

Faculty for Justice in Palestine - University of Florida (FJP UF) Statement of Solidarity with Gaza and UF Students

We, Faculty for Justice in Palestine (FJP) at the University of Florida (UF), affirm our solidarity with students advocating for a ceasefire in Palestine and an end to institutional complicity in the ongoing genocide in Gaza. For seven months, we have mourned the [now uncountable](#) death and destruction of Palestinian life, land, and culture in Gaza during a continuing campaign of ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Beginning last Wednesday (2024-04-24), the student-led UF Divest Coalition and UF Students for Justice in Palestine began a peaceful assembly in the Plaza of the Americas to express their solidarity with the people of Palestine and demand that UF divest from apartheid. Working in shifts, they have persisted in occupying space on the Plaza for a continuous six days and counting.

These students have been met with a climate of repression and intimidation from the university administration and police, escalating to the arrests of nine protestors last evening for peacefully sitting on a folding chair (2024-04-29). Having spent time standing in solidarity with the students occupying the Plaza, we have witnessed university administration's attempts to chill

freedom of expression on campus firsthand. Our students are thoughtful, hardworking young people who are engaging in a peaceful demonstration alongside their academic responsibilities. They are stepping up as part of a [growing, international student movement](#). While students hold space on the Plaza of the Americas, they are balancing studying for their final exams, coordinating food and water deliveries, facilitating prayers, caring for each others' wellbeing, and speaking their beliefs on their institution's complicity in the genocide in Palestine.

It is utterly shameful that UF administration has instructed the University of Florida Police Department (UPD) to confiscate protestors' chairs, mats, signs, water, food, art supplies, and access to electricity. It is unacceptable to see students arrested for peacefully expressing their voices. We condemn that the university has continued to change their expectations for a peaceful and lawful demonstration on a near hourly basis, continuously reinterpreting and restricting allowable activities to the point where sitting outdoors is now threatened with suspension, trespass, and arrest. These students do not deserve to be intimidated with a [vague, arbitrary, and unsigned list of manufactured rules](#) about allowable activities in a public space. These students do not deserve to be arrested or dispersed from their own campus by a combined force of UPD, Alachua County Sheriffs, and Florida State Troopers, as happened late on Thursday night (2024-04-25) and Monday evening (2024-04-29). These students do not deserve to be targeted for perfectly allowable activities on the Plaza during any other circumstance, from tabling events to sports tailgating to regular breaks sitting on a chair in between classes. As faculty, we stand in full solidarity

with our students and we will not stand by as their civil liberties and civil rights are denied for speaking out about the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

We demand that UF end its harassment of students engaging in peaceful protest. We support students' rights to shape the future of their own university through their constitutionally protected freedom of expression. We support the coalition of student organizers in their efforts to [establish demands of their university](#) (included below). Faculty for Justice in Palestine demands the following:

1. **Protection of students' rights to peaceful protest.** Cease the harassment of students demonstrating for justice in Palestine on UF campus and allow their peaceful, lawful protest to continue unhindered. Cease the shameful threats designed to chill free speech on campus. Students have the right to express their beliefs and make demands of their institution.
2. **Termination of partnerships with contractors implicated in genocide:** Sever ties between UF and weapons, arms, and AI contractors that are directly implicated in human rights violations, including the genocide in Gaza. Funding and partnerships with RTX (formerly Raytheon), Lockheed Martin, Kratos Defense, and L3Harris weapons manufacturers must immediately end.
3. **Disclosure of UF's investment portfolio.** University investments must be made transparent and publicly

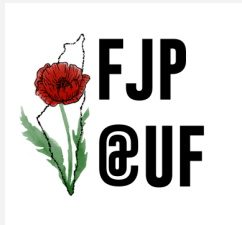
accessible. A student oversight committee should be established to ensure students can give input on their university's future investments.

We applaud students for taking action. To our UF colleagues - now is the time to support our students. As academics, we are part of a long history of combined student and faculty activism on campus that enriches the world through conversation, demonstration, and mutual community support. We invite you to join us in standing with student protesters out on Plaza of the Americas. We implore you to contact administration and make your support of student free speech clear.

In solidarity,

Faculty for Justice in Palestine - University of Florida

April 30, 2024



Share this statement: bit.ly/uffjpsstatement

Addendum to the FJP Statement of Solidarity (2024-05-02)

Now that [more information is available about the nine arrested protestors](#), seven of whom are current UF students, we add the following demand to our above statement:

- 4. Drop all charges and sanctions against the arrested protestors.** Law enforcement escalated the situation to the arrests of nine people over a protestor sitting in a chair, an absurd interpretation and over-enforcement of existing regulation about "building structures." We demand that these charges be dropped, trespass orders be lifted, and students be reinstated in good standing.
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Herein we share the UF Divest Coalition demands (as of 2024-05-02) for reference:

University of Florida Divestment Coalition Demands

The University of Florida Divest Coalition, comprising of passionate student and community-led organizations in Gainesville, is mobilizing to demand an end to the genocide in Gaza and Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine, as well as to address UF's complicity in international war crimes.

Our demands are the following:

1. Disclosure: The university's investment portfolio from 2014-2024 and beyond must be made transparent and accessible to the public
2. Student Oversight: Establish a student oversight committee for future investments, ensuring student input and approval.
3. Termination of Partnerships Complicit in Human Rights Violations: UF must sever ties with weapons, arms, and AI contractors which are directly implicated in human rights violations, including the Gaza genocide. Specifically, UF must:
 - Cut ties between UF Innovate and RTX (formerly known as Raytheon Company)
 - Cut ties with Chris Malachowaky and Nvidia
 - Refuse to allow RTX, Lockheed Martin, or other weapons manufacturers into UF career fairs
 - Discontinue RTX's involvement in the Integrated Product & Process Design course offered at UF
 - Refuse to take part in Lockheed Martin's "Ethics in Engineering" competition
 - End the partnership between UF's Women Engineers Rise Mentorship program with Kratos Defense and L3Harris.
4. Academic Boycott: UF must sever all institutional ties with Israeli universities complicit in apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and falsifying historical information. Specifically, UF must:

- Terminate the partnership with Israeli Hebrew University which is partially built upon occupied Palestinian territory, in contravention of international law
5. Divestment: UF must divest from funding and partnering with weapons manufacturers that are implicated in human rights violations in the Gaza genocide, including Lockheed Martin, RTX, Kratos Defense, and L3Harris.
 6. Speaker Policy: Refrain from hosting speakers affiliated with the Israeli military or spreading misinformation about the history of Palestine (e.g., 1948 Nakba, right of return).