

January 29th update to this letter may be found here: <https://bit.ly/49777OJ>

## TED FELLOWS REFUSE TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH GENOCIDE APOLOGISTS

January 24, 2024

Dear Chris Anderson,

It's time for us to end our association with TED. There is no doubt that TED changed our lives and has given us life-long friendships, but we are no longer willing to be associated with an organisation that platforms and honours vocal supporters of Israel's genocide of Palestinians. 2024 main stage speaker Bill Ackman has [defended Israel's genocide](#) (1)(2) and [ethnic cleansing](#) (3) of the Palestinian people and has cynically [weaponised antisemitism](#) (4) in his programme to purge American universities of [Pro-Palestinian freedom of speech](#) (5). Bari Weiss, also invited as a main stage speaker, has a long, sordid, and well-documented [history of anti-Palestinian](#) (6) speech. Like Ackman, she has weaponised antisemitism to [defend Israel's genocide in Gaza](#) (7) and has a track record [of transphobic extremism](#) (8).

As of today, there are no Palestinian speakers in the line-up, and even if there were, this false sense of balance could not hide the fact that TED has chosen not only to align itself with enablers and supporters of genocide, but to amplify their racist propaganda. This is a shameful position to take, and one that we refuse to accept. We refuse for our work and identities to be exploited to promote the TED brand while the organisation and its speakers generate income and advance their careers through dehumanising Palestinians and justifying their genocide.

TED has a long history of uncritically platforming the US military and arms trade, Israel's most resolute backers. In 2011, TED gave the main stage to General Stanley McChrystal - commander of Joint Special Operations Command during the US's horrific, murderous, and duplicitous [invasion of Iraq in 2003](#) (9), and later commander of the indefensible, disastrous, and unconscionably destructive [invasion and occupation of Afghanistan](#) (10). In 2012, TED gave a main stage speaking slot to Regina Dugan, former director of DARPA (The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) and director of the US armed forces innovation engine which is also deeply implicated in Afghanistan, Iraq, the US's numerous other wars of aggression, and its gruesome role as the [world's most prolific weapons dealer](#) (11). The US military and weapons industry are [fundamentally complicit](#) (12)(13) in the [genocide of Gaza's Palestinians](#) (14). In 2023 TED hosted a stunningly light-touch interview with Elon Musk, a man who publicly espouses and promotes [racist](#) (15)(16) and [antisemitic theories](#) (17), who [voiced his support](#) (18) for Israel's destruction of Gaza in a visit in November 2023, and who promised that without Israeli approval, he would not provide Gaza with internet access through his Starlink network - a service he provided enthusiastically for Ukraine. Rather than admirable and inspirational speakers, we believe a more honest assessment would characterise such guests as facilitators of war crimes.

In this context, we've become increasingly concerned about the fundamental values and moral compass of the organisation over the years, but with this year's speaker selection, it is clear TED has crossed a red line. If the organisation would like to begin repairing its reputation, it should immediately disinvite both Ackman and Weiss from the 2024 conference, and make a

genuine effort to respond to the ongoing genocide by inviting Palestinians themselves to speak of their research, scholarship, and experiences that for decades have clearly documented Israel's apartheid, occupation, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. However, in the unlikely event that this happens, it will be without our participation because we are ending our association with the TED Fellows programme with immediate effect. We are asking TED to remove our names and any references to our work from ted.com and blog.ted.com by January 31, 2024, and to no longer include us in references to the TED Fellows programme. Going forward, we will similarly no longer affiliate with the organisation.

Regards, and with unwavering support for a free Palestine,

Saeed Taji Farouky, Filmmaker, TED Senior Fellow  
Lucianne Walkowicz, Astronomer, TED Senior Fellow  
Ayah Bdeir, Inventor, TED Senior Fellow  
Renée Hlozek, Cosmologist, TED Senior Fellow  
Sarah Sandman, Artist, TED Senior Fellow  
Minou Norouzi, Artist-Researcher, TED Fellow

**To show your solidarity with the letter's authors**, you can [add your name here](#) on a rolling basis. Solidarity is open to anyone regardless of your affiliation with TED, and adding your name here does not mean you are ending your association with TED or requesting your name be removed from their sites.

*Signatures are updated on a rolling basis; as of 2/7/24 there are 182 signatures in solidarity.*

### **In solidarity:**

**Julie Freeman, Artist, TED Senior Fellow**  
**Aziz Abu Sarah, Activist, TED Fellow**  
**Eman Mohammed, Photojournalist, TED Senior Fellow**  
**Esra'a Al Shafei, Activist, TED Senior Fellow**  
**Nighat Dad, Digital Rights activist, TED Fellow**  
**Chanda Prescod-Weinstein, Theoretical Physicist, TED2022 Speaker**  
**Simone Alexander, Program Manager, Former TED Fellows + Community Program Manager**  
**Farwiza Farhan, Forest Conservationist, TED Fellow**  
**Shohini Ghose, Quantum physicist, TED Senior Fellow**  
**Jošt Franko, Photographer, TED Fellow**  
Kayla Lewis, Artist  
Stoplight Soul, Admin Assistant  
Shane McClure, Educator  
**Kevin Bethune, Designer/Author, TED speaker**  
Ozzy Llinas Goodman, Science journalist  
Brian Nord, Scientist  
Saul Williams, Artist  
Avram Rips, Teacher/Activist

Alexander Wallace, writer

**Jessica Banks, Inventor/TV Host/CEO, TEDx speaker**

Djudju Nzumba, Activist

**Nora Flanagan, Educator and Organizer, TEDx/TED speaker**

**Rola Hallam, Doctor, TED fellow**

**Cella Wright, Editorial Producer, TED-Ed**

Peregrine Bermas, Herbalist

Summer Ash, Astrophysicist/Science Communicator

Sasha Bayat, Dietitian

A. Wer, Lawyer

Tana Smith, Lawyer

Sarah Tuttle, Jewish Astronomer

**Sharanya Kolar Sathyanarayana, Technical program Manager, Former TEDx organizer**

Syed Rizvi, Designer

Tatiana Bassil, Product marketing

**Daniella Balarezo, Programming Manager, TED Audio Collective**

**Antonia Le, Podcast Marketer at TED, Podcast Marketing Associate for TED**

Mona Morad, TV news producer

Lejla Kevric, Artist

**Anastasia Taylor-Lind, Photojournalist, TED Fellow**

Nour Chamas, Infectious diseases expert

**Julia Fawal, Digital Strategist, former TED employee**

Patrick Desire, Retired

Esther Lumbreras

Laura De Vita, Lawyer

**Woojae Julia Song, communications specialist, TEDx at TED**

Omar Mawlawi, Entrepreneur

**Aziza Chaouni, Architect, TED Senior Fellow**

**Simone Giertz, Inventor, TED2018 Speaker**

**Fi Clements, Activist, TEDx Speaker**

Joe Jaggi

**Angelo Vermeulen, Space Biologist/Artist, TED Senior Fellow**

Patrick Jean, Editor and Writer

Jeremy Parker, Software Engineer

**Bristol Baughan, Founder, Inner Astronauts, TED India Fellow, 2009**

Blake Parker, Artist

Sarah Sydney, Activist

Firnaaz Ahamed, Academic

**Nasser Jaber, Founder, TEDinArabic Summit Speaker**

Carrie Lin, Activist

Ana Salaverria, Activist

**Melissa Mongiat, Designer, TEDx speaker**

Carly Keller, Artist

Taylor Andersen, Therapist and activist

**Stephanie Ng, Director of Programs, TED-Ed**

**Jim Chuchu, Artist, TED Fellow**

**Tahir Amin, Lawyer, TED Fellow 2009**

Rasha Hamzeh, Entrepreneur and philanthropist

Aseel Abdallah, Activist

Christina Blacken, Performer + Facilitator

Damon Brown, Entrepreneur Coach

Patricia Audrey Hakim, Vlogger/Podcaster

Marina Cattai, Canadian civilian

Cherine el zein, Interior design/activist

Christoffer Danielsson, artist

**Jorge Mañes Rubio, Artist, TED Fellow**

**Athena Lam, Social projects firestarter, TEDxYouth organiser**

Daniel José Older , Author

**Abdigani Diriye, Computer Scientist, TED Fellow**

**Aysha Al Mudahka, social and entrepreneurship, TEDinArabic Partner**

Emma Sanchis, Translator

**Yara Shaban, Educator and Researcher, TED Fellow**

M. Parsons, Educator

A.R. Morrison, Artist

Sarah Salem, Activist

**Kiana Hayeri, Visual Storyteller/Photographer, TED Senior Fellow**

Franziska Schaffner, Filmmaker/Activist

Hadeel J, Feminist and activist

Vincenzo Riso, Academic

Pamela D'Souza, Writer

Atika Zahra, HR Manager

**Adam Bly, Entrepreneur, Past TED Attendee**

Christiana Charalambous, Architect

Anastasia Galben, Engineer, Speaker

Dina Hassanein, Activist

Hisham Elaraby, CFO

Ossama Hassanein, Partner VC Firm

Fatima shabbir, Physician

Nora Barry, Writer/Storyteller

Heather Huguenor, Activist

Erin McClain, Student, UPenn

**C. Adeene Denton, Scientist, TEDx speaker**

Jamie Khan, Designer

Robert Ahearne, Software Engineer

Mehmet Alpaslan, AI Scientist

Jackie Gideon, Creative Director, Media

Gyunghee Park, Ph.D, Sociologist

Jacob Slichter, Writer / Musician

Karen Graubart, Historian  
Lina Masri, Palestinian Supporter  
Aimen Bacha, Teacher  
Virginia McCuen, Analyst  
Amanda Blevins, Teacher  
Abderhman Abuhashem, PhD, Physician-Scientist  
Elizabeth Strong, Software Engineer  
**Alejandra Salazar, Story Editor, TED Audio Collective**  
**Mike Hunt Corneliu, Gender Studies Specialist, Phoenix University, TED attendee**  
**Yarie Vazquez, Filmmaker/Activist, Media Manager, TED Conferences**  
Rowan Asad, Entrepreneur  
Allison Riley  
**Bianca Tylek, Activist, 2020 TED Fellow**  
Fattana Mirzada, Researcher  
Rania khalifa, Investor  
**Ryan Phelan, Media operations coordinator, TEDx at TED**  
Jo Hayman, Educator  
Danielle Doportto, Public Speaking Coach  
**Sierra Craig, TEDx Community Engagement Coordinator**  
**Juliana M Ferreira, Anti wildlife trafficking expert and advocate, TED Senior Fellow/TEDx Organizer**  
**Somi Kakoma, Artist, TED Senior Fellow**  
**Burçin Mutlu-Pakdil, Astrophysicist, TED Senior Fellow**  
**Su Kahumbu, Social Innovator, TED Global Fellow 2010**  
**Dominic Kahumbu, Climate action practitioner, TEDx**  
Mahtab Hanjani, Activist  
Yassine Souabni, Software developer  
**Dr Awab Alvi, Dentist & Activist, TED Senior Fellow**  
**Kyra D. Gaunt, PhD, Author/Ethnomusicologist, Senior TED Fellow, 2022 TED Speaker**  
Teresa C. Younger, Activist/philanthropist  
DeRay Mckesson, Organizer  
Christie Hakim, Program Manager  
Aya Ghossein, Mom/Real estate agent  
Randa Alameh, Business  
Sham Alolabi, Architect and urban researcher  
Paul Bernier, Entrepreneur  
**Ziyah Gafic, Photojournalist, TED fellow**  
Omar Ghadry, Founder advisor and coach  
Elie Khoury, Advertising  
**Theodore Ullrich, Engineer/Designer/Inventor, Speaker at TEDx Atlanta and TEDx Purdue**  
Christopher J.A. Coutinho, Laudato Si' Animator  
Amani Hassan, Cultural Practitioner  
Mohamad El-Husseini, Chief Technology Officer  
Jaspreet Monga, Program Manager/Activist

**Mahogany L. Browne, Writer, TED Attendee**

Ghada Barkett, Activist

**Stanford Thompson, Musician, TED Fellow**

**Sunita Nadhamuni, Social Impact Technologist, TED India Fellow, 2009**

Leen Sadder, Designer / Founder

**Fariel Salahuddin, Entrepreneur/ social innovator, TED Fellow 2021**

Tenzin Tsomo, Environmental Associate

Fasiur Rahman, Program Manager

**Francis de los Reyes III, Environmental Engineer, TED Fellow**

Nassim Nicholas Taleb, Author/Financier/Researcher

**Sung Tingwong, Director, David Cassidy Partridge Institute, TED Attendee**

**Joshua Wanyama, Designer / Photographer, TED Fellow**

**Fariel Salahuddin, Entrepreneur / social innovator, Speaker / TED Fellow 2022**

Luca Buffi, private investor

**Will Potter, Author, TED Senior Fellow**

**Elizabeth Wayne, biomedical engineer, TED Fellow**

Shigeru Kobayashi, Professor

Frank Okay, Artist

**Rafiq Phillips, Technologist, TED Fellow**

**Suzanne Lee, Designer, TED Senior Fellow**

**Dr. Philip Plait, Astronomer/Science Communicator, 2X TEDx speaker**

Scott C. Smith, Senior Analyst and Delivery Manager

Amy Exposito, Student, UIUC

**Sandhya Naidu Janardhan, Architect, TED India Fellow**

Autumn McDonald, Senior Fellow & Nonprofit Leader

**Meklit Hadero, Vocalist/Songwriter/Cultural Strategist, TED Senior Fellow**

Alex Gendler, Writer and editor

**Deepti Doshi, Social Technologist, TED Fellow**

**Tamara Ben-Halim, Human rights advocate, TEDx speaker**

**Shari Davis, Non-profit leader, Speaker**

**Esra Kucukciftci, Technologist, TED supporter/donor**

**Ashwin Naik, Healthcare Entrepreneur, TED India Fellow, TEDxPune Licensee**

**Danielle N Lee, Biologist/Outreach Scientist, TED Fellow 2015**

- (1) <https://x.com/BillAckman/status/1726398589671268528?s=20>
- (2) <https://x.com/BillAckman/status/1736795368480792930?s=20>
- (3) <https://x.com/BillAckman/status/1716074326808514745?s=20>
- (4) <https://x.com/BillAckman/status/1717303527289348165?s=20>
- (5) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/12/billionaires-are-teaming-up-for-pro-israel-anti-hamas-media-drive-report>
- (6) <https://jewishcurrents.org/the-real-war-on-free-speech>
- (7) <https://x.com/bariweiss/status/1717723891756589232?s=20>
- (8) <https://www.transgendermap.com/politics/media/bari-weiss/>
- (9) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-64976144>
- (10) <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/08/15/afghanistan-withdrawal-pullout-military-taliban-chaos-evacuation-biden-inhofe/>
- (11) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/williamhartung/2022/03/18/were-1-the-us-government-is-the-worlds-largest-arms-dealer/>
- (12) <https://jewishcurrents.org/us-complicity-israeli-war-crimes>
- (13) <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/gaza-us-active-partner-israels-war>
- (14) <https://jewishcurrents.org/a-textbook-case-of-genocide>
- (15) <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2022-11-14/elon-musk-toxic-boss-timeline>
- (16) <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/elon-musk-great-replacement-conspiracy-theory-1234941337/>
- (17) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-67446800>
- (18) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/28/elon-musks-israel-trip-what-was-the-purpose-what-did-he-tell-netanyahu>