

BREAKING: OXFORD STUDENTS STAGE DIE-IN FOR GAZA AT GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Dozens of students in blood-soaked graduation gowns disrupt foot traffic outside Sheldonian Theatre

18 May 2024; OXFORD, UK -- On Saturday morning, University of Oxford students have commenced a "die-in" protest outside of graduation ceremonies at the Sheldonian Theatre. Organised by Oxford Action for Palestine (OA4P), the protest calls on the University Administration to commence negotiations with the coalition, whose campus-wide support grows by the day. After nearly two weeks of OA4P's Gaza Solidarity Encampment, which began on 6 May, the Vice Chancellor has only issued a blanket public response with no willingness to meet or consider the demands of the coalition.

The University's silence persists despite a flurry of support for the Gaza solidarity encampment in recent days. Just yesterday, fourteen Oxford trade unions – including the Oxford UCU – issued their resounding endorsement of the action and its demands. Over 550 faculty and staff have signed a letter to stand firmly in support of the encampment and its demands, over 1200 students of the University have already signed an Open Letter campaign in just 48 hours, and motions have been passed across 30 Oxford college student associations. Despite the overwhelming and broad-based support from students, faculty, staff, and community members, the University refuses to engage with the coalition.

The students announced their intention to stay for the duration of graduation ceremonies taking place throughout the day. **In a statement issued this morning**, OA4P outlined the symbolism of its die-in action, and called on the University to enter negotiations.

"We have laid our bodies on the ground, dressed in blood-soaked academic dress, outside graduation ceremonies at Oxford's famed Sheldonian Theatre—the ceremonial epicenter of the University. Each of us represents thousands of Palestinians whose lives and futures have been destroyed. There are no more universities in Gaza, no more graduations, and no more milestones. Higher education has been destroyed and taken away from the people of Gaza for the past seven months: 5,479 students, 261 teachers, 95 professors, and three university presidents have been murdered as a result of Israel's genocidal campaign. We are escalating for Gaza, and our die-in is the next step in refocusing the university's attention on Palestine.

The University must enter negotiations with the Oxford Action for Palestine based on the preconditions that have been communicated to them this morning. We wait to engage in the 'constructive dialogue' for which Vice-Chancellor Tracey called in her wider response to the University. If our escalation is met with continued silence, we are committed to continued mobilisation."

For photos and videos of today's action, visit our Press Kit at linktr.ee/OxAct4Pal. **To read OA4P's full statement** to the University issued this morning, visit our social media @OxAct4Pal on X, Instagram, and TikTok. **For interviews and other enquiries, contact:** m: 07341377729; e: oxpalpress@proton.me.

Oxford Action for Palestine (OA4P) is a coalition of students, faculty, staff, and other members of the University of Oxford community who are dedicated to the liberation of Palestine. On May 6, OA4P established a Liberated Zone encampment in solidarity with Gaza, calling on the University to cut financial and institutional ties with Israeli genocide, occupation, and apartheid. For updates, visit the OA4P linktree at linktr.ee/OxAct4Pal and find us on Instagram, X, and TikTok on @OxAct4Pal.

###