

Central Student Government Report

Submitted by: Alifa Chowdhury, CSG President

July 11, 2024

Note: Administrators have informed us that the Regents are unwilling to read a report longer than two pages. While we have doubts that you will even read this abridged report, a full version is available [here](#) for the public record.

President Ono, members of the Board of Regents, and Executive Officers of the University:

In [our June report](#), we related the horrors being enacted upon the people of Gaza by the Zionist entity, described U-M's complicity in them, and discussed how you have repeatedly ignored broad calls from the U-M community to divest to protect your own financial interests. We discussed how, instead of engaging with these demands and taking action, you have attempted to repress and retaliate against this movement. In the time since, all of the problems discussed in the June report have worsened.

Firstly, and most importantly, the atrocities in Gaza have reached new brutal levels. A [recent report](#) published by the reputable medical journal *The Lancet* shows that a conservative estimate for **the number of deaths resulting from Israel's ongoing genocidal aggression is 186,000 people, or almost 8% of Gaza's population.** The report explains that Gaza's infrastructure has been so thoroughly destroyed that its Ministry of Health has been unable to count all of the deaths directly caused by Israeli attacks (produced, in part, by U-M funding and labor). Genocide, of course, is not only carried out with bombs and guns. As the report details:

[T]here will continue to be many indirect deaths in the coming months and years from causes such as reproductive, communicable, and non-communicable diseases. The total death toll is expected to be large given the intensity of this conflict; destroyed health-care infrastructure; severe shortages of food, water, and shelter; the population's inability to flee to safe places; and the loss of funding to UNRWA, one of the very few humanitarian organisations still active in the Gaza Strip.

Genocide is also carried out with an ideology of dehumanization which allows Israeli soldiers to murder Palestinians without shame or restraint. A recent article in *+972 Magazine* provides several sickening reports from former "Israeli defense force" soldiers:

Israeli soldiers routinely executed Palestinian civilians simply because they entered an area that the military defined as a "no-go zone." The testimonies paint a picture of a landscape [littered with civilian corpses](#), which are left to rot or be eaten by stray animals; the army only hides them from view ahead of the arrival of international aid convoys, so that "images of people in advanced stages of decay don't come out." Two of the soldiers also testified to a systematic policy of setting Palestinian homes on fire after occupying them.

Are these reports sufficient to convince you that Israel is committing genocide? Are they sufficient to raise "serious moral or ethical questions" ([Investment Policy](#)) about U-M's investment in companies perpetrating it? Or does the systematic killing of mass people not matter to you when they are brown and Black bodies? Every day of inaction by U-M is an endorsement of and deliberate choice to contribute to this genocide.

Second, you have doubled down on your repression and retaliation, as detailed in [a recent TAHRIR Coalition press conference](#). You are continuing to press charges against pro-Palestine activists through the Washtenaw County Prosecutor. Not satisfied with Savit's decisions, you have approached State Attorney General Dana Nessel to press further charges. Moreover, you have repeatedly violated Office of Student Conflict Resolution procedures to retaliate against protestors through the disciplinary process. Amid all of this, you have refused to take responsibility for the violence you enacted on the U-M community throughout the past 9 months, most recently during the raid of the Gaza Solidarity Encampment. These decisions to retaliate are disappointing, but not surprising. Your investments in genocide and occupation are so transparently immoral, and to divest would be so damaging to your financial interests, that you must try to stop it with whatever tools are available to you. It's embarrassing. Since this university is so comfortable with contributing to horrific violence against the Palestinian people, it's only to be expected that it's comfortable enacting violence on those who protest it.

CSG remains firm in our commitment to withhold our funds until you choose to divest. As we made clear at the June Regents' Meeting, CSG does not intend to disburse our funds to student organizations or programs. This follows a clear democratic mandate from the student body that U-M must divest, and that we are willing to make sacrifices to force that to happen. It is a clear signal that the student body refuses to accept your violent status quo. We refuse to continue business as usual while our university funds a genocide. We refuse to take concessions such as the student fee.

In the last meeting, Regent Acker and Regent Behm expressed concerns over this stance, citing various past uses of CSG funds. These concerns were in bad faith; at the same meeting, you approved a \$2.7 billion budget, nearly 2500 times CSG's entire operating budget, far exceeding the small portion historically allocated to the very cited programs. UofM is one of the largest gentrifying forces in Washtenaw County. The problems cited are a creation of your own. Nevertheless, **there is an obvious solution to this problem: divest now.** At no point did any regent engage with the content of our report, which explained in detail the moral crisis that forced us into taking such drastic action. Instead, Regent Bernstein invoked the racist imagery of a "mob" to describe a multicultural, POC-led movement. He also accused our mass movement of anti-Semitism. As a Jewish student explained at the press conference "When Mark Bernstein called us a part of an antisemitic mob on campus, he signaled to us, anti-Zionist Jews, that we don't belong. The light of our Shabbat candles never reached the Ruthven building. He told us that we didn't count, that we didn't matter. He erased us."

Our last report attempted to explain the moral imperative to divest. It is clear from your refusal to engage with it that no amount of explanation or dialogue can cause you to take action. But this movement will continue to fight until you do. No amount of repression or retaliation can defeat or intimidate us – or indeed, the entire global movement fighting for a free Palestine, from the river to the sea. Treating the steadfast resistance in Palestine as our compass, we will continue to fight for liberation on this campus and all over the world.

The Student Government of
the University of Michigan - Dearborn



July 2024 Regents Report

President Ono, Members of the Board of Regents, and Executive Officers of the University, it is our honor to submit the following report to you on behalf of the administration of the University of Michigan-Dearborn's Student Government (SG). We look forward to updating you on our initiatives and sharing all we have worked on.

Accomplishments:

We have successfully concluded the interviews for the Senate Chair positions, with the selection process overseen by the Speaker and the Director of Inclusion. I am pleased to report that every Senator and Fellow within the Student Government has been placed in committees aligned with their interests. This strategic placement will enhance their contributions and ensure their active engagement in addressing student concerns.

Projects:

In celebration of Pride Month, our Director of Inclusion has collaborated with the Pride organization to organize a bracelet-making event. This event serves as a platform to bring students together, fostering inclusivity and supporting the LGBTQ+ community. By actively engaging students, we strive to create a campus environment that values and celebrates diversity. Additionally, to better hear student voices and to collaborate with other student organizations on campus, the Student Government is organizing a Student Leader Round Table this month. This event will invite all the presidents of other organizations across the campus to speak about their issues and discuss their problems so that the Student Government can effectively advocate for solving those problems.

Furthermore, we are also working towards organizing an event for next month where Senators will be able to come to campus to learn, and SG alumni will share their experiences.

To Conclude:

Student Government is committed to serving and representing the student body. We have several important projects in progress, and we hope to continue our efforts to make the college community a better place for all students.

GO BLUE! GO DEARBORN!

Rupinder Singh

Student Body President, University of
Michigan-Dearborn

Zahra Patni

Student Body Vice President, University of
Michigan-Dearborn