

October 9th, 2023:

We stand in **full solidarity** with Palestinian resistance against over 75 years of Israeli [settler-colonialism](#) and apartheid. Palestinians have been subjected to the [longest](#) ongoing military occupation in modern history and their right to resist is enshrined in [international law](#).

Yesterday was an unprecedented historic moment for the Palestinians of Gaza, who [tore](#) through the [wall](#) that has been suffocating them in one of the most [densely-populated areas](#) on Earth for **the past 16 years** – an [open-air prison](#) blockaded by Israeli soldiers via land, air, and sea. Despite the odds against them, **Palestinians launched a counter-offensive against their settler-colonial oppressor** – which receives [billions](#) of US dollars annually in military aid and possesses one of the world's most robust surveillance and security [apparatuses](#). Any omission of this context – any rhetoric of “an unprovoked Palestinian attack” – is **shamefully misleading**. We invite you to look into the detailed [Human Rights Watch](#), [B'tselem](#), and [Amnesty International](#) reports on Israeli apartheid.

To those who are now calling for peace, we ask: where were you during the Great March of Return in 2018, when Palestinians in Gaza **peacefully protested and were shot dead** by the [hundreds](#)? Where were you when Israel **indiscriminately bombed Palestinian civilians in Gaza** in 2008, 2012, 2014, 2021, and 2022? Where were you this year, when Israel killed over [220 Palestinians over the past nine months alone](#)? Where were you as settlers [kicked](#) people out of their homes, [arbitrarily](#) imprisoned children without trial, and brutally [oppressed](#) an entire population?

You are not asking for peace. You are asking for quiet submission to systemic violence.

As long as you perpetuate this narrative, fighting will continue to break out until justice is achieved. **Because nothing else is working.**

As Columbia students, our classes regularly discuss the inevitability of resistance as part of the struggle for decolonization. We study under renowned scholars who denounce the fact that the media requires oppressed peoples to be “perfect victims” in order to deserve sympathy. Yet not only does our institution neglect to align its actions with its ostensible values, but it **actively normalizes Israeli apartheid and subjugation of Palestinians.**

We wholeheartedly condemn the email sent by General Studies Dean Lisa Rosen-Metsch on October 8th that exclusively sympathized with Israeli soldiers who uphold the occupation, obfuscated Palestinian resistance as “terrorism,” and refused to acknowledge any of the hundreds of Palestinian casualties in the past 48 hours – let alone the overall context of the past 75 years.

We condemn the October 7th email from Barnard Dean Leslie Grinage that extended support to those “affected by the violence and loss of life in Israel” without even mentioning Palestinian suffering once.

We condemn the fact that Columbia uses our [endowment](#) to invest in Israeli companies that violate international law and profit off of the construction of illegal settlements on Palestinian land.

We condemn that former President Lee Bollinger unilaterally and anti-democratically [overturned](#) a student referendum to divest from these companies in 2020.

And we condemn Columbia initiatives that normalize apartheid by sending students to the region when Palestinian members of our [university](#) community are barred from doing the same – from the 2020 dual-degree [program](#) with Tel Aviv University, to the recently announced [Global Center](#) in Tel Aviv.

We call upon newly-inaugurated President Minouche Shafik to step up and **divest from Israeli apartheid, end the dual degree program with Tel Aviv University, and cancel the opening of the Tel Aviv Global Center.** We call upon our administration as a whole to start **verbally acknowledging Palestinian existence and humanity.**

Columbia students and affiliates, we invite you to [sign](#) this open letter and to join us at 4:30pm on Thursday, October 12th at the Low Library Steps to protest our university’s complicity in Palestinian oppression. We further request that you **individually email our administration to call out their hypocritical statements** and blatant disregard for Palestinian trauma. It is on us to change the status quo and achieve justice for **true, lasting peace**: continue raising awareness, pressuring our university, and expressing solidarity. See you Thursday.

Signed,
Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine

Co-signed,
Columbia Jewish Voice for Peace

Four 10/12 SJP and JVP protest demands from Columbia University:

1. ***Address Palestinian humanity and existence. Correct and apologize for the emails sent by Columbia administration that support Israel while ignoring — and neglecting to even name — Palestinians.***

2. ***Divest*** from companies profiting from Israeli apartheid, noting that both former Columbia and Barnard presidents unilaterally & anti-democratically ignored the student body referendums to divest in 2020 and in 2018.
3. ***Cancel*** the opening of the Tel Aviv Global Center, noting that Palestinian affiliates of Columbia would be restricted from access to this program given Israel's apartheid policies, and further noting that this therefore violates Columbia's very own non-discrimination policy.
4. ***Cease*** the dual-degree partnership with Tel Aviv University, for the same reason.