

Statement on Palestine**

**[AMCHA INITIATIVE NOTE: All names and emails were removed prior to posting in AMCHA's database]

WSUSOM Student Senate

Mon 6/7/2021 11:59 AM

Dear WSUSOM Student Body,

In light of the grief, frustration, and anger engulfing our communities, IJI stands in solidarity with the Palestinian people and our Arab-American students. We vehemently condemn the brutal attacks and war crimes on the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and we support our students' efforts in protesting racism, genocide, and apartheid by the Israeli government. In keeping with our mission, IJI is here to support our student body, share resources for healing and education and amplify the voice of the Arab-American community.

Role of IJI and Student Senate:

It is important to remember that the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and the violent displacement of these people from their homes occurs even when the skies are quiet, free of rockets and missiles. When the social media campaigns and protests fade, many of our students, members of *our* community, are left with continued pain, fear, and generational trauma. IJI will continue to advocate on behalf of the student body. We will be a resource to students and student groups on advocacy and policy for Palestinian human rights, and we will support infrastructure that specifies spaces for healing and education for students to process these atrocities.

[Please contact student leadership here](#) to share your questions, your concerns, and your ideas on future advocacy and a path forward for our institution.

To Our Arab-American students, we see you, we hear you, and we acknowledge the waves of pain, trauma, and exhaustion that this reality causes for you and your families, both here at home and in Palestine. We want to remind you that your voice, your membership in our WSUSOM community, and your existence is important and valued. Your humanity is fact. You are not responsible for educating the masses or spreading awareness of the oppression you and your people face on a daily basis. Take time to heal and protect your energy.

Resources for well-being and healing:

- ✦ [Staying Resilient While Trying to Save the World: A Well-Being Workbook for Youth Activists](#)
- Contacts for counseling services. Your counselors have additional resources as well:
 - [Start My Wellness](#) — Offices in Detroit and Troy, as well as tele-medicine. Call (248) 514-4955 or visit their website to make an appointment.
- CAPS — Just transitioned to a combo of phone and tele-mental-health services through Microsoft Teams App, call to schedule: (313) 577-3398 between 9am-3:30pm or caps.wayne.edu.
- You can schedule an appointment with your class counselor using this [link](#), or contact them directly.

To Our Student Body at Large: It can be difficult to understand complex decades-long issues, especially when it occurs far from home. This may seem like a tragic situation for a particular community, and although religion and political perspectives have dominated the narrative in the media since 1948, this is and has been, a human rights issue. The recent bombing of a COVID testing center and several health organizations and buildings in the Gaza strip emphasize that this is medical apartheid. As physicians-in-training and future leaders, it is imperative to understand the psychological and medical implications these atrocities have on people and their families, who may include your current and future colleagues and patients. We implore you to educate yourselves and your communities, and to use your voice to highlight and uplift voices of historically marginalized communities. We encourage you to challenge your current understanding and have difficult conversations. What you can do:

- ♦ *Educate yourself* on the movement for Palestinian liberation. To get you started, we have compiled a list of resources that 1. Highlight basic information about the history of Palestine and Israel, 2. Explain common misconceptions and misinformation presented in mainstream media, and 3. Shows what life is like in occupied Palestine.
 - Use the **correct language** because it matters:
 - i. This is not a “conflict” between two equal sides. Palestinians are an indigenous people who have been subjected to apartheid and settler colonialism for almost a century by Israel, one of the world’s strongest military powers.
 - [Palestine/Israel 101](#)
 - i. This resource covers a number of topics about Palestine and Israel. We recommend beginning with these:
 - [Who Are the Palestinians?](#)
 - [When Did the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict Begin?](#)
 - [What is the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict Really About?](#)
 - [Palestine: The Basics \(A Guide\) - Instagram](#)
 - [Document: A Guide to Difficult Conversations About Israel and Palestine from Jewish Voice for Peace \(JVP\)](#)
 - i. Learn more about JVP’s mission and resources [here](#)
 - Video: [Is Israel Guilty of Apartheid Against Palestinians?](#)
 - Documentary: Born in Gaza (Netflix)
 - Short Film: The Present (Netflix)
 - Book: *On Palestine*, by Ilan Pappé and Noam Chomsky
 - Book: *The Hundred Years’ War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance* by Rashid Khalidi
 - Book: *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement* by Angela Y. Davis
- Take action.* Raise awareness. Donate. Sign petitions. Practice conscious consumerism.
 - Petition- [Stop Israel’s forced displacement of Palestinians from East Jerusalem](#)
 - Petition- [Healthcare Workers Stand with Palestine](#)
 - Petition- [We, the undersigned, affirm our support for the principles and demands set forth in the following letter published in Scientific American by healthcare workers in solidarity with Palestine and the Palestinian people.](#)
 - Contact your local representatives and ask that they support H.R.2590
 - Bill: [H.R.2590](#)
 - -

- [Find your representative](#)
 - Demand that Congress support legislation to end the \$3.8 billion in military funding to Israel every year using this [link](#)
 - [Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions \(BDS\)](#)
 - i. You can download “Buycott” to find out which products to avoid.
 - Donate
 - [Institute for Middle East Understanding](#)
 - [Medical Aid for Palestinians](#)
 - [Human Concern](#)
- ♦ *Remember, this is NOT a religious issue. Do NOT use the Palestinian cause as an excuse to engage in anti-Semitic behavior. One cannot claim to be a champion for justice while simultaneously targeting an entire religious group and perpetuating harmful stereotypes. If you see someone expressing anti-Semitic statements, it is your job to call them out. IJI is here to promote a safe and healthy learning environment for all of our students, including our Jewish community. That being said, do not decenter and demonize an entire movement based on the actions of a few. Being pro-Palestine is NOT anti-Semitic.*

Post Responsibly on Social Media. Be aware that videos, pictures, and descriptions can be traumatic and triggering for many people.

- ♦ *Avoid:* Graphic material, especially attacks on Palestinian and Arab people, should not be shared as clickbait
- ♦ *Do share:* voices, posts, videos made by friends, mentors, and educators that identify in historically marginalized groups.
- ♦ *Listen and amplify the voices of Palestinian advocates.* Show up in solidarity, give the platform to those whose experience this is, and avoid performative allyship.

Reminders and Support from the Board of Student Organizations:

- ♦ *Student and Community Safety* — Many students may be moved to take direct action. Do so safely and ensure you are not harming the communities you aim to help.
- ♦ *Exploring Additional Ways to Engage* — In a collaborative effort with IJI, we are exploring partnerships with local organizations that provide medical aid for activists. We want to think outside the box and utilize unique skills future physicians to protect the health and safety of those engaged in civil demonstrations
- ♦ *Service Learning* — We embrace active reflection on the pedagogy of service-learning and the ways our student body can build reciprocal relationships with community partners. We must be agents of social change and ensure that our service involvement is a direct retaliation against racial and health injustices.

Sincerely,

Institutional Justice and Inclusion (IJI), External Committee SOM Student Senate

WSU SOM Executive Senate
WSU SOM Board of Student Organizations