

## **Tuesday, June 10, 2025: Petition for Durham University to show support with Palestinian people**

Dr Maja Kutlaca and Dr Alice Finden,

As a University we share, along with the UK Government, the deepest concern at the appalling humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Our response as well as the continued support available to our staff and students is outlined on our website here: [Events in the Middle East - Durham University](#).

In responding to the crisis, our priority has always been to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students, staff and our wider community. We reached out swiftly and directly to staff and student communities affected by these events to offer support and assistance and to hear and address any concerns. We remain in continued dialogue with them.

Durham does not tolerate antisemitism or anti-Muslim hatred and takes reports of bullying, harassment, hate incidents, and abuse seriously. We have mechanisms in place such as our Report + Support tool for staff and students to report incidents, and we uphold freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law. With expertise in Middle East studies, Jewish studies, international law, and peace and security studies, we encourage our academic staff to promote understanding of these and other conflicts.

On your specific point, we would also assure you there is no reason for any concern about surveillance-type activities at Durham.

We have reaffirmed our commitment to increasing practical support for higher education in Gaza, including boosting financial aid for scholarships for Palestinian students from the West Bank and Gaza and providing direct support to Palestinian academics.

We are also involved in discussions at both institutional and national levels to find effective ways to assist students whose education has been disrupted by the war or who will need higher education in the future. We are doing this in collaboration with the Durham Palestine Educational Trust and other organisations dedicated to protecting and promoting higher education in conflict settings, such as Universities UK, Cormack Consultancy Group and CARA, amongst others.

Durham is a university where diversity is respected, valued and celebrated. We are committed to creating a community that values different perspectives and lived experiences. We are also committed to actively listening and maintaining open lines of communication with our students and staff so voices across our community can be heard, respected and supported.

We continue to support all students and staff affected by this crisis and to strive for the cohesion of our diverse global community. Our web pages (linked above) carry more specific details on the support available to staff and students.

Yours sincerely,

**Shaid Mahmood**

**Pro-Vice-Chancellor Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

**Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor – Colleges and Student Experience**

**Lucian J Hudson**

**Executive Director, Communications & External Relations**