

9<sup>th</sup> May, 2024.

UCC Students' Union Executive 23/24  
54 College Road,  
University College Cork.

**Oifig an Uachtaráin**  
President's Office

**An Sciathán Thoir, An Chearnóg Lár,**  
**Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh,**  
**Bóthar an Iarthair, Corcaigh, Éire.**  
East Wing, Main Quadrangle,  
University College Cork,  
Western Road, Cork,  
Ireland.

Dear Students' Union Executive members,

T: +353 (0)21 4902201  
E: [president@ucc.ie](mailto:president@ucc.ie)  
[www.ucc.ie](http://www.ucc.ie)

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. The events of October 7<sup>th</sup> in Israel and the ongoing conflict in Gaza are heinous and abhorrent. Like you, I condemn all violence. I am appalled and deeply upset to see the devastating deaths and injuries in Gaza and the destruction of homes, hospitals, universities and schools. I want to see urgent solutions to alleviate the suffering of the dreadful humanitarian crisis.

I can assure you that University Leadership Team members stand firmly with the national and international calls for an end to violence, the release of hostages and an immediate and permanent ceasefire. We support the findings of the International Court of Justice that Israel must take *all measures* within its power to prevent the commission of all acts coming within the scope of the Genocide Convention. We remain hopeful that a peaceful and lasting resolution to the current conflict can be found.

We are proud that in our university every individual – staff and student – is entitled to speak, act and advocate on behalf of those impacted by war and conflict, and we respect the freedom of our staff and our students to speak, write, listen, challenge, debate and learn about these issues. We are at a time in our history when the mission and values of our university were never more critical, when the injustice, death and heartache caused by war and conflict are ever present realities. We are committed to continuing to engage with staff and students on their efforts to lend their voice to call for an end to the violence, death and destruction. Working together, I am confident that we can engage in meaningful action that will give effect to our common objectives in support of peace and human rights.

In line with the NUI Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct, UCC is committed to the promotion of and respect for universal, inherent, inalienable, and indivisible human rights. As an international university, our staff collaborate on projects of global importance, and are actively involved in research and education that promotes human rights, peacebuilding, and humanitarian causes all over the world, including in Palestine. As a University of Sanctuary, we can be proud that our university is one that embeds a culture of welcome to students and staff who seek sanctuary and refuge in our country. Our Sanctuary Fellowships, Scholars at Risk, Solidarity Fund, and many other initiatives continue to support those who are impacted by conflict. Our Graduate Attributes Programme was established to support and encourage our students to be socially responsible, effective global citizens who make a positive impact on the world.

Universities have many responsibilities and among these is our role in fostering critical thinking and debate and engaging with all manner of diverse perspectives and viewpoints, including those with which we disagree. As a signatory of Magna Charta Universitatum, UCC acknowledges the responsibility of universities to engage with and to respond to the aspirations and challenges of the world and to the communities that they serve, to the benefit of humanity. We also have a role to uphold the principle of academic freedom, which means that we protect the right of scholars to pursue their research. UCC can confirm that we have no current institutional agreements with Israeli universities.

**An tOllamh John O'Halloran PhD, DSc**  
**An tUachtarán**

Professor John O'Halloran PhD, DSc  
President

**Ollscoil na hÉireann, Corcaigh**  
National University of Ireland, Cork

UCC is a partner in 10 EU multi-partner funded Horizon grants, which also involve Israeli partners on research topics including food production, climate and marine, and medicine and health. UCC is not the sole recipient of funding in these very large multi-partner grants, and consortia partners do not provide project funding to each other.

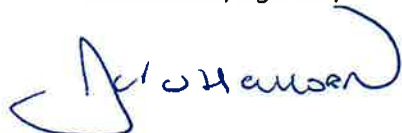
UCC can confirm that:

- In order to address the immediate need of Palestinian students and scholars displaced or at risk, we are establishing a Palestine Emergency Response Working Group, involving SU representation. This Group will identify ways to make existing UCC Sanctuary Scholarships available to displaced Palestinian students, while seeking opportunities to expand our current Scholars at Risk programme for those displaced or at risk as a result of the conflict.
- We are committed to advocating within the IUA for a national, sector-wide approach to sustained support for displaced Palestinian students.
- We have identified that one of the funds, which is invested on our behalf by our investment managers, has a very small exposure with an Israeli financial institution. The amount constitutes less than half a percent of our overall investments and UCC are already engaged in a process of divesting from this investment. This process is expected to conclude by the end of May.
- In line with our commitment to ethical and responsible global engagement, we will:
  - Work with the academic community, including students, to develop an ethical, human rights-based framework to guide our academic, research and business activity in line with our values, including our commitment to academic freedom, and our mission. This will draw on the NUI Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct and other international standards and guidance.
  - Undertake a review of all current relationships, including research and industry partnerships, in line with this framework.
  - Consider what other steps might be taken by the university in order to foster the principles and values of our university community and the responsibilities associated with our role in the world.

UCC is determined that our research, our education and our actions can have global impact in line with our values. We are proud that our campus is a safe and inclusive space for the pursuit of these objectives by all and by upholding academic freedom and freedom of expression, we restate the role of UCC as an environment for learning, and a place where debate is respectful and inclusive.

The Students' Union Executive has an important role to play in helping us to achieve these objectives. By working together, we can continue to be a powerful force for peace and justice in the world.

Le meas mór, i gcónaí,



**Professor John O'Halloran,**  
President