



October 22, 2023

Dear Academics and Academic Institutions:

I am writing to you as the Head of the High Follow-up Committee for Palestinian Arab Citizens in Israel, which is an umbrella organization representing the unified leadership of two million Palestinians who are citizens of Israel.

We are currently witnessing challenging days in Israel and Palestine. These days are marked by semi-military rules in Israel following the rejected violations committed against civilians in the south on Oct. 7th, and the ongoing mass bombardment of Gaza, resulting in the loss of thousands lives. Amidst all of this, the Israeli occupation of 1967 Palestinians territories persists, and the rights of the Palestinian people remain unjustly denied, in contradiction of international law and UN resolutions.

In my capacity as Head of the Higher Follow-up Committee, I want to emphasize our resolute position: we unequivocally reject the violations perpetrated against innocent civilians and the continuation thereof. We consistently advocate for the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and we actively work towards adherence to international laws and norms. Our goal is to reach a peaceful solution that serves the interest of all the peoples in the region by putting an end to the Israeli occupation and fulfilling the internationally recognized right of the Palestinian people for self-determination.

Sadly, the alarming violations against civilians have extended to our civil society, particularly affecting universities and academic institutions in Israel. At the outset of the war and following the Israeli government's declaration of emergency rules, academic institutions have acted as an extension of the oppressors, initiating surveillance of Arab students' social media by their colleagues and institutionally. In ten cases, this has led to the suspension of Arab students, and in some cases Arab lecturers, all due to their opposition to the war and their demands for an end to the suffering of both peoples.

Many students and lecturers, both Palestinians and Jews, have been accused of supporting or sympathizing with 'terror organizations' and "terror acts." They have also been subjected to threats from right-wing groups and students associated with fascist and anti-democratic

ideologies and organizations. These groups persist in exerting substantial pressure on academic authorities, aiming to single out Arab students and lecturers in a manner reminiscent of "McCarthyism".

In these challenging times of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, I earnestly request that you leverage your influence to block the unjust campaigns conducted by academic institutions against their Palestinian students and lecturers. These actions have far-reaching consequences for the entire community of Palestinian citizens and the social relations among Arab and Jewish students on campus.

We implore you to send a message to either the Council of Higher Education in Israel (email: meida@che.org.il) or/and the administrations of Israeli universities. It is of the utmost importance to halt this political repression and persecution of our students and staff, to put an end to the ongoing erosion of academic freedom, and to uphold academic institutions as safe places for scientific research, freedom of opinion and expression, and open dialogue.

The Council of Higher Education in Israel email: meida@che.org.il
Please CC you letter to the High Follow-up Committee email: motabaa30m@gmail.com

Sincerely Yours,
Mohammed Barakeh
Head of the High Follow-up Committee for Arab Citizens in Israel

