

Letter of support for Malaka Shwaikh following the recent attacks, threats, and defamation

To be forwarded to the University of Exeter and the Exeter Guild of Students:

Following the recent defamation, attacks, and threats that our new VP research postgrad has received based on 140-character tweets posted some four years ago, mistranslated and taken out of context, we, the postgraduate and wider student community in Exeter, wish to show our support and solidarity with Malaka. Some of us have known Malaka since she came to Exeter some two years ago; during that time, she has been a non-stop activist fighting all forms of racism, from Islamophobia to antisemitism. She has been a loud voice against discrimination and bigotry for a long time. As a Palestinian herself, she has been touring the world to speak up for justice and to defend the Palestinian right to freedom, justice and equality. We firmly believe that seeking justice for and defending the rights of Palestinians is important. Smears of antisemitism to counter this and digging up tweets from several years ago and taking them out of context are disingenuous. We in the student community can disagree and still respect each other, unless our disagreement is rooted in oppression and denial of basic human rights.

We are calling on the University and the Guild to:

- Recognise that fighting for justice in Palestine and the Palestinians does not equal antisemitism.
- Publish a statement in solidarity with Malaka against all the attacks and threats and defend her as a student, activist, trustee, and an elected member of the Guild.
- Guarantee legal protection for Malaka including against the calls to have her deported.

Signatories:

Postgraduate students:

Yara Hawwari - PhD student, fourth year
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Lamees Felemban, MA student, second year
Rama Sahtout, PhD student, fourth year
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Niklas Haller, PhD student, second year
Charlotte Sefton, PhD student, second year
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Gabriel Polley, PhD student, first year
Schluwa Sama, PhD student, first year
Mohammad Affan, PhD student, first year
Richard Wilson, PhD student, second year
Raafat S, PhD student, first year
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Daniya J, PhD student, second year
Yaar Paretz, PhD student, second year
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Tessa Crossley, postgraduate taught officer, the Students' Guild
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Lizzie Harman, 640039969, Amnesty Society and the World Music Choir
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