



LSA STUDENT GOVERNMENT UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

For Immediate Release:

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To the LSA community and the U-M community at large,

The University of Michigan was founded on the stated principle of developing leaders who will, “challenge the present, and enrich the future.”¹ This week, however, **that mission was yet again proven hollow**, as those who dared to challenge injustice were met—not with upliftment—but with police violence and repression.

On Monday, October 7th, 2024—the **one year mark of the ongoing genocide in Gaza**²—hundreds of protestors assembled in front of the Rackham building, marching together to demand liberation for the Palestinian people and divestment of the University’s endowment from the Israeli apartheid system. Students peacefully protesting the unjust arrest of an organizer were **violently shoved and body-slammed by UMPD officers**. Abruptly, officers deployed chemical agents on the crowd, spraying **indiscriminately** and frequently without checking who they were targeting.³ An estimated **70 protesters were pepper-sprayed** and several sustained significant injuries from the police’s offensive attacks.

This violent police response comes just one day after a leaked audio recording surfaced, in which President Ono **admitted to neglecting Islamophobia due to “powerful groups”**—external political and financial pressures that clearly undermine the university’s supposed commitment to justice and inclusion.⁴

The University of Michigan cannot claim to be a leader in “democracy and civic empowerment,” while violently suppressing peaceful protest on its campus. Rather than fostering an environment where students can “challenge the present” as promised, **the University has shown that it is more willing to bow to external political pressures than to protect the rights of its own community.**

As student leaders elected to leadership of the largest college at the University, we demand (1) immediate **demilitarization of campus police** and a move towards community-based alternatives, (2) a transparent and thorough investigation into the **UMPD’s use of excessive force** at the protest on October 7th, and (3) concrete steps to address **anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian racism**, as well other forms of discrimination on campus.

We will not remain silent while students are brutalized for standing on the right side of history. The fight for Palestinian liberation and divestment will continue, and we call on all members of the U-M community to join us in holding the University accountable.

In Solidarity,
The LSA Student Government Executive Board

¹ [University of Michigan Mission Statement](#)

² [One Year of Israel’s War on Gaza](#)

³ [Photo of UMPD Officer’s Indiscriminate Pepper-Spraying](#)

⁴ [CAIR-MI Federal Complaint Over Leaked Ono Audio](#)