



Persecution of Palestinian students in Israeli Academic Institutions

There are thousands of Palestinians who hold Israeli citizenship enrolled in Israeli universities and colleges. While Palestinian citizens have historically been victims of apartheid laws and policies, since October 7th, Palestinian students have faced a wave of unprecedented persecution from academic institutions. This document presents an overview of the current situation put together by 26 student movements that represent Palestinian students in Tel Aviv University, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Technion Institute of Technology, University of Haifa , Ben Gurion University and Bar Ilan University.

Our movements represent our national identity and dignity through cultural activities and advocacy for our rights as Palestinians, as well as for the overall fulfillment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We are fully dedicated to defending the principles of human rights, equality, and freedom.

Israeli academic institutions have been surveilling the private social media accounts of their Palestinian students, accusing them of “ incitement, identification with terrorist organizations and encouragement of violence” and subjecting them to legal and disciplinary procedures based on complaints they receive from right-wing Jewish Israeli organized student groups. Needless to say, there are no reports of Israeli academic institutions questioning the thousands of Israeli Jewish students who have been waging incitement campaigns against any Palestinian students that likes, shares, or shows any solidarity with the Palestinian people in Gaza and against the genocide and war crimes that are being committed there.

According to legal and human rights organizations, there have been at least 100 students who were expelled, suspended, or kicked out of their dorms, solely based on posts they have made on their social media expressing their opposition to ethnic cleansing, forced displacement, and mass killings. Students were shocked when they received 2-sentence emails from their universities and colleges informing them of their expulsion or suspension, without any prior warning, without giving any chance for the students to defend themselves and sometimes without even showing the students the posts these decisions are based on.

It has become clear that the Israeli academic institutions are taking action, based on complaints from fellow students and academic staff. Several of those students are part of right-wing Zionist



groups that constantly incite against the Palestinian national identity and the human rights of the Palestinian people.

The Israeli Ministry of Education has contributed to this reality by issuing instructions to deal with the “incitement cases” with strictness. The Ministry called for the expulsion of students who “support terrorism”, when it is very important to understand two things: Israel has officially referred to Palestinian diplomatic efforts, civil society campaigns, and human rights organizations, in addition to armed struggle, as terrorism, given a wide scope of such allegations against Palestinian students. At the same time, it is important to highlight that such instructions are not given regarding those supporting the documented crimes being committed against the Palestinian people. Part of the instructions from the Israeli Ministry of Education included passing the information to the Israeli Security Services. The Israeli Ministry of Education is led by Yoav Kish, a hardliner often involved in incitement against the Palestinian people.

“Incitement” or “support for terrorism” include, according to official Israeli standards and laws, merely showing solidarity with the Palestinian people. They include liking a post (even if old), pictures from family celebrations and even verses from the Holy Quran. Some posts are merely paying condolences to people who have been killed, including children and innocent civilians. These examples fall within the realm of freedom of expression.

As Palestinian citizens of Israel who are well aware of the racist tricks used against us, we are also well aware of how Israeli law works. We know, for example, that academic institutions have no authority to look into the personal accounts of students as this is part of their private space. The disciplinary and legal procedures the Palestinian students are being subjected to severely violate their rights to freedom of expression, access to higher education and fair process.

Such procedures have shown the collaboration between Israeli academic institutions and the political establishment, including by de facto endorsing the arbitrariness, anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian, pro-occupation and islamophobic perspectives of the most extremist right-wing government in Israel’s history.

As a result of the overall atmosphere of incitement against the Arab students, On Saturday, October 28th, extremist Jewish groups attacked Arab student dorms at Netanya college, chanting "Death to Arabs" and attempted to storm into the dorms. This incident endangered the lives of dozens of students who were held in the student dorms for long hours, until they were evacuated due to extensive pressure exerted by Arab students and community leadership on the Municipality and Police administration.



Academic institutions are no longer able to protect students as they have been letting the smear and incitement campaigns proceed, which is making the same scenario likely to recur in other institutions and towns.

We call upon the international community to take urgent action on this matter. Palestinian citizens of Israel, who make up over 20% of Israel's population, suffer from well documented and systemic racism and discrimination, including in the academic institutions, but this persecution that they are facing now is unprecedented.

We call upon:

- The European Union to review the academic programs and collaborations with the Israeli Ministry of Education and Israeli academic institutions involved in this campaign.
- All international academic institutions worldwide to review their engagement with Israeli institutions involved in racist practices.
- Donors to make sure that their support is not being used to support anti-Palestinian campaigns.

Sincerely,

Palestinian Students' Movements