



OPIRG York condemns genocide in Gaza and calls for ceasefire immediately

October 20, 2023

The [Ontario Public Interest Research Group at York University](#) (OPIRG York) strongly condemns Israel's latest attacks on Gaza. Since the start of the war on October 7, [at least 4,200 people have been killed, over one million have been displaced, and large parts of the Gaza Strip have been reduced to rubble](#). On Tuesday evening (EST), we saw the [bombing of a fully functioning and staffed Al Ahli hospital](#) that alone has killed at least 500 people, including patients and healthcare workers providing essential and urgent care. [These attacks on the people, institutions, and infrastructure of Gaza, exacerbated by Israel's siege of the territory, constitute an egregious form of collective punishment that academics and activists now warn are genocidal in scope](#). We join humanitarian and human rights organizations around the world in calling for an immediate ceasefire, an end to Israel's current blockade of Gaza and the 16-year siege, and a prisoners' exchange. We view these as necessary first steps, designed to prevent the loss of more lives and to lay the groundwork for comprehensive negotiations aimed at ending Israel's apartheid regime and illegal occupation and recognizing Palestinians' right to self-determination.

As a student-led and funded organization focused on social and environmental justice, we unequivocally condemn all acts of terrorism and state-sanctioned violence that target any civilians. We mourn the loss of Israeli civilian lives claimed in Hamas' initial assault, and those killed, wounded, and bereaved in Gaza. However, mourning is not sufficient. We call on all people of good conscience to see in these events but one more reason that the decades-long policies of dispossession, occupation, and apartheid that are at the root of the violence and atrocity, be forcefully challenged, and ultimately dismantled.

Today, we reaffirm our unwavering support for the nonviolent [Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions \(BDS\) movement](#), which OPIRG York had previously endorsed. We call on York University to publicly denounce Israel's assault on Gaza and call for an immediate ceasefire, which it has yet to do. We remind [York that to appear silent on what is unfolding in Gaza](#) contradicts its own commitment to [Decolonizing, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028](#); as a publicly-funded institution for higher education, it must reject all forms of racism, including anti-Palestinian racism. As students, we call for York to release funds and resources to ensure the mental health and physical safety for all

C449 the Student Centre | York University | 4700 Keele St. | Toronto, ON.

M3J 1P3 | Canada

416.736.5724 ph. | opirgyork@gmail.com | www.opirgyork.org

students - particularly Palestinians - [and to end any partnerships with the Israeli state and state-funded academic/ research institutions immediately](#). We commit ourselves to supporting students and the broader community by assisting with research and resources, providing access to peer-reviewed reading materials, visuals, and graphics. Our staff and board are committed to receiving with urgency requests to fund student-led Palestine solidarity initiatives such as teach-ins and other activities. We encourage our broader community to support efforts and communities on the ground by donating to the [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East - UNWRA](#) - and / or [Medical Aid for Palestine](#).

For more information visit www.opirgyork.org or contact opirgyork@gmail.com.