

18 August 2025



Home

About Us

- *Mission Statement*
- *People*

Updates

Campaigns

- *BDS Toolkit for UCU members*
- *The IHRA Definition: a Toolkit for UCU Members*

Get Involved

- *Code of Conduct*

Mailing List

Home

The page contains the BRISMES Campaigns logo, and a link to BC mission statement and to the campaigns page.

About Us

BRISMES Campaigns is an independent subsidiary of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES). Our mandate is to engage politically and socially in promoting egalitarian education in Middle East Studies, including the endorsement and implementation of the call to boycott Israeli academic institutions voted by BRISMES AGM on 24 June, 2019.

Mission Statement

Our Mission

18 August 2025



BRISMES Campaigns stands for equality in Middle East Studies. We seek a more liberated Middle East Studies, a popular pedagogy that links research and theory to democratic practice, wider public and private understandings, and egalitarian politics across borders. We oppose the many ways in which Middle East Studies, on and off campus, is implicated in injustice and domination – racism, colonialism, Orientalism, misogyny, homophobia, ableism, authoritarianism, (neo)liberalism, and elitism. We believe in transnational solidarity and global justice, and support the Palestinian call for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against the unjust regime of occupation and apartheid imposed by Israel. We will campaign on and off campus on this and other issues through organizational and cultural struggle in civil and political society.

People

Anne Alexander

ANNE ALEXANDER is an activist in the UCU union, co-editor of Middle East Solidarity magazine and a member of the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP). Her doctoral research focussed on the anti-colonial movements in Egypt and Iraq between 1945-1963 and she contributes regularly to a range of publications on the politics and practice of social movement organising in the Middle East.

Jamie Allinson

JAMIE ALLINSON is senior lecturer in Politics and International Relations at the University of Edinburgh and author of *The Age of Counter-revolution*.

Miriyam Aouragh

Miriyam Aouragh is a Reader at the University of Westminster (London). Her doctoral research focused on the birth and implications of the internet in Palestine. She led a Leverhulme project about the revolutionary dynamics in the Arab world and their techno-social relations as they are marked by revolution and counter-revolution. Her current research (CAMRI) studies how the contradictions of capitalism shape the modes

18 August 2025



and meanings of resistance in the era of digital transformations, her work is published amongst others in her book *Palestine Online* (IB Tauris 2011).

John Chalcraft

JOHN CHALCRAFT is Professor of Middle East History and Politics at the LSE. His research focuses on history 'from below' in Gramscian perspective. His most recent book is *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (CUP, 2016). He currently serves as Treasurer for the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP) and as Secretary of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES).

Updates

Our letter to Vice-Chancellors on educide in Palestine

6 May 2024

This letter was sent to VCs at UK universities on 6 February 2024

Dear Vice Chancellor,

In light of the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Israel in relation to breaches of the Genocide Convention, we are writing to you on behalf of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Campaigns (BRISMES Campaigns) to request that your university do more to support educators and the education system in the Gaza Strip.

Over the past four months we have witnessed Israel's wholesale destruction of the education system in Gaza, which is made up of over 625,000 students and about 23,000 teachers and professors, all of whom have been impacted by the war. As at 24 January 2024, Israel had killed 4,327 students and injured 8,109. Further, Israel had killed 231 teachers and administrators and injured 756. The number of students and educational staff killed in such a short period is unprecedented in the region's history. Those

18 August 2025



students and teachers who have not been killed are among the more than 1.7 million people who have been forcibly displaced and who are living in overcrowded and unsanitary shelters or sleeping in the open. Like the rest of the population in Gaza, they are at risk of dying of hunger and disease, with no access to food, potable water, electricity, heating or medicine. Whereas we focus on Higher education, we contextualize the educational system in Gaza to grasp the long-term destruction that amounts to *Educide*. Israel has destroyed Higher Education infrastructure in Gaza on a massive scale, the impact cannot be understood outside the massive destruction of middle and elementary education and staff, taken together this illustrates how a whole school generation is destroyed.

Israel has systematically destroyed all of Gaza's universities. On 17 January, Israel blew up Al-Israa University, the last university left standing in Gaza. Footage shared by the BBC shows the university being completely destroyed. This act of wanton destruction follows the repeated targeting by Israel of Gaza's universities since the start of its military operation: the Islamic University and the University College of Applied Sciences were bombed on 11 and 19 October, respectively. On 4 November, Israeli forces bombed Al Azhar University, the second largest university in Gaza, and this was followed by the destruction of Al Quds University on 15 November. The medical school in the Islamic University was bombed on 10 December, while Al-Aqsa University and the Palestine Technical College have also been severely damaged.

In addition to the destruction of universities, a majority of school buildings in Gaza have been damaged. Israeli soldiers have filmed some of their acts of destruction, including in one video which shows the moment the Israeli army blew up a UN school in Beit Hanoun in December. As a result of the destruction of Gaza's schools, hundreds of thousands of children who have already been deprived of education for several months will not have a school to return to once Israel's attacks subside. Moreover, Israeli forces have attacked multiple schools serving as temporary shelters, killing Palestinians who sought refuge in them. For example, in November 2023 Israeli forces attacked the UNRWA-run Al-Fakhoura and Al-Buraq schools, killing at least 40 people and wounding many others, while in December 2023, they killed 15 Palestinians in attacks on Shadia Abu Ghazala School.

Alongside the decimation of the physical infrastructure of higher education in the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces have killed 94 members of Gaza's higher education community, including numerous internationally respected scholars, who comprised part of the

18 August 2025



region's intellectual leadership. These include Professor Sufian Tayeh, president of the Islamic University of Gaza, Professor Muhammad Eid Shabir, a microbiologist and Tayeh's predecessor at the university for 15 years, Dr Said Al-Zubda, president of the University College of Applied Sciences, and Professor Refaat Alareer, co-founder of the 'We Are Not Numbers' project and one of Gaza's most prominent intellectuals.

As you will no doubt be aware, Israel's killing of students and academic staff and its deliberate destruction of educational infrastructure constitute breaches of international humanitarian law, which requires Israel to take all feasible measures to spare civilians and civilian objects. It is self-evident that Israel has failed to comply with these requirements. As the UN Secretary General noted in late October, 'we are witnessing...clear violations of international humanitarian law...in Gaza'. Further, as South Africa argued before the ICJ, Israel's attacks on education and students should be viewed as further evidence that Israel is deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their destruction, in contravention of the Genocide Convention. As you will be aware, the ICJ has ruled that South Africa's case that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza is a plausible one.

In light of all of the above, we request that your university do the following:

1. Condemn Israel's destruction of the education system in the Gaza Strip and express support for Gaza's universities, staff and students, just as UK Universities did in regard to Ukraine's higher education system within a month of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Failure to do so now would raise serious questions about the consistency of moral standards at UK universities.
2. Review all partnerships, including research cooperation, student exchange programmes, and funding relations, with Israeli educational and other institutions, and end any relation that might be connected to 'plausibly genocidal acts' within the terms of the ICJ ruling, including support to the actions of Israeli armed forces and acts of genocidal incitement carried out by members of Israeli institutions, as well as discriminatory or recriminatory actions against Jewish and Arab Israelis who have criticized the war in Gaza.
3. To commit to set up placements, fellowships and scholarships for new students from Palestine, as well as hardship funds for students affected by the war on Gaza, and to enhance provision of placements for existing Palestinian academics and students,

18 August 2025



including through the British Academy's Researchers at Risk Fellowship Programme, which is supporting Ukrainian researchers affected by the war in Ukraine but is not supporting Palestinian researchers.

4. To actively support Palestine's universities through inter-institutional cooperation, including virtual exchanges, library sharing and infrastructural support. We note with regret that there are currently no partnerships between UK universities and universities in Gaza, exposing a clear double standard when set against the response to Russia's attack on Ukraine: within four months of Russia's invasion, 71 partnerships were in place with Ukrainian universities, and UK universities had 'come forward in droves to support their Ukrainian counterparts, backed by UK Government initiatives and funding'. We expect UK universities to support their Gazan counterparts in the same way.

We kindly ask you to respond within two weeks of receipt of this letter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
BRISMES Campaigns

Tags: education, gaza, human-rights, israel, palestine, politics

Emergency briefing: defending Palestine solidarity organising and free speech on campus

16 October 2023

18 August 2025



This event took place on **Thurs 19 October, 7pm**

The brutal bombardment of the civilian population of Gaza by Israeli forces and the forced removal of over 1 million Palestinians from their homes has brought hundreds of thousands onto the streets in protest. Yet students and academics who have spoken up on social media and at demonstrations have been targeted by hostile media campaigns. University managements have banned or restricted meetings against Israeli apartheid and occupation on campus. And government ministers and the police have created a climate of fear by threatening to criminalise using the Palestinian flag and pro-Palestinian slogans.

- How can we, as university and college workers, trade union activists and students work effectively to defend pro-Palestinian voices and organisers?

18 August 2025



- How can we ensure that our universities and colleges stand up to government pressure and support critical teaching and research on the roots of the conflict which examines the history of settler colonialism, apartheid and occupation?
- What should campus trade unions do to protect the right to protest, boycott and organise in solidarity with Palestine?

Hosted by BRISMES Campaigns, BRICUP and MENA Solidarity Network.

Chair:

- Sean Wallis (UCU London Region)

Speakers included:

- Rhiannon Lockley (National Executive Committee UCU and chair of UCU's national Equality committee)
- David Renton (Head of Employment Law Team, Garden Court Chambers who has fought a number of free speech cases in the employment courts)
- Gabriel Frankel (European Legal Support Centre)
- Tom Hickey (BRICUP<https://youtu.be/gjfJjw5p67E>)

Resources

- **Download David Renton's briefing note on his talk here** [Protecting individuals accused of misconduct around Israel/Palestine]
- **Briefing document** prepared by ELSC, BRISMES Campaigns and London Region UCU reps [Defending your advocacy on Palestine in the Higher Education context]

18 August 2025



Statement from BRISMES Campaigns Regarding the Earthquake in Morocco

September 12, 2023

BRISMES Campaigns is devastated by the destruction in the aftermath of the Friday evening 8 September earthquake in Morocco. Our thoughts are with our friends and colleagues and all who have been impacted. We offer our deepest condolences for those you have lost, and hope you are reunited with missing loved ones soon. Thousands of people have died, are dying as we speak, or are badly injured. Many more are homeless and severely traumatised. The regions of Ouarzazate, El Haouz, Chichawa, and Taroudant belong to a part of Morocco that still carries the scars of colonial underdevelopment and postcolonial marginalization. The towns hit by the earthquake are remote and poor. They get very wet, cold and snowy in the winter. Though the places in and around the epicentre are hard to reach, in numerous devastating social media messages university lecturers and school teachers have reported the loss of their students, of homes and schools that disappeared, and the destruction and death of complete villages in the Atlas mountain region. The race against the clock is real, the number of casualties will rise, and efforts made in the aftermath will be crucial.

Dozens of initiatives have emerged to collect donations, and several colleagues in the UK work with local NGOs and community leaders. Driss Ksikes, Director of Economia, LCI Research centre in Rabat told us, "Teachers have announced that they've lost all their students in the villages. Teachers from across the country are banding together to help, in coordination with local organisations." Rachida Azough, who coordinates Moustaqbel's Education Support Unit, notes, "We know the families of our students, so reconstruction is not that complicated for us. We give the funds directly and they do what is necessary with it. People need a roof over their heads. We know that the aftermath, the reconstruction phase, is the moment when most aid ends, and we're ready to help our students rebuild their lives."

We encourage all BRISMES members to contribute to relief efforts, and to extend support to affected colleagues at their universities. Whilst we cannot endorse any particular organisations running relief campaigns, members who are looking for ways to

18 August 2025

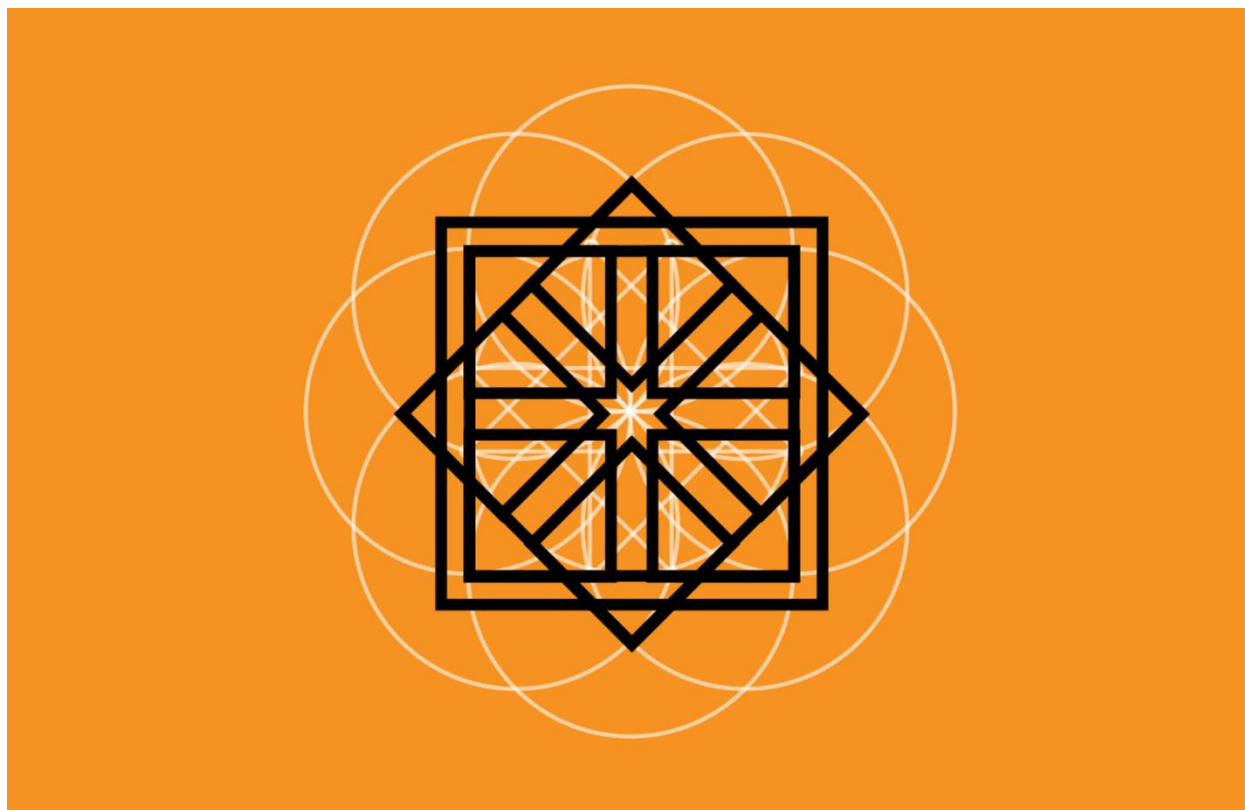


help those affected may wish to find out more about the organisations below, including those supporting educators and their students.

- Moustaqbel <https://donations.moustaqbel.org/>
- Foodbank Maroc (@FoodbankMaroc) <https://banquealimentaire.ma/donation/>
- SOS – Maroc (@SOS_Maroc) <https://www.gofundme.com/f/soutien-aux-victimes-du-seisme-au-maroc>
- El-Baraka Angels <https://www.gofundme.com/f/soutien-aux-victimes-du-seisme-au-maroc>
- High Atlas Foundation (@AtlasHigh) <https://www.hihatlasfoundation.org/>

Statement in solidarity with Palestinian human rights defenders

November 25, 2021



18 August 2025



#StandWithThe6

This statement has been drafted collaboratively by early career academics who are concerned for the lives of Palestinians and how the misuse of anti-terror laws both by the Israeli government and other governments globally prevents crucial solidarity and academic work being conducted. Scholarship on terrorism cannot be pulled apart from international politics and it is vital we take a stand and try to effect change.

To add your name to the letter, follow [this link](#).

We, academics, researchers and practitioners in the fields of Terrorism Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Human Rights and Public International Law strongly condemn the Israeli Ministry of Defence's recent designation of six Palestinian civil society groups as 'terrorist' organisations. This unsubstantiated designation is based on false allegations.

The recent proscription of the Palestinian groups Addameer, Al-Haq, the Bisan Center, Defence for Children International Palestine, the Union of Women's Committees and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, comes in the context of Israel's decades-long military occupation of Palestinian territory and its numerous violations of Palestinian human rights, under a discriminatory system that international human rights organisations, such as Human Rights Watch and B'tselem, have widely condemned. This crackdown against Palestinian civil society groups is an extremely worrying escalation in Israel's attempt to further curtail Palestinian's resistance against occupation, and prevent the documentation of violations against human rights. These groups engage in lifesaving work that benefits the large proportion of disenfranchised Palestinians who face on a daily basis the violence of dispossession, and increased restrictions on civil and basic human rights.

UN human rights experts have condemned the false designation calling it a 'frontal attack on the Palestinian human rights movement'. Criminalising the work of these groups, which are a lifeline to hundreds of Palestinian families, is meant to stifle any form of resistance, survival and meaningful and dignified living. The barring of these groups under the anti-terror law also works to criminalise anyone who finances or supports them. Two hundred and forty-one regional and international organisations have called for Israel to repeal its Anti-Terrorism Law (2016), stating that 'it does not meet basic human rights standards'.

18 August 2025



As researchers who engage in critical work on Middle Eastern Studies, Terrorism and Political Violence, and Human Rights in general, we believe our concerns are legitimate and valid, and foresee a frightening increase in the misuse of counter terrorism legislation globally. We are extremely concerned for the safety of members of the six organisations and the Palestinian families and individuals who rely on their support. We are equally concerned for the wellbeing and safety of researchers and practitioners who work with these organisations, and those who work to shed light on the plight of Palestinians in the occupied territories. We hold the Israeli government fully responsible for the safety of the employees of these legitimate NGOs.

The misuse of counter terrorism legislation to curtail human rights and undermine civil liberties is a dangerous precedent. The international community should prevent governments from violating basic human rights that are guaranteed by the United Nations' charter and other international and regional treaties and legislation. We stand in solidarity with these organisations who do vital work. We call on to the international community to exert rightful pressure on the Israeli government to repeal the proscription of the six Palestinian civil rights organisations. We also call on the Israeli government to cease the misuse of anti-terror laws against civil society organisations in the occupied Palestinian territories and to end the military occupation of Palestinian territory. We further call upon Higher Education institutions to publish statements condemning this designation.

Your name will be added below and this statement will be shared with the six Palestinian organisations. If you have any queries or want to make changes to your name, please email standwiththe6@gmail.com

Signed:

Dr Adam Elliott-Cooper, Lecturer, Department of Politics and IR, Queen Mary University of London

Dr Afaf Jabiri, Senior Lecturer, University of East London

Ahmed Abozaid, University of St Andrews

Dr Alessandra Mezzadri, Senior Lecturer Development Studies, SOAS University of London

Alice Finden, PhD candidate in critical terrorism studies, SOAS, University of London

Alistair Davison, Executive Director, Cordoba Peace Institute – Geneva

Amna Kaleem, PhD Researcher, University of Sheffield

18 August 2025



Dr. Anna Meier, Assistant Professor, University of Nottingham
Dr Anne Alexander, Research Associate, CRASSH, University of Cambridge
Professor Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, SOAS University of London
Professor Azrini Wahidin, University of Warwick
Dr Barbara Pizziconi, Reader in Japanese Applied Linguistics, SOAS, University of London
Barbara Schenkel, PhD candidate, SOAS, University of London
Bethany Elce, PhD student, SOAS
Dr Busra Soylemez-Karakoc Bucknell University
Chaeyoung Yong, PhD candidate, University of St Andrews
Chougrani
Dr Christian Henderson, Assistant Professor, Leiden University
Dr Clive Gabay, Reader in International Politics, Queen Mary University of London
Professor Dina Matar, SOAS, University of London
Dr Darryl Li, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of Chicago
Darya Tsymbalyuk, PhD researcher, University of St Andrews
Dr David Wearing, Post Doctoral Research Associate, SOAS University of London
Dr Emily Jones, Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Essex
Dr Emily Regan Wills, Associate Professor, School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa
Frederic Schneider, Senior Research Associate, University of Cambridge
Professor Gilbert Achcar, Professor of Development Studies, SOAS, University of London
Professor Goldie Osuri, University of Warwick
Dr. Hannah Bargawi, SOAS University of London
Dr Hsinyen Lai, Associate Lecturer, St Andrews
Dr. Imad Mustafa, University of Erfurt (Germany)
Professor Jan Selby, Professor of Politics and International Relations, University of Sheffield
James Godfrey, PhD Researcher, Birkbeck, University of London
Dr Jared Ahmad, Lecturer in Journalism, Politics and Communication, University of Sheffield
Dr Jasmine K. Gani, Senior Lecturer in International Relations, University of St. Andrews
Dr Jeff Handmaker, Associate Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam
Dr Jennifer Philippa Eggert, independent researcher
Professor John Chalcraft, LSE
Joude Bazzoun, student, University College Utrecht
Professor Laleh Khalili, Professor of International Politics, Queen Mary University of London

18 August 2025



Dr Lewis Turner, Lecturer in International Politics, Newcastle University
Lilly Barker, PhD student, Nottingham Trent University
Professor Lindiwe Dovey, Professor of Film and Screen Studies, SOAS University of London
Dr Lisa Stampnitzky, Lecturer in Politics, University of Sheffield
Dr Lori Allen, Reader, Department of Anthropology, SOAS
Lucia Kula, Lecturer in Law & Gender, SOAS University of London
Professor Lynn Welchman, School of Law, SOAS, University of London
Madlen Nikolova, Doctoral candidate, Department of Politics, University of Sheffield
Dr Malaka Mohammed, the University of St Andrews
Professor Mandy Turner, Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Manchester
Dr Manjeet Ramgotra, Senior Lecturer, SOAS University of London
Dr Maria Norris, Assistant Professor, University of Coventry
Dr Mazen Masri, Senior Lecturer, The City Law School, City University of London
Dr Melanie Richter-Montpetit, Senior Lecturer in International Security, University of Sussex
Mekia Nedjar International Relations Lecturer
Mira Al Hussein, PhD Candidate, University of Cambridge
Professor Miriam R. Lowi, The College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ, USA
Mohammad AlYousef
Nama'a, Doctoral Researcher at Delft University of Technology
Professor Neve Gordon, Professor of Human Rights, School of Law, Queen Mary University of London
Professor Nicola Pratt, Professor of the International Relations of the Middle East, University of Warwick
Dr Nisha Kapoor, Associate Professor, University of Warwick
Nivi Manchanda, Queen Mary University of London
Dr Omar Dahi, Associate Professor, Hampshire College
Dr Paola Zichi, Postdoctoral Researcher, Queen Mary, University of London
Pietro Stefanini, PhD student, University of Edinburgh
Dr Piers Robinson, co-director, Organisation for Propaganda Studies
Prerana Pai Bhande, Student, University College Utrecht
PhD candidate at the University of St Andrews (anonymous)
Dr Rabea Khan, University of St Andrews
Dr Rahul Rao, Lecturer in International Political Thought, University of St Andrews
Professor Raymond Suttner, Emeritus Professor, University of South Africa

18 August 2025



Professor Richard Jackson, University of Otago, New Zealand
Ronit Matar, PhD candidate/assistant lecturer, School of Law, University of Essex
Dr Sai Englert, Lecturer, Leiden University
Sam Morecroft, Anti-Casualisation Officer, USIC UCU
Dr Sharri Plonski, Senior Lecturer in International Politics, Queen Mary University of London
Shirin Rai
Shreeta Lakhani, Senior Teaching Fellow in Gender Studies, SOAS, University of London
Endowed Professor Stellan Vinthagen, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Dr Subir Sinha, Reader in Development Studies, SOAS, University of London
Dr Tara Van Ho, Senior Lecturer, University of Essex School of Law and Human Rights Centre
Dr Tanzil Chowdhury, Lecturer in Public Law, Queen Mary University of London
Professor Tim Jacoby, University of Manchester
Thomas Reid, PhD, University of St Andrews
Dr Tom Pettinger, Research Fellow, University of Warwick
Dr Tor Krever, Assistant Professor of Law, University of Warwick
Professor Virinder Kalra, University of Warwick
Zalina Abdul Halim, PhD candidate, University of Malaya
Zouhair Hammana, PhD candidate, Erasmus University Rotterdam

(List of signatories updated on 25 January 2022. For the latest list of signatories, see [here](#).)

BRISMES Campaigns launch

July 9, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6QT5-ZnGhg&t=3s>

Our launch event at BRISMES Conference on 7 July 2021 heard from campaigners, scholars and renowned Palestinian poet Fady Joudah about why translating academic privilege into concrete forms of solidarity and action has never been more urgent.

Watch the recording of the livestreamed event above.

18 August 2025



Chair: Hicham Safieddine

Panellists:

Omar Barghouti, Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

Sara Salem, LSE

John Chalcraft, LSE

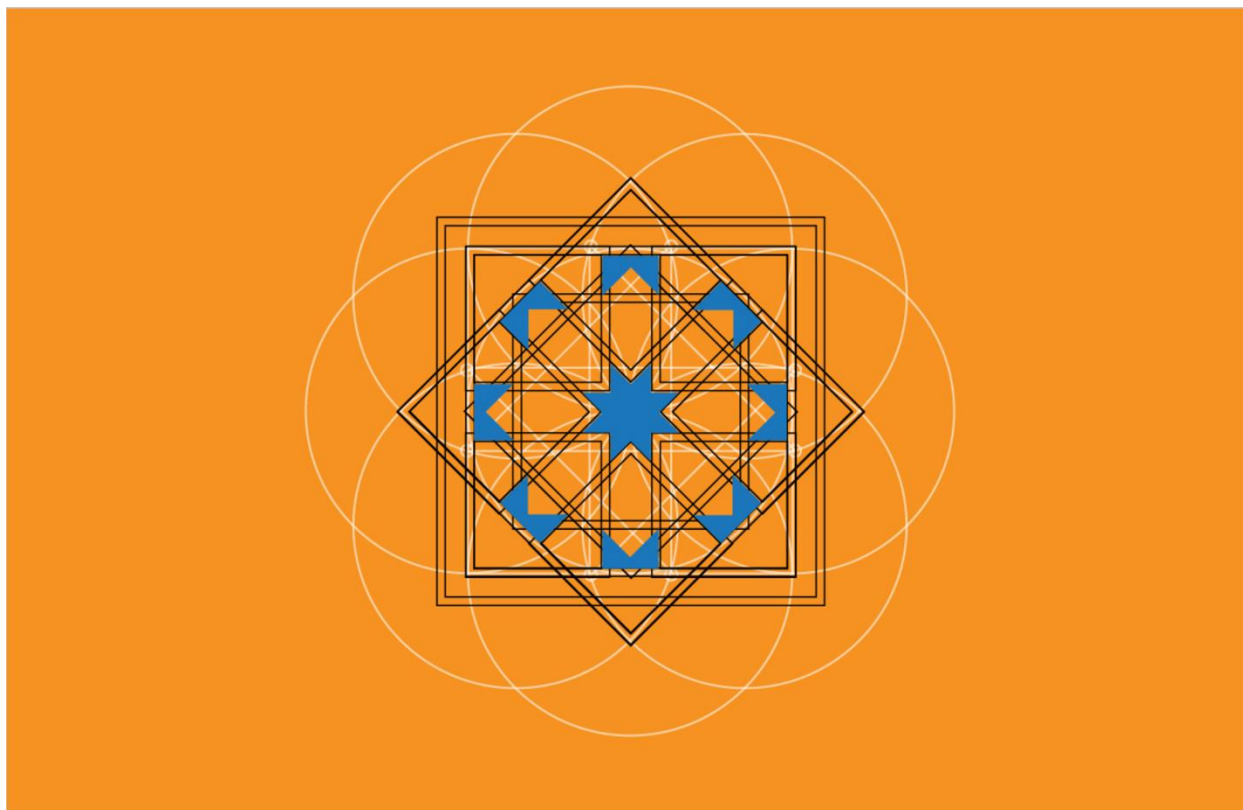
Marcy Newman, Founding member of the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

Fady Joudah, Poet and Translator

Middle East Studies in Practice and Anti-Colonial Education

May 30, 2021

18 August 2025



Wednesday 7 July 2021, 3.15-5.15pm

BRISMES Conference online

Chair: Hicham Safieddine

Panellists:

- Omar Barghouti, Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel
- Sara Salem, LSE
- John Chalcraft, LSE
- Marcy Newman, Founding member of the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel
- Fady Joudah, Poet and Translator

18 August 2025



Campaigns

BRISMES Campaigns promotes the grassroots, anti-racist, democratic, transnational and non-violent Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement in solidarity with the liberation struggle in Palestine. We promote the academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions, which are complicit in the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. We also campaign for divestment from companies (whether financial, industrial, service-oriented) which aid and abet settler colonialism. We also campaign for sanctions to be imposed on Israel until it ceases to violate international law. More generally, BRISMES Campaigns undertakes solidarity actions to defend Palestinian voices, histories, activists, educators, and educational activities which have come under increasing attack by pro-Israeli groups and individuals in recent years.

Get involved

We rely on volunteers to organise our campaigns, if you can share skills or time we'd love to hear from you. Click on the link below to find out more.

VOLUNTEER (*link to the get involved page below*)

BDS Toolkit for UCU Members

This document is aimed at members of the University and College Union (UCU) who wish to take action within their union branch on questions of Palestinian education and rights. It explains what steps to take to build a campaign at a local level and provides links to UCU's recent national policies relevant to Palestine. Although aimed at UCU members, the general approach and resources will also be useful for members of other unions.

This document is therefore divided into two sections. The first contains background materials, resources and information on the academic dimension of the BDS. The second section is more specific and it is targeted at UCU members who might be wanting to take action in their union branch. To avoid repetition and overlap with other sources we have focussed on a selection of links and background information.

18 August 2025



SECTION 1: Background – Why the academic Boycott?

BDS Academic boycott page <https://bdsmovement.net/academic-boycott>

- **Case study 1:** the establishment of Hebrew University in Jerusalem
- **Case study 2:** Palestinian universities and the denial of the right to education by Israeli authorities.

SECTION 2: Taking action in UCU

UCU members can play an important role in support of the Palestinian struggle for freedom. UCU has been at the forefront of the fight. Local UCU branches can do a lot too. Find out how in this section.

- Find out if your university is complicit with the Israeli occupation. British universities can be complicit in different ways, from investing their money into companies that support and allow the Israeli occupation and the violation of Palestinian human rights, to partnering with Israeli universities.

Is your university investing in complicit companies?

- University Complicity Database: <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/university-complicity-database/>
- UN database on of companies operating in Israeli settlements: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25542&LangID=E> (report with the list is a word document downloadable at the of the press release)
- War on Want report on 'UK bank complicity in Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people' <https://waronwant.org/resources/deadly-investments>

Does your university have a research partnership with an Israeli university? Universities usually list their links on their websites in the collaborations or partnerships section.

Is your university complicit? Time to do something about it! Find out how here.

18 August 2025



1) Find out what is going on at your university. The first step is to find out who is doing what on campus. PSC and other BDS activists are present on many university campuses, and they can be your best allies.

2) Propose and pass a motion in support of Palestine in your UCU branch.

All members can put motions on their branch's agenda, you just need to find out when the next general meeting will be! There is likely to be a deadline for motion submission before the meeting so that the proposed motion can be circulated in advance to the membership. Check your local branch rules to find out what this is or ask a member of your branch committee. However, it is often a good idea to approach your committee beforehand and find out a) whether your branch already has passed a motion on this topic b) whether they would be able and willing to support the motion. You may also want to look at the record of UCU's national Congress to see what relevant motions have been passed. It will help make a case for your motion at local level if you can point to relevant national policies which have already been agreed at Congress.

UCU's current national policy on Palestine was passed at the annual Congress in 2021. The full list of motions can be found here: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/Congress2021>

The relevant motion on Palestine in 2021 was L3 and was carried by 192 votes in favour, 15 against, 20 abstentions (p58 in this document: https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/11576/Congress-Motions/pdf/Voting_report_Congress_29and31.05.21_1.pdf).

Committee members will be able to advise you on the specific procedures of the branch (this will often be also included in a document on the UCU local branch website).

- **Case study:** Some examples of motions on Palestine which were passed at a general meeting of the Leeds University branch of UCU: <https://www.leedsucu.org.uk/motions-passed-at-extraordinary-general-meeting-17-june-2021/>

3) Your motion has been approved. What now?

Approving a motion is a great first step, well done! Now you can use this as a springboard for future steps.

18 August 2025



Organise a campaign. In recent years, several British universities have divested from companies complicit with the Israeli occupation. And this as a result of well organised campaigns run by staff and students. UCU local branches can play an important role.

Read about organising a campaign in academia: <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/AOC-guide-2020.pdf>

Read about recent successful divestment campaigns at UK institutions:

- University of Leeds (2018) <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20181105-in-first-uk-university-divests-from-firms-supplying-israel-army/>
- University of Manchester (2020) <https://bdsmovement.net/news/university-manchester-divests-nearly-2million-from-companies-complicit-israels-oppression>

The IHRA Definition: a toolkit for UCU members

A controversial definition of antisemitism that conflates criticisms of Israel with antisemitism has been used on campuses across the UK, leading to restrictions on the freedom of speech of staff and students.

This is the conclusion of a report authored by the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES), the largest academic association in Europe focused on the study of the Middle East and North Africa, and the European Legal Support Center (ELSC) into the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism by Higher Education institutions. The report demonstrates that the definition is not fit for purpose and is infringing on academic freedom and freedom of speech, while also harming the mental health, reputation and career prospects of students and staff.

Read the report here >> <https://www.brismes.ac.uk/news/press-release-new-report-highlights-major-free-speech-issues-in-uk-universities>

18 August 2025



UCU members have repeatedly criticised the IHRA definition on very similar grounds both at national and local level, through motions adopted by branches and at the union's national congresses in 2017, 2018 and 2021. This toolkit provides resources for UCU activists who want to raise this issue within their branch and institution.

Model motion

This UCU branch notes that:

1. A report by the British Society for Middle East Studies (BRISMES) and the European Legal Support Centre (ELSC) has analysed 40 cases of accusations of antisemitism directed at students and staff based on the IHRA definition, which were recorded between 2017 and 2022.
2. By the time of the report's publication in September 2023, with the exception of two cases which were still ongoing and had yet to be substantiated, all accusations of antisemitism discussed in the report were eventually rejected.
3. The report highlights concerns that casualised staff are particularly vulnerable to the negative impact of unfounded allegations on their careers and their mental health
4. UCU Congress warned about the risks that the IHRA definition would be used to silence voices critical of the state of Israel in motions passed in 2017, 2018 and 2021.

This UCU branch resolves:

1. To circulate the report to members
2. To create an information page on our website with resources relevant to this question
3. To write to senior management echoing the report's call for rescinding the adoption of the IHRA definition
4. To invite BRISMES to send a speaker to brief members on the report

Sample newsletter announcement

18 August 2025



Major report on 'The adverse impact of the IHRA definition of antisemitism' corroborates UCU's concerns that the antisemitism definition adopted by large numbers of universities in recent years has damaged academic freedom. **Read online >>here**

Sample website text

The IHRA Definition of antisemitism has been widely adopted in recent years by UK Higher Education Institutions. UCU branches and the national union have raised persistent concerns about the IHRA definition through motions passed at branch meetings and at UCU congress in 2017, 2018 and 2021. A report by the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) and the European Legal Support Centre in September 2023 found that the IHRA Definition had led to restrictions on freedom of speech for staff and students, led to censorship and self-censorship and harmed the mental health, reputation and career prospects of students and staff. **Read the report >>here**

Background reading and resources

- [Report: 'The adverse impact of the IHRA definition of antisemitism'](#)
- UCU national policy: [congress resolutions 2021 \(Motions 12 and 13 as amended\)](#), [congress resolutions 2018 \(special congress, motion 37\)](#); [congress resolution 2017 \(Motion 57, composite\)](#)
- [IHRA working definition of antisemitism](#)
- [European Legal Support Centre](#)
- [Report of the UCL Working Group on a Definition of Antisemitism](#)
- [No IHRA Definition campaign website](#) (a joint project of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, BRICUP and Jews for Justice for Palestinians)

Get Involved

Our campaigns could not run without the support of volunteers who help us organise – if you'd like to contribute to what we do please get in touch using this form.

Name(required)

18 August 2025



Email(required)

Academic institution or workplace

Trade union or other organisation

Languages spoken

If you are in Higher Education are you

- A student?
- A staff member?

Which area of our work most interests you?

- Research
- Media
- Campaigning and mobilisation
- Other (please add details below)

Other Details (*open answer*)

SEND

Code of conduct

This Code of Conduct underpins our commitment to develop an inclusive community dedicated to open scholarly exchange and the dissemination of knowledge in Middle East Studies. The Code should not be construed as compromising in any way our commitment to the principles of academic freedom, defined by UNESCO as ‘the right, without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom to express freely [your] opinion about the institution or system in which [you] work, freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies.’

This Code applies to the following individuals:

18 August 2025



1. All BRISMES Campaigns Directors, in the course of BRISMES Campaigns activities and business;
2. Those engaged to undertake work for BRISMES Campaigns, whether in paid employment or acting as volunteers;
3. Those attending BRISMES Campaigns events and/or engaged in BRISMES Campaigns activities and business, whether in person or on-line.

We expect all of the above to recognise their responsibilities and to:

- Behave in a way that respects the rights and dignity of others.
- Treat others fairly.
- Display courtesy and good manners in every interaction appreciating that individuals have different styles and expectations.
- Value differences in others and the contribution they make.
- Participate in BRISMES Campaigns business on a co-operative basis.
- Demonstrate a commitment to upholding the values of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Everyone has the right to feel safe when participating in BRISMES Campaigns events and/or business.

You should not discriminate against, bully or harass others on the basis of: cultural and role difference, including (but not exclusively) those involving age, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, political beliefs, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital or family status and socio-economic status. You should respect the knowledge, insight, experience and expertise of fellow members (regardless of career stage and length of service), relevant third parties and members of the general public.

Bullying and harassment of any kind is completely unacceptable, and our community is an environment where prejudice and socially unacceptable behaviour are never tolerated.

We recognise bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying does not need to be deliberate; someone may demonstrate bullying behaviour, which falls within the above definition, without

18 August 2025



intending it. Whatever form it takes, bullying is unwarranted and unwelcome, and can cause embarrassment, fear, humiliation or distress to an individual or group of individuals. Bullying often results from a misuse of individual power derived from status/position or physical strength and is usually perpetrated by those who have power against those with less power as a result of structural inequalities, such as, women, people with disabilities, ethnic and/or racialised minorities and LGBTQ individuals. Bullying can also be a form of discrimination. Bullying and harassment are often closely linked, and may overlap, but they are legally distinct.

We recognise as harassment any unwelcome verbal or physical behaviour, including sexual advances, when the unwanted conduct has the purpose or effect of either violating another person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Harassment does not need to be deliberate; someone may harass another person without intending to. In some situations, where the unwanted conduct is serious, a single incident may constitute harassment. In other situations, conduct may become harassment if it is repeated or sustained.

The following list provides examples of the types of behaviour which can amount to harassment, although the list is, by no means, exhaustive:

- Unwelcome physical contact or physical interaction: This may range from unnecessary touching or brushing against another's body, physical assault, coercive sexual relations, physical threats, insulting or abusive behaviours or gestures. It may also encompass invading someone's "personal space" by standing very close to them where this is unnecessary.
- Unwelcome verbal conduct: This may include the making of remarks and comments about appearance, lewd comments, sexual advances, innuendo and banter, the making or repetition of offensive or stereotyped comments, jokes or songs, the making of threats and the making of patronising comments.
- Unwelcome written or visual interaction: This may include sending unwelcome emails, notes or pictures, and displaying or sending offensive material.

Given the current reliance upon electronic means of communication it should be specifically noted that harassment, bullying and victimisation by electronic means is also unacceptable. For example, this might involve:

18 August 2025

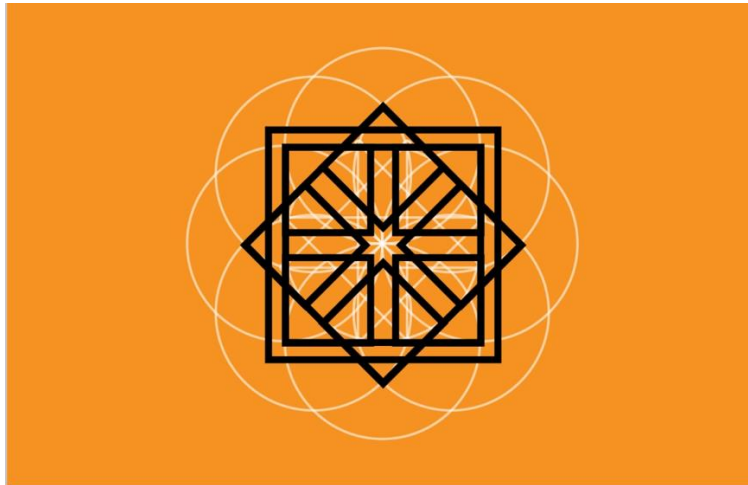


- Sending emails (with or without attachments) which breach the terms of this Code.
- Inappropriate copying of emails to parties not seen as relevant to the discussion, as a way of intimidating or inappropriately gaining leverage.

If you have any doubts or queries as to the contents or purpose of this Code, please contact the BRISMES Vice President or Secretary to discuss.

If you believe that any aspect of the Code has been breached in your interactions with BRISMES Campaigns activities and business, please contact the **BRISMES Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Champion, Dr Paola Rivetti** (paola.rivetti@dcu.ie).

Mailing List



Sign up to our mailing list to receive regular updates about our work and upcoming events. Click here to [join](#).