

PSAC 901

Statement: Queen's response to pro-Palestine and anti-austerity demonstrations

March 12, 2024 – PSAC 901 is disturbed by Queen's University's response to pro-Palestinian demonstrations that took place on campus on Friday, March 8, 2024. The demonstrated pattern of behaviour from Queen's highlights a lack of regard, respect, or compassion for concerns brought forward by the broader campus community in response to [ongoing violence and genocide perpetrated against Palestinian people](#).

On March 8, Solidarity with Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR) Queen's and Queen's Students vs Cuts, along with more than 200 supporters from groups and organizations across Queen's University campus, exercised their right to peacefully assemble and protest through jointly-held demonstrations. An initial [statement by Queen's University regarding the raising of a Palestinian flag](#) atop Grant Hall by unknown persons, which also occurred on March 8, has since been edited. The first version of the statement, posted on the morning of Saturday, March 9, included the following paragraph:

"Campus Security works closely with local police to ensure that if there is a need to act, it will be communicated swiftly and effectively. Campus community members who experience or witness **a hate-motivated act** or have concerns for their physical safety should contact Campus Security of local police immediately. Queen's community members with concerns of hate, harassment or discrimination are encouraged to make a report or complaint under the university's Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Response Policy."

[The edited version](#) now reads:

"...community members who experience or witness **an unlawful act** or have concerns for their physical safety should contact Campus Security or local police immediately."

PSAC 901 rejects the conflation of pro-Palestinian sentiment or acts with hate, harassment, or discrimination. As the Union representing more than 2,000 graduate student workers and postdoctoral scholars at Queen's, **we call on the university to issue a statement affirming its commitment to protect, value, and uphold the rights of Palestinian students, staff, faculty, and community members**. Within academic environments, in particular, Queen's efforts to suppress dissent and expressions of [support with Palestinian people's human rights as they experience a genocide](#) only serve to amplify violence, and fail to ensure the safety of campus community members who are Palestinian and those who express solidarity with upholding Palestinian human rights. **We call on Queen's to demonstrate greater regard for the safety and concerns of pro-Palestinian community members than the university does for physical property.**

Along with multiple campus organizations, groups, and representatives, **PSAC 901 has signed on to the [Queen's University Apartheid Divest \(QUAD\) coalition](#)**. Queen's University Apartheid Divest strives towards a liberated Palestine and the end of Israeli apartheid by urging Queen's to divest all economic and academic stakes in Israel. We seek an end to all interlocking systems of oppression through collective action and solidarity with oppressed people worldwide. As campus community members on Turtle Island, we demand that institutions to which we belong exert every effort to dismantle the systems of oppression and state violence that have been subjecting Palestinians for over 75 years.

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The [Queen's University Apartheid Divest coalition](#) demands Queen's University immediately divest all economic and academic stakes in Israeli apartheid. Furthermore, we demand that the University (in no specific order):

1. **Cut ties** from all corporations and institutions complicit in genocide, settler-colonialism, apartheid, or ethnic cleansing against Palestinians.
2. **Divest** from companies profiting from Israeli apartheid, noting that Queen's University has divested in the 1980s from the South African apartheid.
3. **Cease** the exchange partnerships with both Tel Aviv University and Ben Gurion University of the Negev, noting that Palestinian affiliates of Queen's would be restricted from access to this program given Israel's apartheid policies, and therefore, violates Queen's very own non-discrimination policy.
4. Vigorously **protect** students, staff, and faculty's academic freedom and right to political speech.
5. **Recognize and adopt** the [Arab Canadian Lawyers Association \(ACLA\) definition of Anti-Palestinian racism](#) at Queen's University so as to address the rampant Anti-Palestinian racism and support Palestinian students and their allies in their identities and advocacy. This has already been presented to Principal Deane and his administration by Palestinian, Arab, and Palestinian allied students; the definition has yet to be adopted.
6. That our student union, the AMS, and each faculty society commit to a strong, consistent position in solidarity with Arab students, Palestinian students, Palestinian-allied students, and with the Palestinian struggle against genocide and settler-colonial apartheid.

Signed,
The PSAC 901 Executive Committee