

BREAKING: CASE DROPPED AGAINST THE WELLINGTON SQUARE 17

Police Will Take No Further Action Against Protestors Arrested on 23 May

20 August 2024; OXFORD, UK --

On 23 May, 17 OA4P protestors were arrested for staging a sit-in at Vice-Chancellor Irene Tracey's office to protest Oxford University's aiding and abetting of israel's genocide in Gaza. The arrests and brutality against protestors that day marked the most severe incident of police violence in recent University history. The Wellington Square 17 issued the following statement.

"This week, the Wellington Square 17 were informed by Thames Valley Police that no further action will be taken against us.

"We feel vindicated by the police's decision and relieved that we will not need to divert precious resources to a legal battle. We are grateful to all those who lent us solidarity and support.

"But it should never have come to this. We condemn Oxford University and the Vice-Chancellor's choice to call the police and unleash the full force of state violence onto its own students, alumni, workers, and local community. It alarms us that that the University would rather criminalise, silence, and endanger protestors rather than confront its enabling of israel's genocide in Gaza.

"For weeks following the arrests, the University tried to distract from its violent response by spinning narratives against us. We condemn the blatantly false allegations, made shamelessly by University officials in emails sent to every member of the University, that the Wellington Square 17 had assaulted members of staff. For the university to spread such lies is dangerous and irresponsible given the current political climate and the rise of the far right: Muslim, Arab, and racialised protestors were at risk of Islamophobic and racist policing, and trans and gender non-conforming protestors faced transphobic and transmisogynist treatment from the police.

"We condemn the real violence that protestors supporting us outside Wellington Square faced from the police, including concussions, dislocated limbs, and bloodied faces.

"We condemn the University's forced closure of OA4P's two encampments and the cruel, punitive measures it took against student activists protesting israeli genocide, occupation, and apartheid.

"Since the arrests on 23 May, israel's genocidal violence has only intensified – all with the continued financial backing of the University of Oxford. We have watched with horror as israel bombed refugee camps, burning children alive; tortured and raped prisoners on video; massacred hundreds of Palestinians while they worshipped, lined up for food,

sheltered in schools, buried their dead, and fled to 'safe zones'; deliberately sniped children in their heads; denied international calls for the entry of polio vaccines, food, and aid; and murdered what could exceed 180,000 Palestinian people in Gaza, according to a letter recently published in The Lancet.

"Our demands are even more urgent than they were when the Vice Chancellor chose to call the police on us in May, but the University continues to delay action. As OA4P's negotiations team continues meetings with the Administration, the Wellington Square 17 call on the University to immediately commit to implementing a roadmap for OA4P's six demands. In the meantime, across the UK, we are gravely concerned about the state's egregious crackdown on activists fighting for Palestinian liberation and climate justice.

"This is not the end. We will not rest until Palestine is free. All eyes on Gaza!"

For interviews and other enquiries, contact: m: 07341377729; e: oxpalpress@proton.me; @OxAct4Pal on X, Instagram, and TikTok. For a Press Kit and other resources, visit linktr.ee/OxAct4Pal.

Oxford Action for Palestine (OA4P) is a student-led collective joined by faculty, staff, and the wider Oxford community, all of whom are dedicated to the liberation of Palestine. On May 6, OA4P established a Liberated Zone encampment in solidarity with Gaza, calling on the University of Oxford 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.

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