

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is [name] and I am the concerned parent/guardian of [child's name], a student currently enrolled in [school's name]. I am writing to express my deep disappointment regarding the recent statements made by [school/district's name] concerning the recent violence between Israel and Gaza.

These statements, while intended to address the recent situation, have presented a one-sided perspective showing solidarity and concern only for Israel with no acknowledgment of the ongoing and historical suffering and death of Palestinians. This is an unbalanced and biased stance that can be harmful to the institution's reputation and, more importantly, to the numerous students, faculty, and staff within your district who identify as Muslim, Palestinian, Arab, or Jewish.

Studies have shown that these marginalized students are already at an increased risk of peer-to-peer bullying, discrimination, and harassment from school administrators and faculty. When educators and academic institutions make one-sided public statements on the situation in Palestine and Israel that fail to acknowledge the realities, struggles, and humanity of Muslim, Palestinian, and Arab students, this can contribute to a hostile school environment, bullying, harassment, and retaliation.

I want to take this as an opportunity to not only discourage this unfair perspective but to educate our faculty, administration, and leadership. Over the past 75 years, the Palestinian people have experienced immense suffering, displacement, and a 15-year-long inhumane siege and blockade in Gaza, which has been described as "the largest open-air prison" by human rights organizations. The blockade, which has been ruthlessly imposed by Israel by land, sea, and air has effectively deprived Palestinian residents of freedom of movement and crippled Gaza's economy. It has severely restricted access to basic human needs, like food, clean water, electricity, and medicine. Israel's war crimes against Palestinians of all faiths have been well documented by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, B'Tselem, and others who have unequivocally declared Israel an apartheid state.

The United Nations has repeatedly deemed Israel's aggressions in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank as "illegal under international law" and a "substantial obstacle to peace." The death toll of the conflict in Palestine-Israel is disproportionately borne by the Palestinians. Between 2008 and 2021, at least 5,739 Palestinians and 251 Israelis were killed. According to the UN, the conflict has taken the lives of 23 Palestinians for each Israeli. Over the same time period, at least 121,438 Palestinians and 5,682 Israelis were injured. It is essential that your school keep in mind that the Palestinian people have endured decades of dispossession, dehumanization, and annexation under the illegal Israeli occupation and apartheid system. Their humanity should be recognized and respected as they face the devastating consequences of violence, including the recent Israeli airstrikes in Gaza.

This letter is not asking you to ignore the suffering of Israelis and it in no way condones violence perpetrated on civilians. It does, however, challenge you to identify the overwhelming hypocrisy of the recent statements—noting that no such unilateral support was previously offered to Palestinians who have been occupied, brutalized, and terrorized for over seven decades.

As a concerned parent, I have already seen the effects of your statements on my child, who has been negatively affected and disillusioned. I would like to remind you of your obligations under Pennsylvania law to ensure a safe school environment for all students and to ensure that no student faces bullying, discrimination, or harassment on the basis of their protect characteristics. Moreover, you are legally

obligated to investigate any such incidents of school bullying and discrimination and to ensure that the victim faces no further retaliation or harm.

Our elementary, intermediate, and high schools are not meant to be political battlegrounds, nor are educators, faculty, and administrators meant to make biased and one-sided declarations in times like these. Your district and school are tasked with the education and care of a diverse student population. You have the duty to approach times like these thoughtfully and steadfastly, not rashly and reactively—especially when it is clear that you have taken no care to understand the nuanced, complex, and long-lasting political conflict. More importantly, your utmost responsibility lies with your students, who deserve to be equally nurtured, protected, and supported.

I am calling on all school faculty, staff, and administrators to adopt a balanced view that ensures a welcoming and safe environment. I ask that in lieu of the recent biased statements, you also issue a statement affirming the pain and suffering of the Palestinians—especially the more than two million Palestinians in occupied Gaza, half of whom are children—and who have been called “human animals” by Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. These children, who are being indiscriminately bombed by Israel at this very moment, are also worthy of your outrage.

I look forward to your prompt response to my correspondence.

Sincerely,

[Your name and contact information]