

Harvard University student organizations targeted for opposition to Israeli war crimes in Gaza

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Over 30 student groups at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, are the target of a vicious state-sponsored smear campaign after signing a statement correctly blaming the Israeli regime for the bloody conflict presently raging in Israel and Gaza.

The statement, authored by the Harvard Undergraduate Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) and co-signed by 33 other Harvard student organizations, declares, “We, the undersigned student organizations, hold the Israeli regime entirely responsible for all unfolding violence.”

It continues, “Today’s events did not occur in a vacuum. For the last two decades, millions of Palestinians in Gaza have been forced to live in an open-air prison. Israeli officials promise to ‘open the gates of hell,’ and the massacres in Gaza have already commenced. Palestinians in Gaza have no shelters for refuge and nowhere to escape. In the coming days, Palestinians will be forced to bear the full brunt of Israel’s violence.”

The statement reemphasizes the Israeli government’s sole responsibility for the violence, “Israeli violence has structured every aspect of Palestinian existence for 75 years...Palestinians have been forced to live in a state of death, both slow and sudden.” It concludes, “Today, the Palestinian ordeal enters into uncharted territory. The coming days will require a firm stand against colonial retaliation. We call on the Harvard community to take action to stop the ongoing annihilation of Palestinians.”

This brief and principled statement has drawn a barrage of condemnation over the past several days, involving the university administration, the corporate media and the capitalist state, to vilify any criticism of

Israel’s genocidal attacks on the Palestinian people.

Former Harvard president Larry Summers, along with a collection of academics, immediately denounced the statement. Summers was treasury secretary in the Clinton administration and a key architect of financial policies that have resulted in the greatest levels of social inequality in US history. He wrote on X/Twitter that the joint statement is “morally unconscionable” and that it “sickened” him.

Summers continued, “The silence from Harvard’s leadership, so far, coupled with a vocal and widely reported student groups’ statement blaming Israel solely, has allowed Harvard to appear at best neutral towards acts of terror against the Jewish state of Israel.”

Harvard Computer Science professor Boaz Barak called on Harvard to remove the organizations’ school affiliations, writing on X/Twitter, “I have a lot of criticisms of Israeli policies, but everyone who signed this statement is condoning terrorism, rape, and murder.”

The PSC’s joint statement has also been attacked by numerous leading political figures, both Democrats and Republicans, including Republican Senator Ted Cruz, House Republican Conference Chair Elise Stefanik, and Democratic Congressman Ritchie Torres.

A recent joint statement on the Israel/Gaza conflict by Harvard affiliates called the PSC’s statement “completely wrong and deeply offensive” and demanded that all students group signatories immediately retract their endorsements. Harvard’s Jewish center, Harvard Hillel, denounced the PSC’s joint statement as representative of “further hatred and anti-Semitism.”

Harvard University President Claudine Gay quickly associated herself with the attack, issuing a statement declaring, “As the events of recent days continue to reverberate, let there be no doubt that I condemn the terrorist atrocities perpetrated by Hamas. Such inhumanity is abhorrent.”

All of these attacks are filthy slanders and bald-faced lies, part of a broader propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting any support for the popular uprising of the Palestinian population of Gaza against the far-right Netanyahu government in Israel, US imperialism’s proxy force in the Middle East.

They also place the students involved in physical danger. According to the *Harvard Crimson*, “As of Tuesday evening, at least four online sites had listed the personal information of students linked to clubs that had signed onto the statement, including full names, class years, past employment, social media profiles, photos, and hometowns.”

In recent days, this campaign has been increasingly directed against widespread support for the Palestinians in Gaza on the university campuses. New York University law student and president of NYU’s Law School Bar Association Ryna Workman is currently the target of attacks by the university, media and far-right pro-Israel elements for issuing a principled statement of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

In a newsletter for the Student Bar Association, Workman wrote that “Israel bears full responsibility for the tremendous loss of life” and that the “regime of state-sanctioned violence created the conditions that made resistance necessary.”

Workman has been falsely presented by the right-wing *Daily Mail* publication as a supporter of genocidal murder. This slander was essentially endorsed by NYU when university spokesperson John Beckman stated that Workman “blam[ed] victims of terrorism for their own death.” It has been reported that the corporate law firm Winston and Strawn has rescinded its offer of employment to Workman. Student groups at various other campuses, including Columbia University in New York City and George Washington University in Washington DC, have also faced similar attacks.

On Tuesday, billionaire hedge fund manager and longtime Democratic Party donor Bill Ackman, founder and CEO of Pershing Square Capital Management, called on Harvard to release the names of students who

are members of the organizations that signed the PSC’s joint statement. Ackman menacingly wrote, “I have been asked by a number of CEOs if Harvard would release a list of the members of each of the Harvard organizations that have issued the letter assigning sole responsibility for Hamas’ heinous acts to Israel, so as to insure [sic] that none of us inadvertently hire any of their members. If, in fact, their members support the letter they have released, the names of the signatories should be made public so their views are publicly known.”

Why not just throw all those opposing the Israeli apartheid regime’s crimes against the Palestinian people in prison? This is the logical conclusion of Ackman’s statements.

Sanaa M. Kahloon, a junior at Harvard, responded to these attacks in a statement on behalf of the Harvard PSC Monday afternoon. He wrote that the organization’s members “reject the accusation that our previous statement could be read as supportive of civilian deaths. To restate what should be obvious: the PSC staunchly opposes violence against civilians — Palestinian, Israeli, or other.”

He continues, “The statement aims to contextualize the apartheid and colonial system while explicitly lamenting ‘the devastating and rising civilian toll’ in its caption. It is unacceptable that Palestinians and groups supporting them are always expected to preempt their statements with condemnation of violence.”

It is a historical fact that the Israeli government and its US backers bear the ultimate responsibility for the thousands of deaths and mass devastation that has occurred over the last several days.

The hysterical propaganda campaign being waged speaks to the immense fear within ruling circles that masses of people will not be inclined to lie back and accept the narrative concocted by the warmongers in Washington and Jerusalem.



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