

We, the Fordham Students For Justice in Palestine, demand that Fordham University recognize its responsibility as a Jesuit institution to uphold the inherent dignity and right to life of Palestinians.

While the Palestinian people demonstrate immense bravery against this genocide, President Tania Tetlow and the administration at large have insincerely employed the language of pacifism to absolve themselves of their moral duty to condemn it. They have implicitly likened this conflict to a religious one, obfuscating the truth of what is occurring: **Palestinians—regardless of religion—are oppressed and subjected to racialized genocide.** The ongoing genocide and humanitarian crisis in Palestine, exacerbated by decades of suffering and displacement since the Nakba in 1948, necessitates urgent and principled action. Fordham must call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, an end to the occupation, and an end to the genocide; divest from companies complicit in Israel's human rights violations; and adhere to the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI).

For over 200 days, US-backed Israel has engaged in a relentless campaign of complete terror in the occupied Gaza Strip. For half a year, the Israeli Occupation Forces' (IOF) ceaseless bombardment of the besieged territory has spared nothing and no one. Over 30,000 Palestinians are dead. The IOF trap the lifeless bodies of infants and children under piles of rubble; they ravage the land and its people with illegal phosphorus gas; they blow refugee camps and humanitarian aid trucks to bits; they meticulously exterminate scholars and journalists; they raze entire neighborhoods several times over; they bomb hospitals and universities into total oblivion. Funded and backed by the United States, Israel commits the greatest and most searing acts of violence imaginable, subjugating an entire population to a never ending barrage of death, destruction, and despair. Amidst the rubble, not a single university is left standing in Gaza.

As a Jesuit institution, Fordham University's mission statement claims that it is dedicated to research and education aimed at **“the alleviation of poverty, the promotion of justice, the protection of human rights and respect for the environment.”** Central to its ethos is the principle of cura personalis, or care for the whole person. The university underscores this commitment by emphasizing that its educational offering extends beyond academic growth alone, striving to nurture the moral, emotional, and spiritual development of its students. This is, supposedly, a large part of what makes a Fordham education worth the substantial financial investment.

Despite these professed values and aspirations, **Fordham University has failed to take a principled stance in response to the ongoing genocide, apartheid, and enduring occupation faced by the Palestinian people over the last 75 years. Instead, Fordham remains complicit, contributing to the violence through its financial entanglements.**

Administration continually refuses to recognize the Fordham University chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine. And, on the whole, has failed to commit itself to any adequate historical contextualization or sympathy for the Palestinian people.

This lack of moral leadership is particularly concerning against the backdrop of escalating repression and discrimination faced by Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim students and professors within academia, as well as their allies. **Such inaction not only contradicts Fordham's stated values but also undermines its purported commitment to *cura personalis* and the Jesuit tradition of promoting justice and human dignity.**

Therefore, recognizing the power latent in institutions like our own, we present the following demands:

Our Demands

1. **We demand that Fordham University call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, an end to the genocide, and an end to the 75 year long occupation of Palestine.** Since the Nakba in 1948, Palestinians have endured brutality, displacement, and ethnic cleansing at the hands of the settler-colonial Israeli state. Across the diaspora, Palestinians are denied the right of return, while those in their homeland face the ceaseless brutality of an apartheid state. Most recently, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are facing a campaign of elimination. In line with numerous scholars of international law and the charges made by South Africa in the International Court of Justice, there is no term more apt to describe the situation in Gaza than genocide. If Fordham wishes to demonstrate any commitment to human life and rights, they must unequivocally call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, an end to the occupation, and an end to the genocide.
2. **We demand that Fordham University immediately divest all stocks, funds, and endowment from companies complicit in Israel's occupation, apartheid, and genocide, and commit to refraining from any future investments that perpetuate**

these atrocities. Concurrently, we insist on full financial transparency to ensure that Fordham does not fund or invest, publicly or privately, in the perpetuation of Israeli apartheid and genocide. The silence from Fordham University regarding its investment practices speaks volumes. Without a clear picture of its investments, we have no choice but to presume that Fordham University, like other major private institutions in the country, is actively invested in the genocidal, settler-colonial state of Israel. A cursory glance at its main donors reveals a pattern of tacit approval of human rights violations. Significant contributions from entities—such as JPMorgan Chase & Co, a top investor in Israeli weapons manufacturer Elbit Systems; Aramark, notorious for exploiting highly unethical prison labor; and Bloomberg Philanthropies, which shamelessly boasts ties to the Israeli apartheid state—only further exacerbate these concerns. Should Fordham University accept funding from these sources, it is not unfounded to suspect its investment in similar projects. Fordham University must recognize its responsibility to uphold ethical investment practices and immediately sever ties with entities complicit in human rights abuses. Ending its relationship with HP (Hewlett-Packard, a company included on the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions [BDS] list due to its involvement in providing technology infrastructure to the Israeli military) is a critical step. Failure to take decisive action will leave us with no option but to intensify our calls for divestment and hold the university accountable for its role in perpetuating injustice.

3. **We demand that Fordham University commit to the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), cutting all ties with both the Hebrew University in occupied Jerusalem and with Tel Aviv University.** PACBI was initiated in 2004 to contribute to the struggle for Palestinian freedom, justice, and equality. It advocates for a boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions for their deep and persistent complicity in Israel's denial of Palestinian rights that are stipulated in international law. By refusing to engage with Israeli academic and cultural institutions complicit in the denial of Palestinian rights, we demand that Fordham actually stand by their purported commitment to ethical principles and human rights, calling on the institution's stated mission.
4. **We demand that Fordham University reinstate the Students for Justice in Palestine.** Fordham University's history of repression towards Palestinian voices, exemplified by the court case Awad et al. vs Fordham University, sheds light on the broader pattern of silencing and marginalization faced by Palestinian advocacy groups. In the Awad

et al. vs Fordham University case, Fordham ultimately denied recognition to Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), effectively barring them from official club status on campus. This landmark decision not only silenced Palestinian voices but also set a troubling precedent for the suppression of SJP and other pro-Palestinian groups nationwide. During a time of economic austerity for the university, Fordham allocated resources towards a five-year-long legal battle with SJP instead of investing in its faculty or academic programs. The denial of recognition to SJP by Fordham University was a clear infringement on academic freedom and free speech, stifling the ability of students to engage in dialogue and advocacy on Palestinian rights. This repressive action contributes to a climate of fear and intimidation, hindering meaningful discourse on the movement for Palestinian liberation. Addressing Fordham University's complicity in silencing Palestinian voices is therefore essential for dismantling systemic oppression and advancing the cause of Palestinian liberation on campuses nationwide.

In making these demands, we draw on a long line of student activism here at Fordham, rooted in a commitment to justice, human rights, and solidarity with oppressed peoples worldwide.

Signed,

Fordham Students for Justice in Palestine