



BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, 71-75 Shelton Street, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9JQ

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Vivienne Stern MBE
Chief Executive, Universities UK

cc. Professor Dame Sally Mapstone DBE, FRSE
President, Universities UK

cc. Jo Grady,
General Secretary, University and College Union

Sent via email: vivienne.stern@universitiesuk.ac.uk; principal@st-andrews.ac.uk; jgrady@ucu.org.uk

15 November 2024

Dear Ms Stern,

Thank you for your letter dated 28th October on behalf of Universities UK, yourself and Professor Mapstone, in response to our letter of 23rd October.

While we are pleased to hear of the steps that UUK has taken over the past year, and of your “steadfast” commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law, your letter did not address or respond to the main substance of our letter, which focused on the recent [expert statement](#) by United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, Gina Romero. This report identifies systematic and concerted attacks, including by UK universities, on the student movement supporting Palestinian human rights, and outlines a series of recommendations for universities and other academic institutions.

We wrote to you asking that you join our call for UK universities to implement the Special Rapporteur’s recommendations immediately and in full. Because your letter did not address this important issue, we are writing again to kindly request that you respond on this point.

We hope that you will join our call, which would protect freedoms of expression, association, peaceful assembly and protest on university campuses. This would offer much-needed reassurance to our members that their rights will be respected, and that UK universities will remain places of open intellectual exchange.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Nicola Pratt
BRISMES President

Dr Lewis Turner
Chair, BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom

On behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom
British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES)

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