

## **Demand for breaking off institutional collaborations with Israel**

For the past 19 months, the women, the men, and the children of Gaza have been slaughtered before our very eyes. The world has turned a cold and blind eye to their suffering. Starved, isolated, terrorized, and forced to leave their land, they are in danger of extermination. Gaza is now reduced to a cemetery: at least 53'700 people, including 15'613 children, have been killed, and thousands more are still missing. The remaining 1.9 million people are experiencing an ongoing and unbearable danger.

This well-organized massacre is setting frightening records : the number of bombs dropped per square meter; the number of children killed, dismembered or orphaned; the number of destroyed hospitals; of universities and schools reduced to ashes; the number of journalists killed while trying to inform the world about this genocide[1][2][3][4][5][6]. The list goes on and on. Since the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2024, Benjamin Netanyahu has been under an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court for war crimes. In the latest weeks, the situation has worsened. Israeli forces have resumed restarted the land invasion of Gaza, and their systemic blockade of international aid has resulted in a famine: tens of thousands of children are malnourished and in immediate danger of death [7]. While the WHO reports that the Gazaoui health system has collapsed due to perpetual attacks and evacuations [8], Israeli leaders shamelessly announce their intention to continue the invasion until they have "full control" of the Palestinian enclave [9]. In this context, the Israeli control of the rare "humanitarian" aid seems like a cynical joke, in sickening taste.

Amid the extreme emergency of this situation, political pressures are mounting, both nationally[10][11][12][13][14] and internationally[15][16][17][18][19]. A tipping point has been triggered reached, and political voices are now finally in tune with the public opinion.

Our universities and institutes of technology rightfully ceased their collaboration with Russia, as a response to the invasion of Ukraine. They must urgently do the same with Israeli institutions, for the sake of consistency and integrity, legal obligations and moral duty. The ongoing massacre impacts research, academic freedom and critical knowledge, in Gaza and worldwide. The Swiss universities' and institutes of technology's duty must be to oppose it loudly and firmly. For all these reasons, many academic institutions have already ceased any sort of collaboration[20][21][22][23][24][25][26] with the Israeli universities whose implication in the wartime effort is documented by internationally renowned israeli intellectuals[27]. It is thanks to the students' protests and mobilizations on campuses all around the world, and the support of faculty, that these fair and legitimate decisions were finally taken [28][29].

One of the missions of our universities and institutes of technology is to educate tomorrow's elite. They have the moral duty to make themselves heard. They have powerful leverage, which they must direct towards political institutions in order to honor their humanist values, their responsibilities, and their duties. Furthermore, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court's injunctions regarding the protection of human rights also directly concern Swiss universities and higher education institutes. We must be clear: maintaining their collaborations with the Israeli institutes and universities is no longer just a reputational risk anymore, it has now become complicity in crimes against humanity and genocide (Art. III of the 1948 United Nations Convention), finally now widely perceived and recognized as such.

**In the name of the Collective for Academic Freedom, Democracy and Solidarity (CLADS), we demand that UNIL and EPFL immediately break off the entirety of their collaborations with Israeli companies and academic institutes. Finally, we ask them to take responsibility for their scientific and ethical obligations by responding to our requests, which have so far gone unanswered [30].**

- [1] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>
- [2] <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/ecocide-in-gaza>
- [3] <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/un-special-committee-press-release-19nov24/>
- [4] <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147976>
- [5] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/>
- [6] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza\\_genocide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_genocide)
- [7] Tom Fletcher, the UN's head of humanitarian operations, warns on BBC Radio 4's "Today" program that 14,000 babies could die within 48 hours for lack of food. As this letter is being written, it is feared that they have already joined the 15,000-plus children who have gone before them.( <https://www.unicef.fr/article/israel-palestine-les-enfants-paient-le-prix-de-la-guerre/>).
- [8] <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj933kj17n0o>
- [9] [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/05/19/netanyahu-says-israel-will-take-control-of-all-of-the-gaza-strip\\_6741416\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/05/19/netanyahu-says-israel-will-take-control-of-all-of-the-gaza-strip_6741416_4.html)
- [10] <https://www.rts.ch/info/regions/jura/2025/article/denonciation-penale-contre-4-conseillers-federaux-pour-complicite-a-gaza-28890670.html>
- [11] <https://www.sp-ps.ch/fr/campagne/appelpourgaza/>
- [12] <https://verts.ch/campagne/lettreouverte-gaza>
- [13] Calls from the cities of Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchatel:  
<https://www.lausanne.ch/apps/actualites/Next/serve.php?id=16331>  
<https://www.neuchatelville.ch/medias/actualites/detail/neuchatel-sassocie-a-la-declaration-de-geneve-et-lausanne-sur-gaza>
- [14] Position statements of the Evangelical Reformed Church in Switzerland( <https://www.reformes.ch/eglises/2025/05/prises-de-position-protestantes-sur-gaza-eglises-eers-epg-gaza-guerre-israel> ) and the Swiss Bishops' Conference  
( <https://www.eveques.ch/preoccupations-pour-les-populations-et-la-paix-en-terre-sainte/> )
- [15] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/20/uk-suspends-trade-talks-with-israel-repellant-extremism>
- [16] <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/20/uk-france-canada-warn-israel-of-sanctions-is-opinion-shifting-on-gaza>
- [17] <https://www.thelocal.se/20250520/sweden-calls-for-eu-sanctions-targeting-individual-israeli-ministers>
- [18] [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/05/20/uk-joins-france-s-initiative-for-recognition-of-palestinian-state\\_6741456\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/05/20/uk-joins-france-s-initiative-for-recognition-of-palestinian-state_6741456_4.html)
- [19] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/07/netherlands-urges-review-of-eu-israel-trade-deal-over-catastrophic-gaza-aid-block>
- [20] [https://www.franceinfo.fr/monde/proche-orient/guerre/guerre-au-proche-orient-de-dublin-a-geneve-plusieurs-universites-europeennes-rompent-leurs-liens-avec-israel\\_7291974.html#xtor=CS2-765-%5Bautres%5D-](https://www.franceinfo.fr/monde/proche-orient/guerre/guerre-au-proche-orient-de-dublin-a-geneve-plusieurs-universites-europeennes-rompent-leurs-liens-avec-israel_7291974.html#xtor=CS2-765-%5Bautres%5D-)
- [21] <https://www.dutchnews.nl/2025/05/radboud-cuts-ties-with-israeli-universities-over-human-rights/>
- [22] <https://delta.tudelft.nl/en/article/tilburg-cuts-ties-with-two-israeli-institutions>
- [23] <https://lecourrier.ch/2025/05/19/la-complicite-des-unis/>
- [24] <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/dutch-royal-academy-of-art-cuts-ties-with-israeli-school-2485623>
- [25] <https://student.uniarts.fi/articles/news/uniarts-helsinki-response-to-the-student-unions-statement-about-the-academic-and-cultural-boycott-of-israel/>
- [26] <https://www.bdsmovement.net/news/five-norwegian-universities-cut-ties-with-israel-over-gaza-genocide>
- [27] <https://lecourrier.ch/2025/05/19/la-complicite-des-unis/>
- [28] <https://lecourrier.ch/2025/05/22/des-hes-priees-de-rompre-avec-israel/>
- [29] Letter of support for the students occupying the Geopolis hall at Unil, dated 5.5.2024, with over 400 signatures.
- [30] As a reminder of unanswered requests: at UNIL, immediate implementation of the recommendations of the [rapport d'expert.e.s sur l'éthique et les collaborations externes](#). At EPFL: [rapport d'expert.e.s indépendant.e.s sur l'éthique des collaborations](#).

