

# Milton S. Eisenhower Symposium: Letter to the Coordinators and President Daniels

To President Daniels and the Coordinators of the MSE Symposium,

We, the undersigned, write to you concerning an upcoming lecture by Professor Alan M. Dershowitz (LL.B.) which is proposed to take place at 8 p.m. on November 10th, 2015, in Shriver Hall, as part of the MSE Symposium. Our aim in this letter consists of the following five parts:

- (1) To inform you of the criminal status of several recent and continuing actions of the government of the State of Israel in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.
- (2) To inform you of the advocacy and public support of Professor Dershowitz for the State of Israel throughout (and despite) its illegal activities.
- (3) To remind you of the ethical standards to which The Johns Hopkins University avowedly holds itself.
- (4) To express, for your records, our condemnation of the views of Professor Dershowitz insofar as they relate to the illegal activities of the State of Israel.
- (5) To petition and implore you, on the basis of (1) - (4), to make public statements of disaffiliation with Professor Dershowitz's views on the activities of the State of Israel, so that there may be no misapprehension that the MSE Symposium, by inviting Professor Dershowitz, in any way supports either the violation of international law, generally, or the committing of war crimes, specifically.

(1) The State of Israel violates the provisions of The Fourth Geneva Convention (i) in its construction of settlements within the Occupied Palestinian Territory, (ii) in its construction of the 'separation'/annexation wall in those territories, and (iii) in its movement of civilian population into the Occupied Territories. This is not merely our opinion but the judgement of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and of the Security Council of the United Nations. [1][2] Also worth noting is that these are also the opinions of former ICJ Judge, human rights activist and noted holocaust survivor, Thomas Buergenthal S.J.D, as well as of Israeli Supreme Court Justice and former Israeli Attorney General Menachem Mazuz [3] [4]. Furthermore, the activities of Israeli forces in the Occupied Territories have, on multiple occasions, constituted (and been recognized as) war crimes. [5] [6] [7] These judgments and reports are unambiguous and/or final, and require no further comment, except, perhaps, that they are endorsed by the entirety of the international community (as represented in the UN Security Council) with the sole exception of The United States. [8] There is also a substantial possibility that, in its activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the State of Israel has brought the United States into violation of its own federal laws concerning the shipment of arms. [9]

(2) Professor Dershowitz has made clear on numerous occasions - in public and in published print - that he refuses to acknowledge the illegality of the actions of the State of Israel mentioned above, and that the Government of the State of Israel should behave similarly [10] [11] [12]. These refusals accompany a further litany of denials of the war crimes attributed to Israel by a variety of authorities (Amnesty International, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, and, again, the international community generally) [13], [14]. That the opinions of Professor Dershowitz are as we thus claim them to be cannot be in any serious doubt and the supporting information is available to anyone who pays attention to his various published writings and public statements.

(3) The ethical standards of The Johns Hopkins University, as set forth in a variety of official documents indicate that "each member of the University bears a personal responsibility to uphold the ethical standards of the Institution" [15] and that "it is essential that the faculty and staff of The Johns Hopkins University maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct, both in fact and in appearance" [16]. Additionally, the University's General Anti-Harassment policy clearly states that "any type of behaviour which is based on ... ethnicity [or] national origin [and]...creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment" is to be considered as harassment [17].

Allow us to clarify. We in no way wish to suggest that the intentions of the coordinators of the MSE Symposium were or are to create an environment of hostility or offence towards any JHU members who have connections to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Nonetheless, by inviting Professor Dershowitz to participate in a celebrated JHU lecture series, the coordinators of the MSE are inviting a noted denier of the crimes committed against residents of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Furthermore – and crucially – this invitation is happening in the absence of any public statement by the MSE Symposium, or by the University generally, which might serve to officially dissociate either the Symposium or the University from Professor Dershowitz's views. The coordinators of the MSE Symposium thus risk contributing, inadvertently, to an environment of hostility towards university members who bear any ethnic or national affiliation with those Territories.

(4) We, the undersigned, explicitly denounce and condemn the views of Professor Dershowitz as they pertain to the crimes of the State of Israel. It is our view that Professor Dershowitz, in explicitly supporting the State of Israel in its violation of international law and committing of war crimes, shames his professional office and its connected institution. While we acknowledge definitively and readily the right of The Johns Hopkins University (and any university) to invite any speaker they wish for the purposes of freely exchanging ideas, as well as the right of any individual (including Professor Dershowitz) to speak freely, as he wishes, in accordance with his deliberate opinion, we nevertheless utterly protest any decision on the part of the University or MSE Symposium to invite Professor Dershowitz without also publically and specifically condemning and/or disaffiliating from the views he holds on the issues discussed.

We in no way intend to create an environment of hostility or offense towards any JHU members who have ethnic or national connections to the State of Israel, only to condemn the State's violations of international law and the criminal actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, along with the views of Professor Derhowitz as outlined above.

(5) The evidence that Professor Dershowitz publically holds opinions that are unacceptable to any institution whose faculty and/or students must 'maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct' is incontrovertible. Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand that public statements be made to officially and specifically disassociate both The Johns Hopkins University and the MSE Symposium from the relevant opinions held by Professor Dershowitz. These statements should be made either on the websites of the MSE and the President or they can be made in the form of open letters to us, the undersigned, as individuals and/or as societies. These open letters should be sent either as emails to the representatives of the groups mentioned in the signatures below for (subsequent publishing and circulation) or via publication in the Hopkins Newsletter. (These options are not taken to be mutually exclusive.)

It must be made clear that inviting Professor Dershowitz is not intended as a show of support for the relevant opinions he holds. To that end, we also demand that some further specific statement be made – in the manner we have just outlined – that the inclusion of Professor Dershowitz in the MSE Symposium is in no way to be understood as an attempt to create an environment of hostility towards any university members with ethnic or national connections to the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Finally, we implore that any who read this letter will see the sense in our claims about Professor Dershowitz. It can be no part of an institution like Johns Hopkins that it should permit itself to be seen as implicitly assenting to criminal violence visited upon civilians. To be silent on an issue such as this is to stain both the dignity of

our University and that of its members. In writing this letter, it is certainly not our goal to create any undue distress in any segment of the University, nor to unnecessarily disrupt the peaceful proceedings of the University's affairs. And so, let us end with the following quotation from Johns Hopkins alumnus, League of Nations Founder and Twenty-Eighth President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson:

“... right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts - for democracy, ... for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.” [18]

Yours faithfully,

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