Sunday, May 5th, 2024
UTSU Statement RE: Solidarity with Students’ Encampment for Palestine

The University of Toronto Students’ Union (UTSU) stands firmly in support of the student encampment on our campus, our students’ right to engage in peaceful protest, and the demands set forth by the parties involved: to disclose the university’s investments and financial holdings, divest from investments that sustain Israeli apartheid, and terminate partnerships with Israeli academic institutions operating in illegal settlements or those that sustain apartheid policies.

Alongside other student unions, we join in calling upon our university’s administration to ensure the safety of the students in the encampment, including protection from violence, intimidation, and threats of sanctions—academic or otherwise. We are concerned by the use of force on students in this movement throughout North America, and we condemn any sort of criminalization and dehumanization of the participants of all peaceful protests. The UTSU remains steadfast in our commitment to fostering a community where all students feel safe and supported, and we denounce any form of Islamophobia, antisemitism, anti-Palestinian or Arab racism, and bigotry.

As members of an academic institution, our students’ rights to expression and protest are invaluable. These rights have long enabled our students to not only bring forth important dialogue onto our campus, but to enact change and make history.

Members of our executive committee have visited the encampment, and have observed the sense of community fostered by those involved. Their programming, including Friday Jummah prayer, Shabbat dinners, shared meals and letter writing, has provided a safe space for students from all backgrounds to come together to hold our university accountable for their complicity in the unjust violence in Gaza.

This protest is part of a global student movement. It is critical that we, as UTSU executives, students, and community members, step up to meet the moment. We are proud of our students and stand alongside them in peacefully advocating for their demands, and for freedom in Palestine.

In times of heightened tension, we recognize the importance of increasing awareness for available support resources. We encourage those in need of assistance to utilize the resources provided below.

In solidarity,
The UTSU Executive Committee
Resources

University of Toronto Students’ Union Health Plan - Empower Me (confidential mental health and wellness service available 24/7, 365 days a year)

https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/telus-health-student-support/ U of T Telus Health Student Support provides students with real-time and/or appointment-based confidential, 24-hour support for any school, health, or general life concern at no cost to you.

https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/directory-of-chaplains/

https://mcuoft.com/counselling/

https://www.chabad.org/jewish-centers/3134115/Toronto/Campus-Chabad-House/Chabad-of-Midtown-at-the-University-of-Toronto

https://good2talk.ca/

https://www.rainbowrailroad.org/ Support for queer individuals escaping violence and persecution in their home countries.

https://naseeha.org/ Anonymous and confidential hotline providing counseling, available in English, French, Urdu and Arabic.

https://stellasplace.ca/ Free mental health services to young adults ages 16 to 29 in Toronto, including peer support, clinical, employment, wellness and recovery programs.

If you are in need of academic support, please contact your respective college/faculty registrar/academic advisor.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact communications@utsu.ca