



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

HOW DO WE SUPPORT THE CONTINUATION OF H.E. IN PALESTINE?

10TH SEPT 2026



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Outline



Islamic University of Gaza after Israeli bombing in 2014

- Context – scholasticide and solidarity
- Examples of educational initiatives
- Other forms of solidarity
 - BDS and academic boycott
 - Resisting erasure - making Palestine visible
 - Research solidarity
 - Solidarity networks
- Q&A
- Discussion



Context: HE in Palestine

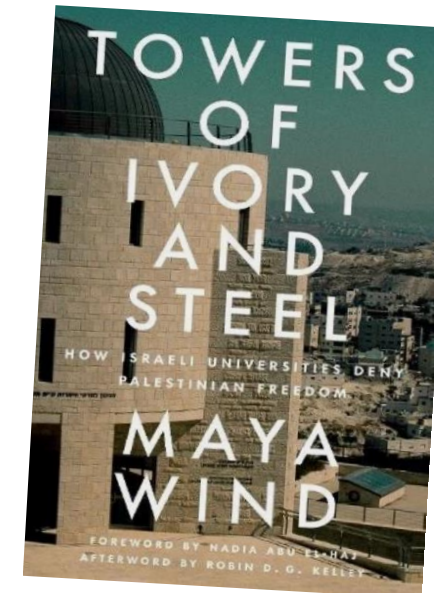


Context: HE in Palestine



Islamic University of Gaza after Israeli bombing in 2014

- Since its inception, HE in Palestine has been repeatedly + systematically targeted by Israel
- ‘Scholasticide’ (Prof. Karma Nabulsi) – systematic obliteration of Palestinian centres of education by Israel - arrest, detention or killing of teachers, students and staff, and the destruction of educational infrastructure
- Well-documented (e.g. Wind, 2023)



Context: HE in Gaza



Islamic University of Gaza after Israeli bombing in 2014

- Since Oct 2023, all 12 HEIs in Gaza destroyed or severely damaged – plus libraries, archives, etc
- Widespread killing, mental/physical harm + displacement of students, academics + staff
- HE initially ground to a halt - huge barriers to education + knowledge production
- 90,000 university students out of education, and no way to pay staff
- No coordinated response initially ... but in May 2024 there was an unprecedented call for support from leaders from Gaza's 3 main universities ...

Source: [Gaza: UN experts decry 'systematic obliteration' of education system](#)



Emergency statement by Gazan HEIs



Before and after the Israeli military detonated mines at Israa University in Gaza (January 2024)

Unified Emergency Statement by Palestinian Academics and Administrators of Gaza Universities

“We have come together as Palestinian academics and staff of Gaza universities to affirm our existence, the existence of our colleagues and our students, and the insistence on our future, in the face of all current attempts to erase us ...

We call upon our friends and colleagues around the world to resist the ongoing campaign of scholasticide in occupied Palestine, to work alongside us in rebuilding our demolished universities, and to refuse all plans seeking to bypass, erase, or weaken the integrity of our academic institutions. The future of our young people in Gaza depends upon us, and our ability to remain on our land in order to continue to serve the coming generations of our people ...

We built these universities from tents. And from tents, with the support of our friends, we will rebuild them once again.”

Source: Emergency Committee of Universities in Gaza's Statement (29/5/24)



Sanctuary Solidarities and Palestine



Before and after the Israeli military detonated mines at Israa University in Gaza (January 2024)

What might solidarity
with Palestinian HE look
like at this moment?

Educational
initiatives

Other solidarity
actions (incl. activism)



Solidarity: Educational Initiatives



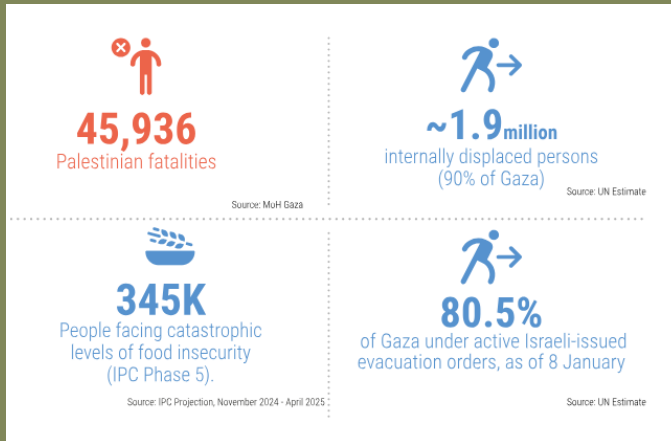
Educational Initiatives

More than 80% of schools and universities have been destroyed or damaged, [according to the UN](#).

PALESTINE

90,000 students have lost access to HE in Gaza – Academic

Paul Cochrane 16 January 2025



Statistics from a [UN OCHA](#) update from January 2025



Educational Initiatives



Students in a makeshift classroom in a tent in Gaza (from [LINEs4Palestine](#))

- April- May 2024 till present
- Delivery of online teaching- Live session
- Provided recorded materials- Recorded video (lectures, workshops), Lecture slides, notes, virtual labs etc
- Medicine, Applied sciences (Biochemistry, Microbiology, Haematology, Immunology), Data Science
- Books and other online resources
- Virtual lab companies- LearnSci, Labster
- Mentoring PhD students
- Provided mental health support- joined up with UK professionals.
- 3 universities, including Oxford university has now joined this effort.
- Scholarship opportunities (limited and very competitive)
- Many inactive initiatives and some active initiatives.



Educational Initiatives



Students in a makeshift classroom in a tent in Gaza (from [LINEs4Palestine](#))

Teaching conversational English language

1000+ students

Zoom and WhatsApp

Al Azhar and IUG

Engineering, English, Law, Business, Medicine

CELTA/ESOL qualified teachers - 70+

All voluntary!



Educational Initiatives



SCAN ME

30% discount by using the
Coupon code Westill25



100+ pieces

- Short reflections
- Poems

Captures raw, unedited voices of university students in Gaza during the conflict- famine, starvation and the constant displacement.

Very powerful.

Endorsed by Ian McEwan, Ilan Pappé, Leila Sansour among others.



<https://darajapress.com/publication/we-are-still-here/>

Educational Initiatives



Mariam Marwan
English language student, Gaza

Short term..

- Provide virtual/pre-recorded/existing materials including labs
- Help guide PhD students complete their studies.
- Supervise their masters students' thesis (wherever possible)
- Donate towards their education (straight to the university)
- Mental health support (community-led approach)
- Access to resources (library)
- Donate to release certificate
- Provide e-SIM



Educational Initiatives



*Heba AbuHussein
English Student, Gaza*

Mid term..

Mid-longer term.. (all short term plus...)

- Financial
- Help (donate) rebuild tents to facilitate local delivery of teaching
- Cover tuition fees.
- Provide online courses (full)
- CPD (certified/accredited)- for free
- ODL
- Virtual training (EngInfo, Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing, Mental health, Midwifery, Teaching)



Educational Initiatives



*Student Malak Hani in Gaza
(from [Telegraph article from 19/7/25](#))*

Long term..

Long term (all of the above plus)

- After permanent ceasefire (end of conflict)
- Huge financial contribution to reconstruct infrastructure
- Academic Partnerships & Knowledge Exchange
- Curriculum Development & Research Support
- Faculty Development & Capacity Building
- Mental Health & Well-being Support
- Policy & Institutional Strengthening
- Branch international campuses to train locals
- Scholarship mechanisms to fund local research
- Free movement for Higher Education (Gaza – West Bank)



Solidarity: Activism



Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions



Logo of the BDS Movement

Palestinian Civil Society first called for BDS against Israel in 2005:

“We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and People of Conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era.”

This would be until Israel complied with the following conditions:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194



Academic Boycott

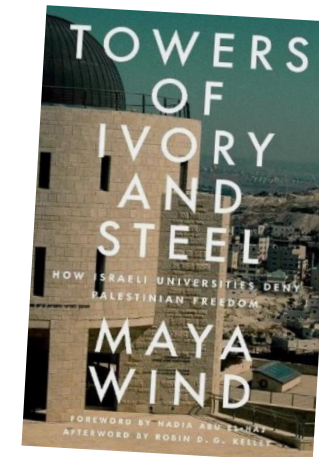
PACBI focuses on boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions because:

“Academic institutions are a key part of the ideological and institutional scaffolding of Israel’s regime of occupation, colonialism and apartheid against the Palestinian people. Since its founding, the Israeli academy has cast its lot with the hegemonic political-military establishment in Israel, and notwithstanding the efforts of a handful of principled academics, the Israeli academy is profoundly implicated in supporting and perpetuating Israel’s systematic denial of Palestinian rights.” *(excerpt from PACBI Guidelines)*

There is mounting evidence of the complicity of Israeli universities in the occupation, apartheid system and genocide of the Palestinian people



Logo of PACBI



[Why Boycott Israeli Universities?](#) (BRICUP Guidelines)

Academic Boycott



Logo of PACBI

PACBI Guidelines state an academic boycott involves boycotting the following if supported/funded by the Israeli government, HEIs, corporations or associated support / lobby groups:

1. **Academic events** (such as conferences, symposia, workshops, book and museum exhibits)
2. **Research and development activities** (e.g. the EU-Israel Horizon 2020 scheme)
3. **Funding for academic activities**
4. **Talks/debates at international venues** with Israeli state officials or reps from HEIs
5. **Study Abroad schemes in Israel** for international students
6. **Special academic honours or recognition** granted to Israeli officials, HEIs or reps of HEIs
7. **Normalisation projects** based on the false premise of parity between the oppressor and the oppressed
8. **Institutional membership** of Israeli associations in world bodies
9. Contribution to **academic journals based at Israeli universities**
10. Writing **recommendations, advising on hiring** at Israeli HEIs, etc
11. **Studying, teaching or conducting research** at an Israeli HEI
12. **Academic visits or fact-finding** missions that receive funding from Israel, its complicit institutions or lobby groups

N.B. there are exclusions – *“Mere affiliation of Israeli scholars to an Israeli academic institution is ... not grounds for applying the boycott”*

Academic Boycott



Logo of PACBI



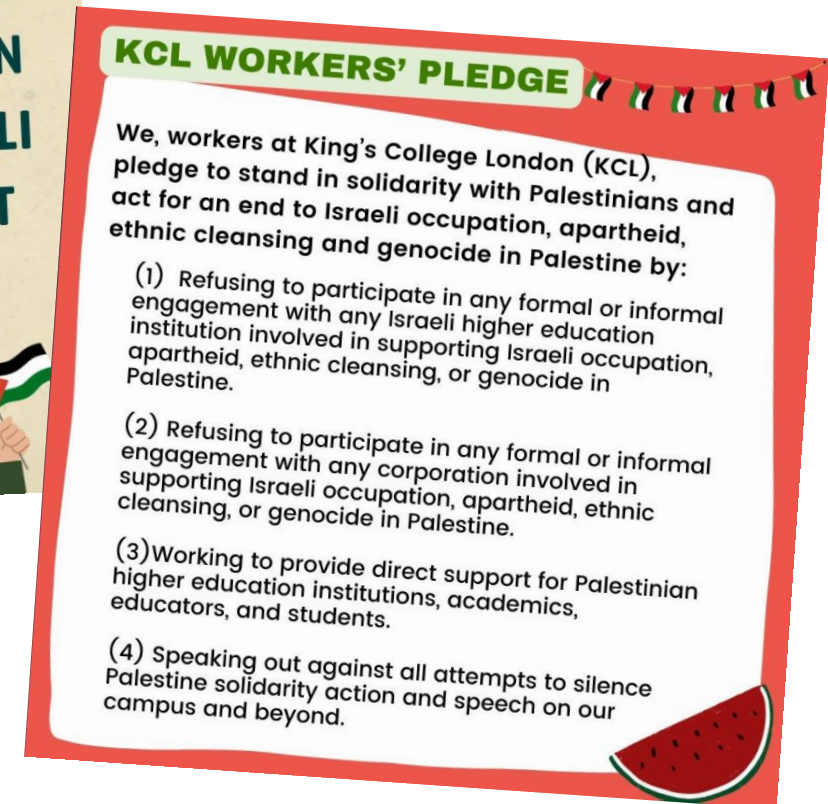
Source: Wilco Hazeleger's speech (Sept 2025)

Academic Boycott in UK universities

Close alternatives to academic boycott (if institutions are initially reluctant to take this step themselves):



Logo of PACBI

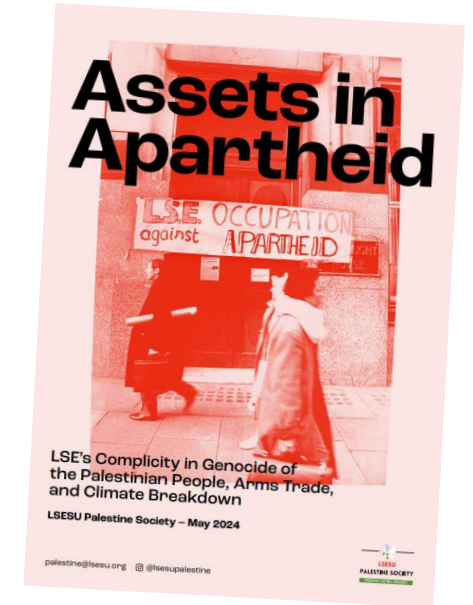


Divestment



*Palestine Solidarity
Campaign logo*

- University Complicity Database tool on Palestine Solidarity Campaign website: <https://palestinecampaign.org/university-complicity-database/>
- Complicity reports by staff/students at various UK universities – e.g. LSE's Assets in Apartheid
- Examples of universities that have agreed to divest as a result of mounting pressure
 - Swansea (£5m divested from Barclays)
 - QUB (£800,000 from complicit companies)
 - Portsmouth (£800,000 from Caterpillar)
 - Trinity College Cambridge (divested multi-million pound portfolio from weapons manufacturers)



Resisting Erasure: Making Palestine Visible



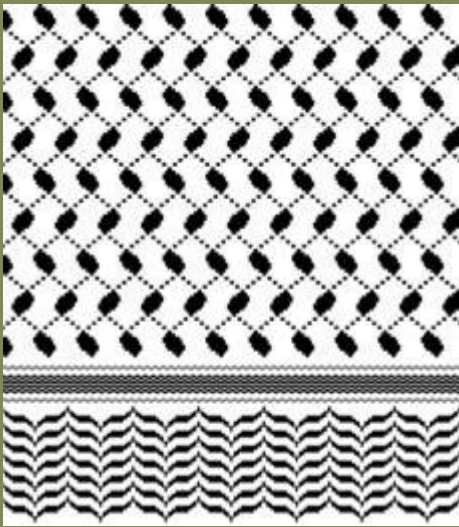
Detail from poster for Solidarity Against Scholasticide tour of UK universities in Autumn 2024

To counter a systematic campaign of attempted erasure:

- Cultural events and displays (e.g. literature, music, dance, art, film, 'Palestine Corner' in library)
- Solidarity statements
- Rallies / marches / protests
- Wear your solidarity
- Talks / discussions in different disciplines (e.g. Palestine Dialogues at Sussex)
- Bringing Palestine into your teaching
- Fundraising events – share via internal comms
- Marking significant dates – e.g. Nakba Day (15th May), UN's International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29th November)



Networks and Resources



Traditional keffiyeh pattern



<https://palestinecampaign.org/university-complicity-database/>

<https://ucw4palestine.org/>

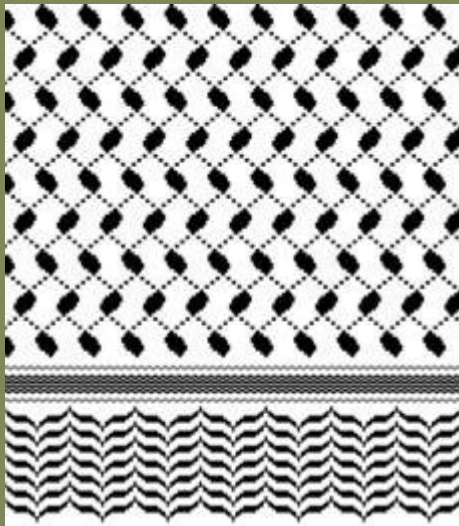
<https://www.ucu.org.uk/CeasefireNow>

<https://www.bdsmovement.net/>

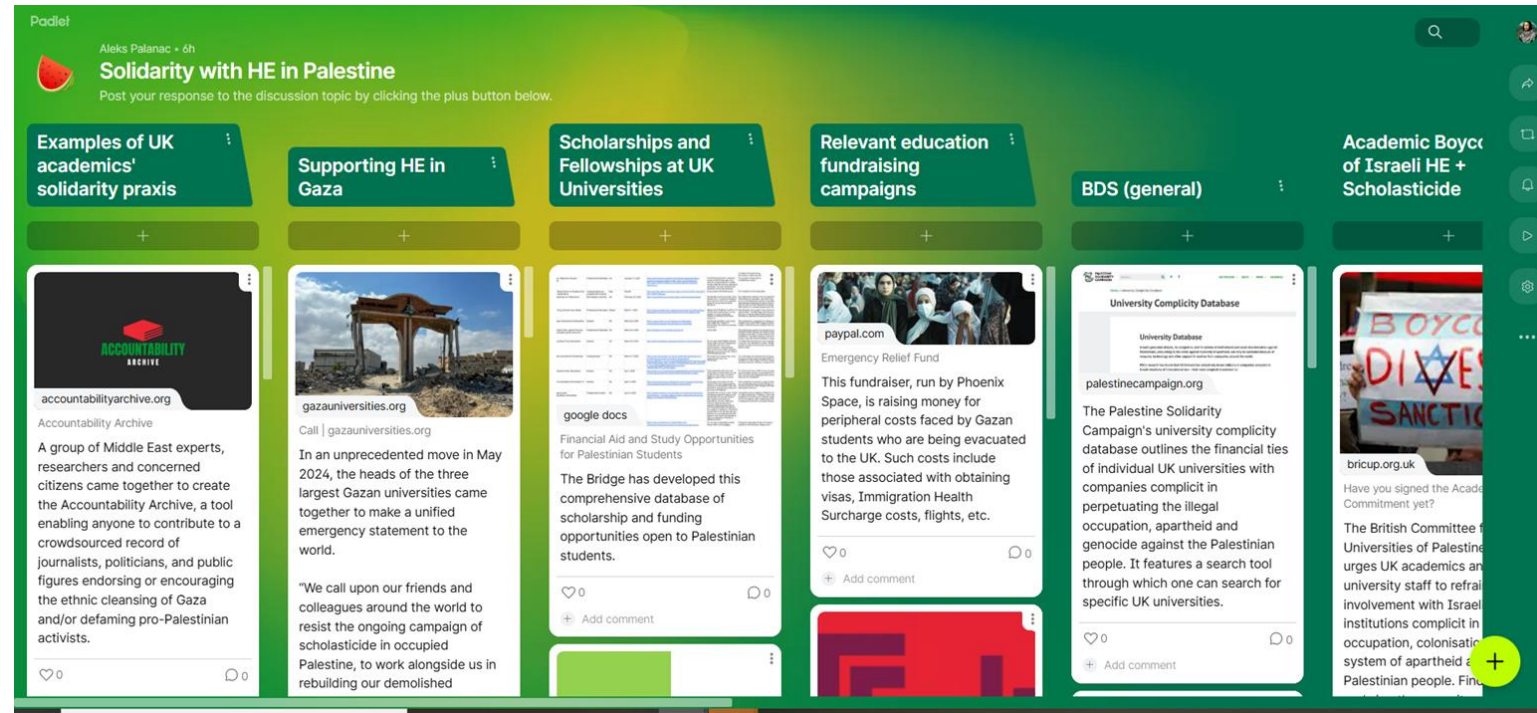
<https://www.bricup.org.uk>

<https://www.brismes.ac.uk/>

Solidarity Initiatives Padlet



Traditional keffiyeh pattern



Access the
Padlet here





[Watch the](#)
[video](#)



Follow on
Instagram

Q&A



Discussion



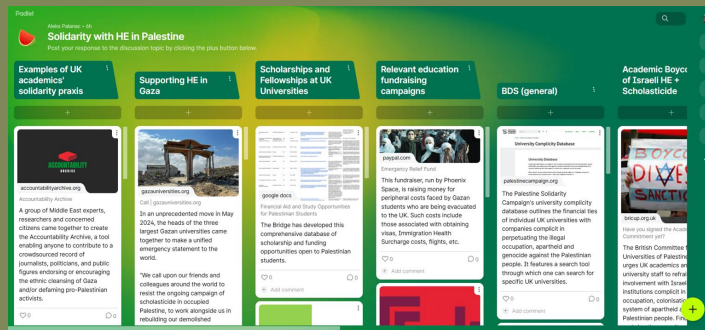
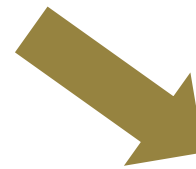
Solidarity Initiatives Padlet

Discuss in pairs or small groups:

- What (if any) solidarity initiatives have been implemented at your institution?
- How successful have they been?
- What challenges (if any) have been encountered along the way? How have these been tackled?

You might like to access the Solidarity with HE in Palestine Padlet and add any links to relevant initiatives, resources and networks which are missing.

Access the Padlet here



Detail from Solidarity with HE in Palestine Padlet



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