

# Student Government Resolution 2023-06

On the President's statement on the 2023 conflict in Israel and Gaza and in support for institutional statements better accounting for the civilian toll on Palestinians in the Gaza strip and abroad.

Authors: Senator Daniel Yahalom.

Sponsors: President Srivani Edupuganti.

---

**Whereas** the Office of the President of the University of Texas at Dallas released an official statement on 16<sup>th</sup> October extending sympathies to students affected by the deaths in Israel but not extending similar sympathies to their IPalestinians<sup>1</sup>; and

**Whereas** current events globally exacerbated antisemitic<sup>2</sup> and anti-Palestinian<sup>3</sup> sentiments; and

**Whereas** derogatory and anti-Palestinian sentiments have been expressed by students at the University of Texas at Dallas since October 7<sup>th</sup><sup>4</sup>; and

**Whereas** the Gaza strip is densely populated and home to 2.1 million inhabitants<sup>5</sup>, including friends and relatives of UTD students; and

**Whereas** militants associated with Hamas and other groups in the Gaza strip attacked Israeli towns outside the Gaza strip on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, killing over 1,400 Israelis and kidnapping nearly 200<sup>6</sup>; and

**Whereas** the Israeli government ordered 1.1 million civilians to evacuate from the northern portion of the Gaza strip over the span of 24 hours, which the United Nations described as having "devastating humanitarian consequences"<sup>7</sup>, and a defiance of "the rules of

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A

<sup>2</sup> A teacher in France was killed by an Islamist extremist on October 13<sup>th</sup>. Although it is not known if the teacher was Jewish, the attack was linked by authorities to the ongoing conflict.

The Associated Press, French authorities link a school stabbing that killed a teacher to Islamic extremism: <https://apnews.com/article/france-school-stabbing-arras-878f42a5df4a873ca7bd80a173cc9097>

<sup>3</sup> A 6-year-old Palestinian child was stabbed by his family's landlord in response to the ongoing conflict. CNN, A 6-year-old Palestinian-American was stabbed 26 times for being Muslim, police say. His mom couldn't go to his funeral because she was stabbed, too:

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/16/us/chicago-muslim-boy-stabbing-investigation/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B

<sup>5</sup> The Washington Post, Visualizing the Size of Gaza City Compared with U.S. Cities:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/17/gaza-size-population-comparison/>

<sup>6</sup> The New York Times, Hamas Took Nearly 200 Hostages. Here's What We Know About Them:

<https://www.nytimes.com/article/israel-hostages-hamas-explained.html>

<sup>7</sup> Foreign Policy, Israel Orders Mass Evacuation of Northern Gaza:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/10/13/israel-gaza-hamas-war-mass-evacuations-humanitarian-corridor-ground-offensive/>

war and basic humanity” due to the high population density and poor infrastructure of the Gaza strip<sup>8</sup>; and

**Whereas** the Israeli government utilized its blockade of the Gaza strip, which has been in effect since 2007<sup>9</sup>, to cut off all access to food, electricity, and the internet in the Gaza strip since Monday, October 8th<sup>10</sup>, and cut access to drinking water from October 8th to October 15th<sup>11</sup>; and

**Whereas** the ongoing conflict damaged civilian infrastructure in the Gaza strip<sup>12</sup>, including hospitals<sup>13</sup>, and led to the death of over 3,400 Palestinians in the Gaza strip<sup>14</sup>; and therefore

**Be it resolved** by the Student Government Senate of The University of Texas at Dallas that institutions must take a primarily humanitarian approach to the current conflict – prioritizing the safety and wellbeing of civilians in the Gaza strip, West Bank, and Israel proper above all else; and

**Be it further resolved** that the Student Government Senate of the University of Texas at Dallas asks that any official statements from the University of Texas at Dallas on the Israel-Palestine conflict account for the suffering of both Israeli and Palestinian students; and

**Be it further resolved** that the Student Government Senate of the University of Texas at Dallas recommends that future official statements from the University of Texas at Dallas regarding sensitive topics be approved by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, or equivalent thereof<sup>15</sup>, before being published; and

---

<sup>8</sup> Martin Griffiths, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Official statement as Tweet: <https://twitter.com/UNReliefChief/status/1712923531799929300>

<sup>9</sup> Britannica, Blockade of Gaza Strip: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Gaza-Strip/Blockade>

<sup>10</sup> Business Insider, Israel announces ‘complete siege’ of Gaza, cutting its electricity, food, water, and fuel: <https://www.businessinsider.com/israel-gallant-announces-complete-siege-gaza-no-electricity-food-fuel-2023-10>

<sup>11</sup> Reuters, Renewed water supply to parts of south Gaza agreed with Biden, Israeli minister says: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/renewed-water-supply-parts-south-gaza-agreed-with-biden-israeli-minister-2023-10-15/>

<sup>12</sup> Al-Jazeera, Israel-Gaza war in maps and charts: Live Tracker: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>

<sup>13</sup> Reuters, In deadly day for Gaza, hospital strike kills hundreds: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/least-500-victims-israeli-air-strike-hospital-gaza-health-ministry-2023-10-17/>

<sup>14</sup> Al-Jazeera, Israel-Gaza war: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>

<sup>15</sup> In anticipation of any future restructuring of the office in compliance with Texas Senate Bill 17 Texas Legislature Online, 88(R) History for SB 17:

<https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=88R&Bill=SB17>

**Be it resolved** that the Student Government Senate of the University of Texas at Dallas asks the Office of the President to clarify their support for *all* students, regardless of nationality, in accordance with the above guidelines, in the aftermath of the October 16<sup>th</sup> statement; and

**Be it further resolved** that a copy of this resolution will be shared with the Office of the President of the University of Texas at Dallas, the Vice President of Student Affairs of the University of Texas at Dallas, the Staff Council of the University of Texas at Dallas, the Academic Senate of the University of Texas at Dallas, and The Mercury.

*Presiding officers:*

|   |
|---|
|   |
| Srivani Edupuganti<br><i>Student Government President</i> |

## Appendix A: Text of the President's October 16<sup>th</sup> Statement

Dear UT Dallas Community,

As I have watched and read about the events of last week, I have been filled with various emotions, including shock, horror, grief and sadness.

Clearly, there can be no justification for the atrocities committed by the terrorist group Hamas, which targeted, killed and kidnapped innocent Israeli civilians, including children. Our hearts are broken for the people of Israel and for all those affected by the violence and inhumanity of Hamas. We will never forget October 7, 2023.

Yet, in the face of this cruelty, I have also felt pride in what has been happening at UT Dallas. Throughout the week, despite loss and strong feelings, we have seen something impressive on our campus. Students are conversing about their differences; they are gathering donations and peacefully protesting; they are shaking hands.

There have been no reports of violence, nor have any events been interrupted.

I already knew we had wonderful students, but my pride in this diverse community has reached a new level. Our remarkable students, staff and faculty have gathered the best of themselves to engage with each other respectfully and civilly. It is the very essence of the Comet spirit here at UT Dallas, a campus where everyone has a place.

As part of such a caring community, it is important for us to be aware of those among us, including ourselves, who may be heartbroken, fearful or anxious. For those who may need support, we have numerous resources to help navigate these uncertain times:

- For students, the Student Counseling Center is available for **appointments**. Additionally, students have access to 24/7 counseling through UTDTALK (**972-883-8255**) and **TimelyCare**.
- For faculty and staff, the **Employee Assistance Program** offers counseling services, and those on the **UT SELECT Medical Plan** have access to additional mental health benefits.

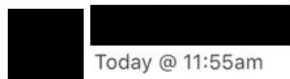
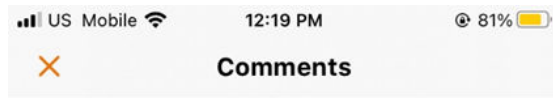
While it is likely that violence and war will continue in the days ahead, it is my expectation that our campus community will continue to display open communication, respect and kindness.

Thank you for your continuing example. Be empathetic. Be kind. Work for peace.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard C. Benson

## Appendix B: Screenshots of hurtful comments against Palestinians and Palestinian students



Today @ 11:55am

Americans defending Palestinians is like chicken getting ready for an interview at KFC. Who do you think they will come for next if Israel falls.

4 Comments

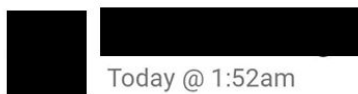


Ok but you're Indian so you can go worry about India instead. I'm sure your country has enough problems. Use your education and potential and go benefit your country instead.

Today @ 12:03pm



Thats exactly what I'm doing.



Today @ 1:52am


Screw Palestine, most of them are terrorists and a threat to humanity. More power to Israel 🇮🇱🇮🇱🇮🇱. Israel has all the rights to protect itself from Palestinian terrorists. #IstandwithIsrael



  posted in Student Feed: Fak  
Palestine, more power to Israel 🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸.  
🗨 Oct 11 @ 10:02pm

 posted in Student Feed: I  
support Israel. They have a right to defend  
themselves.  
🗨 Oct 12 @ 9:04am


  posted in Student Feed:  
KEEP BIGOTRY OUT OF THE UTD APP. stop  
seeking attention yash you're making a fool of ...  
🗨 Oct 12 @ 8:52am

 DELETED DELETED posted in Student Feed:  
<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/rcna119865>  
At least president Bide...  
🗨 Oct 12 @ 8:39am

 DELETED DELETED posted in Student Feed:  
Free Israel, terrorists don't deserve any peace  
especially when they cut babies heads of...  
🗨 Oct 12 @ 7:55am

  posted in Student Feed: Screw  
Palestine, most of them are terrorists and a  
threat to humanity. More power to Is...  
🗨 Oct 12 @ 1:52am


  posted in Student Feed:  
anyone who was near ecss at around 8:20 pm  
ish who heard that chick screaming know wtf ...  
🗨 Oct 12 @ 12:46am

 DELETED DELETED posted in Student Feed:  
Land of the free my ass, people want me to get  
cancelled, but yet want to post their own...  
🗨 Oct 13 @ 7:14pm

1h



## UT Dallas

 in Student Feed: I want to apologize to the UTD community for my derogatory comments on the Palestinian community I made earlier this week. I was overcome with grief, anger, and very emotional especi...



DELETED DELETED posted in **Student Feed**:  
I want to apologize to the UTD community  
for my derogatory comments on the  
Palestinian c...

🕒 Today @ 12:11pm