

## Branch motion on solidarity with Palestine and academic freedom

Exeter UCU notes:

1. A dramatic intensification of violence against Palestinians across Palestine and Israel, and particularly in Gaza, including:
  - The mass killing of civilians, totaling more than [13,000](#) to date according to the [Palestinian Health Ministry](#) in Gaza, more than 5,600 of whom are children; and the injury of over 30,000 people living in Gaza;
  - The internal displacement of more than [1.6 million](#) people in Gaza through processes of [ethnic cleansing and forced population](#) transfer that began on 13 October 2023;
  - The [collective punishment](#) of more than two million people by [cutting off water, electricity, food supplies](#), and [humanitarian aid](#) in clear violation of international law;
  - The [genocidal language](#) used by Israeli state officials to systematically [dehumanise Palestinians](#), including categorising Palestinians as [animals](#);
  - The bombardment of academic institutions including the [Islamic University of Gaza](#), [Al-Azhar University](#) and [250 schools](#), alongside hospitals, health centres, housing units, and other civilian infrastructure;
  - A marked increase in Israeli state and settler violence in the occupied West Bank, including [killings](#), [arbitrary detentions](#) and [settler attacks](#) on Palestinian villages.
2. The increasing threat to academic freedom in our sector and to the right to protest in our workplaces, with particularly worrying attacks on Palestinian academics, workers, students and their supporters by the [British state](#), [university managements](#) and the [media](#).
3. The calls issued by Palestinian trade unions and workers for international support from unions, including: The statement from the [Union of Teachers & Employees of Birzeit University, Palestine](#); and the statement from Palestinian Trade Union coalition [Workers in Palestine](#).

This branch will:

1. Demand an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Palestine and lifting of the illegal Israeli siege on Gaza to allow entry of aid, relief and reconstruction.
2. Call on the UK government to suspend political and military support to Israel, which is used to perpetuate war crimes and crimes against humanity.
3. Call on the VC to use her influence with Universities UK (UUK) to shift the discourse about Palestine, protect academic freedom and bring further pressure on the UK government to join the call for a ceasefire.
4. Call on University of Exeter's senior management to review its strategic/corporate partnerships and due diligence process, with the aim of ending complicity in the arms trade with Israel.
5. Reaffirm [UCU's opposition](#) to the [Prevent Duty](#), working together with colleagues to refuse compliance and continuing to campaign for its abolition.
6. Defend academic and non-academic staff and students who face defamatory and hostile media campaigns, and support the right to dissent and protest – on campus and in our public work.

**First proposer:** Katie Natanel (IAIS)

**Second proposer:** Laleh Khalili (IAIS)