-Israels-war-on-Palestinian-higher-education.pdf>. [Accessed: 29/01/24].;

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