

UOW Encampment for Palestine

Mission Statement

We are a collective of students, academic staff, professional staff, alumni, and community members committed to ending our university's role in the genocide of Palestinians. We are gathered here on unceded Dharawal land to re-erect the UOW encampment for Palestine.

Since October 7th, *at least* 36,318¹ Palestinians have been slaughtered by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). All Palestinian universities have been systematically destroyed by the IDF. Thousands of university students have been murdered by the IDF.² At least 95 academics³ have been specifically targeted and killed by IDF air-strikes.⁴ Just as UOW plays an important role in the Wollongong community; preserving and expanding knowledge, providing education and careers, nurturing innovative research, and being a space for academic discussion and social life, so too did these now destroyed educational institutions of Palestine.

Our university, the University of Wollongong, is complicit in this ongoing genocide of Palestinians.

UOW research, in partnership with the Defence Materials Technology Centre (DMTC), Bisalloy, and Blue Scope Steel, is used to produce and improve armoured steel. This steel is sold to Israeli weapons manufacturer Rafael Advanced Defence Systems and Israeli vehicle manufacturer Plasan for use on armoured fighting vehicles and armoured cars. The IDF, Israeli police and West Bank settler militias use these vehicles to kill, maim, displace, and ethnically cleanse the people of Palestine. Through the DMTC, UOW also has connections to BAE Systems which produces components for the F35 combat aircraft employed in the current bombardment of Gaza.

Hebrew University of Jerusalem works closely in partnership with the Israeli government to produce propaganda (Hasbara) which legitimises Israeli apartheid, land theft and war crimes. They have a well-documented history of suppressing dissenting voices and academic freedom. The university hosts an IDF military base on campus, delivers military intelligence programs, produces military research, and allows the IDF to station snipers on the roofs of university buildings. Part of the university, including student accommodation in which exchange students are housed, is on an illegal settlement.

Further detail on how these UOW partners cause harm, with detailed citations, will be provided shortly in additional documents.

These are the only the partnerships we know about, which is why one of our goals is for UOW to disclose all links with Israel and the IDF in particular.

As individuals who care about this university, it is our collective moral responsibility to maintain

¹ AJLabs, 'Israel-Gaza War in Maps and Charts: Live', in Al Jazeera. Updated May 24th, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>

² United Nations, 'UN experts deeply concerned 2024: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>

³ See above

⁴ Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, 2024: <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6108/Israel-kills-dozens-of-academics,-destroys-every-university-in-the-Gaza-Strip>

pressure on our university to uphold its own ethical principles.

Demands:

Our demands to UOW management match those of a growing global movement:

1. UOW must disclose all ties to Israel.

This includes military manufacturers, Israeli Universities, and any other entities linked to the Israeli State, Settlements, or the IDF.

2. UOW must divest from these entities that profit from the genocide of Palestinians.

This specifically includes:

- a. Cutting ties with the DMTC and its partners
- b. Removing Bisalloy as an industry partner and suspending any research collaboration until it ends sales to Israel
- c. Suspending the student exchange program with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and ending any collaboration agreements
- d. Cutting ties with any other undisclosed investments, while-ever they maintain ties to Israel.

3. UOW must not renew or accept any new contracts with entities directly or indirectly tied to Israel.

Our principles:

We commit to upholding the following principles in our encampment:

- prioritising the voices of marginalised people, particularly Palestinians
- decentralised, non-hierarchical organisation
- peaceful protest
- direct democracy in decision making
- being a safe and inclusive space (with a particular focus on maintaining a strong anti-racist position)
- mutual collaboration with other students, staff, and community groups who share these principles and demands
- continual self-reflection to ensure inclusion, effectiveness, and change where appropriate

To UOW administration:

You are enabling, supporting, and profiting from the first live-streamed genocide in human history. Live up to your own ethical principles. Disclose and divest.

June 2024