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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **OXFORD, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITIES ESTABLISH 'LIBERATED ZONE' ENCAMPMENTS FOR GAZA**

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*Hundreds Join Campus Encampments, Calling on Oxford and Cambridge to End
Complicity in Genocide*

OXFORD and CAMBRIDGE, UK, 6 May 2024 -- In the early hours of Monday morning, students, faculty, and staff of the Oxford and Cambridge University communities established 'Liberated Zone' encampments on their campuses, joining over 100 universities across the globe in protest of Israel's seven-month long genocide in Gaza. To date, Israel has killed over 34,000 Palestinians and targeted every aspect of life in Gaza, including the destruction of hospitals, universities, schools, and entire neighborhoods. There is no end in sight as Israel continues stating intent to launch an invasion in Rafah. The Oxford and Cambridge encampments call for an immediate end to their universities' complicity in Israel's ongoing genocide, occupation, and ethnic cleansing of Palestine.

The newly-formed coalitions Oxford Action for Palestine (OA4P) and Cambridge for Palestine (C4P) issued a joint statement:

"From Columbia to UCLA, from Trinity College to Sciences Po, from Newcastle to Goldsmiths, over 100 universities across the globe have now taken bold and urgent action for Palestine. As members of these institutions, we refuse to accept our universities' complicity in Israel's war crimes against the Palestinian people – and we refuse to stand by while they justify Israel's campaign of mass slaughter, starvation, and displacement.

In Oxbridge, we work and study in gilded halls funded by the largest endowments of any universities in the UK, with over £8 billion and £7.8 Billion in respective holdings. Our universities' wealth and prestige stem directly from their role in the British empire and its disastrous colonial legacies, including the Oxford and Cambridge men who authored the Balfour Declaration in 1917, ceding Palestinian land to the Zionist settler-colonial project. In 2024, these universities may claim to be confronting their role in historic colonial violence – but their words ring hollow while they lend financial and moral support to Israel's genocide, occupation, and ongoing colonisation of Palestine.

Oxbridge's profits cannot continue to climb at the expense of Palestinian lives, and their reputations must no longer be built on the white-washing of Israeli crimes. Today we join the university students, faculty, and staff across the globe who refuse to continue business as usual while our institutions profit from genocide.

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The OXFORD UNIVERSITY encampment sits in front of the Pitts Rivers Museum – a disturbing display of artefacts stolen from colonised peoples across the world, and a violent reminder of the harms inflicted by the British empire. In founding the Liberated Zone on this site, Oxford Action for Palestine (OA4P) calls on the University of Oxford to:

1. DISCLOSE UNIVERSITY-WIDE ASSETS

1.1 Annually disclose a comprehensive account of University-wide assets, including direct and indirect investments, land holdings, donations, and grants.

2. DIVEST UNIVERSITY-WIDE ASSETS

2.1 Immediately divest University-wide direct and indirect holdings in all arms companies.

2.2 Publicly pledge to completely divest University-wide direct and indirect holdings in all companies that are complicit in Israeli genocide, apartheid, and occupation of Palestine within the next 5 years.

3. OVERHAUL INVESTMENT POLICY

3.1 Expand the ethical restriction on arms manufacturers to cover direct and indirect investments in all arms and military technology companies.

3.2 Add an ethical restriction to the Investment Policy on direct and indirect investments in companies that are complicit in Israeli genocide, apartheid, and occupation.

3.3 Integrate community stakeholders in ethical investment review processes to ensure that all investment decisions adhere to justice-based guidelines.

4. BOYCOTT INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

4.1 End all institutional relationships with Israeli universities, including exchange programmes, joint projects, conferences and other official links.

4.2 Pledge not to enter into future institutional relationships with Israeli universities as long as Israeli genocide, apartheid, or occupation is ongoing.

4.3 End research, career, and procurement partnerships with companies and institutions that are complicit in Israeli genocide, apartheid, or occupation.

5. DROP BARCLAYS

5.1. In light of Barclays bank's extensive investments in companies supplying Israel with weapons and military technology, the University of Oxford and its Subsidiaries must stop banking with Barclays.

6. REBUILD AND REINVEST

6.1 Publicly commit to supporting, through financial and material means, the Palestinian-led rebuilding of the twelve universities that have been completely, or in part, destroyed by Israeli aggression in the last year.

6.2 Establish and support a long-term task force composed of staff, students, and relevant Palestinian community members who will recommend how best to meet the call issued by Palestinian higher education institutions to rebuild the higher education sector in Gaza.

6.3 Publicly commit to allocating resources in the interim to support scholars at risk in Palestine through, but not limited to, exchanges, joint projects, academic fellowships and partnerships, and scholarship programmes.

The encampment will be active with daily educational and community events, and is happy to facilitate press enquiries. For OA4P's full statement, elaboration on demands, a press kit, and other updated materials, visit linktr.ee/oxact4pal, which will be live after the launch of the encampment. For live updates and media content as OA4P's campaign progresses, visit @OxAct4Pal on X, Instagram, and TikTok.

The CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY encampment sits at the beating heart of Cambridge's campus.

Whether through direct investments, indirect equity exposure, or academic and industrial partnerships, the University of Cambridge assists the continued enforcement of the decades-long destruction of Palestinian life, and the normalisation of illegal settlement of their land. The University cannot claim to be a place of ethics and learning while maintaining such relationships. As decades of supporting such violence have culminated in the state of Israel's 7 months-long genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, we therefore demand the following from the University of Cambridge:

- 1. DISCLOSE** all endowments from, investments in, and financial and professional relationships with, institutions and companies complicit in the ongoing ethnic cleansing of Palestine, by conducting an ethical audit and properly responding to the Freedom of Information request submitted on 22 September 2022.
- 2. DIVEST** by terminating all such relationships with, institutions and companies complicit in the ongoing ethnic cleansing of Palestine, and bringing to an end its use of Barclays Bank, which invests over £1 billion in, and loans and underwrites more than £3 billion for, 9 companies complicit in this settler colonial project.
- 3. REINVEST** by supporting Palestinian students, academics, and scholars of the University of Cambridge, and of the destroyed universities of Gaza.
- 4. PROTECT** the academic freedoms and safety of all of its students, faculty, and staff, and particularly of those targeted for their involvement in pro-Palestine action or victimised by anti-Palestinian or other racialised attacks, including by becoming a University of Sanctuary for all forced migrants.

For interviews and other enquiries, contact:

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Cambridge: 07961014869, cambridge4palestine@proton.me, X (@cam4palestine), Instagram (cambridgeforpalestine)

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