

Bryn Mawr Student Collective Grievances and Action Items

The Bryn Mawr Palestine Coalition, with the endorsement of students, alumni, and parents, writes this out of an urgency to ensure the safety of our community. We are deeply concerned about the safety of Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim community members. We do this work with a deep commitment to advancing the collective liberation of Palestinian and Jewish people by challenging racism, Islamophobia, and antisemitism. Our community has written this as a mobilization of a deep dedication to love, justice, and transformation. We cannot stand by as the safety of our community members at Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and across the world, is under threat. We feel Palestinian students' fears about safety have been illegitimized. We are sickened by rhetoric that portrays Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim community members as threats. Students feel that Bryn Mawr College, through its communication and lack of material action, perpetuates institutional complicity in the ongoing violence facing these communities.

Israel has been a colonial force in Palestine since 1948, a force that has escalated into today's military occupation. The state of Israel has maintained a violent siege over Gaza for 16 years. In the past two months, Israel has killed a conservative estimate of 16,248¹ people in Gaza alone, as of Tuesday, December 5th. This number is rapidly increasing with every second, and it is imperative that we act now. This targeted violence has caused indescribable death, grief, and pain. We have a responsibility to listen to those affected by this violence, particularly by engaging with Palestinians, their knowledge, and experiences.

We must affirm that none of us are free until all of us are free. We reject the notion that the safety of Jewish people is in opposition to the safety of Palestinian people. Protecting our Jewish community should not silence Palestinian people and their voices. Conflating criticism of Israel with antisemitism minimizes actual antisemitic and hateful acts. Furthermore, it constructs a dangerous political environment in which pro-Palestinian activists are censored with allegations of antisemitism² and face subsequent threats to their personal safety as well as outright violence.

On Sunday, December 3rd, students held an open forum to draft the following grievances and action items in response to the College's recent communications and operations surrounding the shooting of our friend, Haverford Junior Kinnan Abdalhamid, and his two Palestinian friends. This is inextricably part of a rising tide of anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim sentiment around the world, country, and on our campus. We cannot enable such hate to poison our world; we must protect one another. Over 100 students attended this student-led forum to discuss how we, as a student body, can collectively respond to these growing threats and attacks on our community. We discussed how we can ensure a safe and equitable space for all students who choose to pursue their studies here. On Tuesday, December 5th, students held another open forum to share the consolidated grievances and action items heard in the first meeting with the student body. Over 50 students were in attendance, and we worked together to solidify this document.

¹ [Israel-Hamas War Live Updates](#) from Aljazeera.com

² [Canary Mission's Blacklist of Pro-Palestinian Activists](#)

Our call to action is a part of our broader communities' call for justice. As such, we stand in firm solidarity with the demands of Haverford Students for Peace³ and Swarthmore's Students for Justice in Palestine.⁴

We call on the College, by way of President Kimberly Cassidy and the Dean's Office, to respond to this document with respect and urgency. Students hope to build trust in the College by seeing concrete responses and implementation of these action items. Through this relationship, we can protect one another and ensure that our institution reflects our collective values of safety and care in and beyond our community.

GRIEVANCES AND ACTION ITEMS

PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY

SUPPORT STUDENTS

ADHERE TO THE COLLEGE'S MISSION

TAKE ACCOUNTABILITY

CALL FOR AN END TO ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE

PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY

In the interest of **PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY**, we advocate that the following be done to ensure the safety of our community:

1. The College will offer legal funding and support for students involved in protests. Students, including SGA members, have the right to protest on campus and speak about current events; this will be without retribution from the College. Students will not be threatened with social or academic disciplinary action, nor the suspension of student organizations related to the liberation of Palestine (including, but not limited to, Bryn Mawr Palestine Coalition, Students for Justice in Palestine, and Jewish Voice for Peace).
 - a. To protect students from retribution by faculty, the Provost must hold a standard of appropriate faculty response and support in regard to students affected, protesting and/or speaking out about Palestine. The Provost must offer educational resources to faculty members to work against any notions of being uneducated as a reason to not support these students.
2. The College will inform students, faculty, and staff, particularly international and undocumented students, about their rights and protections regarding speech and protest through workshops and other forms of education.
3. Human Resources will protect faculty, staff, and contract workers' rights to vocalize support for Palestine, in line with the Honor Code. This does not only refer to legal protection but also to cultivating a space in which faculty feel safe expressing their support for Palestine inside and outside of the classroom, as well as sign onto statements supporting Palestine. If faculty choose to develop "Faculty for Justice in Palestine"⁵ or any similar groups, this action must be protected,

³ [Haverford Students for Peace Demands for Administration](#)

⁴ [Swarthmore Students for Justice in Palestine Demands](#)

⁵ [Haverford Faculty for Justice in Palestine](#); Signed by faculty from the Bi-Co and beyond.

with the Provost taking necessary steps to ensure the safety of those involved. The Student Employment Office will guarantee students with on-campus jobs have the right to express political opinions and protest without risk of facing additional repercussions.

- a. Members of the Dorm Leadership Team (DLT) have the right to express their political opinions in support of Palestine.
 - b. Members of the DLT will be provided clear guidelines about how to navigate these conversations with residents in their dorm, and ensured by Residential Life that their jobs will not be impacted if they speak up or protest on or off campus.⁶ However, the responsibility to educate students, facilitate conversation, and de-escalate conflict should not only fall on the shoulders of DLT, especially the Community Diversity Assistants (CDAs).
 - i. The College must direct these issues to a restorative justice practitioner (Support Students, section 2.f).
4. Residential Life will offer free housing and meal stipends for the upcoming winter break to all Palestinian, Israeli, Iraqi, Lebanese, Jordanian, Egyptian, and Syrian students. This requires immediate action.

SUPPORT STUDENTS

In the interest of SUPPORTING STUDENTS, we advocate that the following be done to better support students and their needs:

1. We call on the President, Deans, and Provost to offer and improve Academic Flexibility, following Universal Design for Learning (UDL).⁷ This means:
 - a. Making clear to faculty that academic flexibility must be provided in ALL classrooms and offered to ALL students.
 - b. Providing Zoom and/or alternative lessons for students in the event that they are not able to attend class due to family and personal loss, protests, teach-ins, and community grieving.
 - c. Offering retroactive academic flexibility from October 7th and onward for all affected students and the general student body.
 - d. Offering universal extensions.
 - e. Making courses finished as “credit/no-credit” in the 2023-2024 academic school year not be counted towards the student’s four allowable credit/no-credit.
 - f. Extending the deadline of credit/no-credit until noon on Friday, December 22.
 - g. Allowing courses taken credit/no-credit to count towards major requirements in the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 semesters.
 - h. Providing letters of explanation for students applying to any opportunities that require transcripts in the event their grades dropped amidst this traumatic semester.
2. Improve and implement culturally competent counseling in the following ways:

⁶ Hiring Email from ResLife: "All dorm assignments are final. In order to accept your appointment, you must be willing to accept your housing assignment for the entire school year."

⁷ <https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>

- a. We advocate for the Health and Wellness Center to hire BIPOC counselors who are trained in decolonial, restorative, and transformative justice frameworks, as informed by cultural and Indigenous practices and ways of being.⁸
 - i. This includes hiring Muslim counselors and Arabic-speaking counselors with the intention of long standing employment. Students would be included in the hiring process.
 - ii. Increase the number of interfaith coordinators from different religious backgrounds.
 - iii. Provide professional development⁹ and training opportunities for counselors to become trained in decolonial, restorative, and transformative justice frameworks¹⁰
- b. Provide a weekly group counseling session for Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and all students personally affected by or connected to the ongoing genocide in which they can be offered healing and support facilitated by Palestinian counselors and healers.
- c. Expand the “9 free appointments”¹¹ each student is offered in addition to the “initial brief assessment appointment” with Counseling Services in which students will be guaranteed free ongoing access to mental health services by Bryn Mawr College.
- d. Provide reimbursement and funding for students who are required to travel for counseling sessions.
- e. We advocate for The Health and Wellness Center to invest in cultural and structural competency by way of workshops and training.¹²
- f. Hire a restorative justice practitioner that operates through the Health and Wellness Center who can aid in mediating conflicts on campus.
3. Student workers will not face disciplinary or punitive action if they need to take off of work with less than 36 hours of notice due to these ongoing crises.
 - a. We advocate that the Student Employment Office honor students’ requests and believe their reasons for taking time off of work.
 - b. Students who take this time off of work will receive paid sick leave.

ADHERE TO THE COLLEGE’S MISSION

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE’S MISSION is to foster “open inquiry, global perspectives, civic engagement, and innovation.” It also expresses a commitment to “racial justice and to equity across all aspects of diversity.”¹³ **In alignment with this mission, we advocate that:**

1. The College makes the Middle East, Central Asian, and North African (MECANA) concentration a minor.
2. The Provost, along with any additional hiring committees, hire multiple tenure-tracked Palestinian faculty members across disciplines.

⁸ Restorative Justice Training through the [Restorative Justice Center of UC Berkeley](#).

⁹ International Institute for Restorative Practices [Professional Development](#).

¹⁰ RP@P Workshops and Trainings: University of Pennsylvania provides [Restorative Justice Trainings](#).

¹¹ [Counseling Services: Frequently Asked Questions](#): Question 4.

¹² What is [Structural Competency](#)? [Structural Competency Networks and Training Materials](#).

¹³ [Bryn Mawr Mission Statement 2019](#).

3. The Study Abroad Office cut ties with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Rothberg International School and the University of Haifa.¹⁴
 - a. The Hebrew University and The University of Haifa have both hosted the Havatzalot program, which is a competitive 3 year military intelligence officer training and double major in an intelligence related subject.¹⁵ This program makes Arab students at the universities feel unsafe, because the military students wear their IDF uniforms and carry their weapons on campus.¹⁶ The Hebrew University Medical School supports the Israeli military through research and development¹⁷ and by maintaining partnerships with these Israeli universities, the College is directly complicit in the colonization and ethnic cleansing of Palestinian people.
 - b. We object to our school sponsoring an educational experience in Israel until occupation and apartheid end. This is particularly urgent as the Israeli military continues to bomb schools and universities in Gaza.¹⁸
4. Bryn Mawr College will adopt and establish a definition of antisemitism that does not misinterpret and conflate antisemitism with criticism of the state of Israel.
 - a. Refer to the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA)¹⁹ which was created “by a group of scholars in the fields of Holocaust history, Jewish studies, and Middle East studies to meet what has become a growing challenge: providing clear guidance to identify and fight antisemitism while protecting free expression.”²⁰
 - b. Reject the IHRA’s definition²¹ which dangerously conflates criticism of the state of Israel with antisemitism. This definition was endorsed by a recent U.S. Congressional resolution.²²

TAKE ACCOUNTABILITY

In the interest of ACCOUNTABILITY, we advocate that the College honor its responsibility to its students in the following ways. In your conduct, the College must:

1. Prioritize Moral Investments
 - a. We advocate the Board and Investment Office provide transparency about its investments and the process through which it invests.
 - b. We advocate the Investment Office not renew or continue its investments in military contractors that sell weapons to Israel and countries committing human rights abuses.²³

¹⁴ [Approved Study Abroad Programs in Africa and the Middle East.](#)

¹⁵ [Jerusalem's Hebrew University to host Military Intelligence program.](#)

¹⁶ Ahrnohiem, Anna. 2019. “[Jerusalem's Hebrew University to host Military Intelligence program](#)”. *Jerusalem Post*.

¹⁷ [Hebrew University of Jerusalem Institute for Research in Military Medicine.](#)

¹⁸ [NBC News Article](#) citing the attack on Ahmed Abdelaziz school, run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

¹⁹ [The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism.](#)

²⁰ [The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism.](#)

²¹ [Holocaust Remembrance: Working Definition on Antisemitism](#) which has over 350 signatories.

²² From the [House of Representatives: Resolution 894](#), where on page 4 it states: “Now therefore be it resolved, That the House of representatives... clearly and firmly states that anti-Zionism is antisemitism.”

²³ American Friends Service Committee, [The Database of Military and Israeli Security Export](#) (DIMSE), “United States”.

- c. We advocate the Investment Office divest from corporations that are propelling Israel's occupation and settlements in the West Bank, as recognized by the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement²⁴.
 - i. The JDA states "boycott, divestment and sanctions are commonplace, non-violent forms of political protest against states. In the Israeli case they are not, in and of themselves, antisemitic."²⁵
 - d. We request the Board of Trustees reinstate its Investment Responsibility Committee, which will include students, faculty, staff, and alumni who will have meaningful oversight of College investment policies. The Committee must include social responsibility, consider BDS, and understand imperialism as a key aspect of their work and within the scope of their duties.
- 2. Take Accountability through Apology
 - a. We advocate that the College, by way of the President and Deans' Office, apologize for failing to call for an investigation into the shooting of Haverford student Kinnan Abdalhamid.²⁶
- 3. Make Public Acknowledgements
 - a. When the College addresses our requests with concrete action, we advocate that the College publicizes its actions and gives due credit to students, faculty, and staff who were instrumental in pushing for and accomplishing any changes to College operations.
- 4. We request that information and conversations about school-wide changes not be limited to College-selected students, but rather the students as a whole.
- 5. Implement Transparent Communication
 - a. We request more extensive student involvement and communication regarding the ways in which Campus Safety operates on campus.
 - i. We advocate the Deans recognize how an increased Campus Safety presence can further the discomfort and endangerment of marginalized students, and consider this as a critical factor when changing or increasing Campus Safety operations. Therefore, any such changes will be communicated to students with urgency.
 - ii. We advocate the entire student body is polled about decisions to change Campus Safety presence on campus and the College fully communicates via email with the entire student body about this process.

CALL FOR AN END TO ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE

In line with the College's mission of civic engagement, **we insist** that Bryn Mawr college endorse the call to **END ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE**.

- 1. We insist that the College use its position as a respected Pennsylvania institution and practitioner of Quaker values of peace, social justice, and stewardship, to publicly call for an end to the war. We urge the College to publicly call on Representative Mary Gay Scanlon and Senator John

²⁴ Boycot Divest Sanctions Movement, [Act Now Against These Companies Profiting From Genocide](#) November 5, 2023.

²⁵ [The Jerusalem Declaration: Subheading C, Section 14.](#)

²⁶ "Message Regarding Hospitalized Haverford Student," Tomiko Jenkins & Karlene Burrell-McRae.

Fetterman to support a permanent ceasefire, as supported by the UN,²⁷ Amnesty International,²⁸ and the Friends Committee on National Legislation.²⁹ A permanent ceasefire aids everyone in the region including Palestine, Israel, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Syria.

2. We insist that the College, by way of President Kimberly Cassidy and the Deans Office, call for an immediate end to Israel's occupation, apartheid, and genocide in Palestine, and recognize Palestinian liberation and sovereignty, as supported by the UN³⁰:
 - a. "Today and every day, let us stand in solidarity with the aspirations of the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable rights and build a future of peace, justice, security and dignity for all."

With solidarity and urgency, please sign [here](#):

SIGNATORIES:

In addition to 493 students, 2 professors, 65 alumni, and 32 parents, the following clubs have signed in solidarity:

Acabellas
AJOYO
Anime Club
Art Club
Asian Students Association
Batten House
Bi-Co Asian Adoptees
Bi-Co Choom Boom
Bi-Co Film Society
Bi-College Jewish Voice for Peace
Bi-Co Students for Justice in Palestine
Bryn Mawr Aquatics Club
Bryn Mawr Baking Club
Bryn Mawr Board Game Club
Bryn Mawr Climbing Club
Bryn Mawr College Outdoor Club
Bryn Mawr College Trail Running Club
Bryn Mawr Fencing Club
Bryn Mawr College Lacrosse
Bryn Mawr Looney Tunes
Bryn Mawr Mock Trial
Bryn Mawr Poker Club
Bryn Mawr Service Club

²⁷ ["Secretary-General Reiterates Call for Sustained Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza."](#) 4 December 2023.
["Secretary-General Calls for Immediate Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza."](#) 14 November 2023.

²⁸ ["Israel/OPT: Urgent need for a sustained ceasefire to end civilian bloodshed and mass suffering as fighting resumes."](#) 1 December 2023.

²⁹ ["Quaker Organizations Call for a Ceasefire and Humanitarian Protections in Gaza"](#), 17 October 2023.

³⁰ ["World 'Must Be United in Demanding an End to the Occupation, Blockade of Gaza', Says Secretary-General. Marking Day of Solidarity with Palestinian People."](#) 28 November 2023.

Bryn Mawr's Feminist Coalition (FemCo)
Bryn Mawr South Asian Students
Bryn Mawr Quiz Bowl
Celebrating All Mixed People
Craft Collective
EAT Philly
EnAble & Access Services
Extreme Keys Acapella
Girls Who Code
Gluten Free Club
Haverford Faculty for Justice in Palestine
Healthcare Transportation Club
Hear Me Out
Historical Costume Society
Japanese Arts and Culture Club
Knitting and Crochet Club
Korean Students Association
Lavender's Blue Acapella
Mawrters for Immigrant Justice
Mayuri
Middle Eastern and North African Students Association (MENA)
Miniworld
Muslim Students Association
Night Owls Acapella Executive Board
Nimbus Literary Magazine Executive Board
SGA Institutional Memory Committee
Shakespeare Performance Troupe
Shift Dance Company
Spoon-Fed Sketch Comedy
Sunrise Bryn Mawr
Swing Dance Club
The First Page Tri-Co Creative Writing Association
The Hypotheticals & Co.
Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club
WHRC Haverford College Radio
Zami+
Zine Club