

**Report of the Taskforce on
Academic and Institutional
International Links and
Related Matters (AIIIL)**

27 May 2025

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Executive Summary: Report of the Taskforce on Academic and Institutional International Links and Related Matters (AIIIL)

Trinity College Dublin – May 2025

Background

The AIIIL Taskforce was established in response to student protests in May 2024 over Trinity College Dublin's ("College") links to Israel, amidst international condemnation of Israel's military actions in Gaza following the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023. The protest demanded divestment, solidarity statements, reparations for Palestinian scholars and amnesty for protesting students. College leadership subsequently established the Taskforce to evaluate ethical, legal, and institutional aspects of its current and future institutional international partnerships.

Taskforce Purpose and Mandate

The Taskforce was mandated to:

- Develop principles for evaluating relationships with institutions and organisations in jurisdictions involved in breaches of international humanitarian law and/or serious human rights violations.
 - Assess the balance between academic freedom and institutional autonomy.
 - Consider whether Trinity should issue official statements on cultural, social, or political matters.
 - Recommend how to support viewpoint diversity and constructive disagreement.
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- **Principles, procedures and the establishment of HROWG.**
 - a. A set of draft principles have been developed, affirming human rights, international law, academic freedom, transparency, accountability, environmental sustainability, and freedom of conscience.
 - b. A set of draft procedures were developed to guide the Board and College's principal committees in the application of the aforementioned principles.

- c. The establishment of a new standing Human Rights Oversight Working Group (HROWG) is recommended to guide future decisions of College regarding its relationships with institutions and organisations in countries considered to be acting in breach of international humanitarian law and/or involved in serious human rights violations. Under the aforementioned procedures HROWG may designate any country so acting to be a “country of concern” and advise the Board as to how it should manage its institutional and commercial relationships in that country in light of that designation.
- **Israel as a “Country of Concern” and one in which there is a close association between Israeli universities and the Israeli military.**
 - d. Based on a wide range of evidence, including materials emanating from bodies such as the ICC, ICJ, UN, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, the Taskforce has determined that the evidence concerning the manner in which the Israeli military has pursued its activities in Gaza is sufficient to justify Israel being designated a “country of concern”.
 - e. The taskforce has also determined that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that Israeli universities are closely connected to the state of Israel and its military to the extent that those universities must be considered to be institutions which support the policies of that state and the manner in which it has pursued its military actions in Gaza.

3. **Taskforce Recommendations**

In light of its conclusion that Israel must be considered to be a “country of concern”, and in accordance with the procedures proposed, the Taskforce has reviewed College’s investments in Israeli companies as well as its institutional and commercial relationships with Israeli entities. Its relevant findings and conclusions appear below. The recommendations are intended to last until such time as Israel is no longer considered to be a “country of concern”.

- f. **Investments:** The Taskforce notes that College has already divested from Israeli companies on the UN Blacklist. Following a detailed consideration of the relevant

facts and for the reasons detailed in this report the Taskforce recommends that College fully divest from all companies headquartered in Israel.

- g. **Suppliers:** The Taskforce notes that College has no current supply contracts with Israeli companies. Insofar as the future is concerned, for the reasons detailed in this report the Taskforce recommends that College enter into no future supply contracts with Israeli firms.
- h. **Commercial Relationships:** The Taskforce accepts that College's existing Intellectual Property -related contracts are acceptable as they are not collaborative contracts. Insofar as the future is concerned, for the reasons detailed in this report the Taskforce recommends that College enter into no new commercial relationships with Israeli entities.
- i. **Academic Ties:** College has two current Erasmus+ exchange agreements with Israeli universities. Participation in these programmes has been on an inbound basis only since October 2023. For the reasons detailed in this report the Taskforce recommends that College enter into no further mobility agreements with Israeli universities.
- j. **Research Collaborations:** College is engaged in a number of EU-funded research consortia which include Israeli partners. There is no evidence to associate any of these with breaches of international humanitarian law or human rights violations. The Taskforce accepts that College cannot readily extract itself from these agreements. However, for the reasons detailed in this report the Taskforce recommends that College should not submit for approval or agree to participate in any new institutional research agreements involving Israeli participation. Furthermore, College should seek to align itself with like-minded universities and bodies in an effort to influence EU policy concerning Israel's participation in such collaborations.

- **Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy**

- k. It is the view of the Taskforce that Academic freedom must be balanced with the ethical responsibilities of individual academics. Decisions based on Institutional autonomy, to sever links with complicit universities are, in the opinion of the Taskforce, consistent with academic freedom when grounded in international legal norms.

- **Official Statements**

- I. It is the view of the Taskforce that College should not issue statements on cultural, social, or political matters unless such matters are directly connected to the institution or are coupled with a strategic action plan.

- **Viewpoint Diversity**

- m. It is the view of the Taskforce that College should continue to support regular, open forums for debate and support respectful dialogue across all viewpoints.

Unanimous Support

The Taskforce unanimously supports the findings and recommendations, emphasising Trinity's duty to uphold human rights and ethical governance in its institutional decisions. The Taskforce understands that, following consideration by the Board, the Report will be brought to the relevant College Committees for further consideration

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1. Background and Context

1.1 Background

On 7 October 2023, approximately 1,200 Israelis and other civilians were killed in a shocking terrorist attack by Hamas and other groups. A large number of Israelis were taken hostage. Israel's response to the attack has been massive and devastating. The military operation has to date claimed the lives of in excess of 52,000 Palestinians, the majority of those being women and children and more than 100,000 have been injured. Almost everyone living in Gaza prior to 7th October 2023 has had to flee their home and the humanitarian situation is now catastrophic with the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) thwarting the distribution of available humanitarian aid. The significant escalation of military attacks in recent weeks and the resulting increase in civilian deaths, injuries and starvation has been the subject matter of widespread condemnation by many countries across the world.

Based on interim rulings made by the International Court of Justice, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (“ICC”) and the UN security Council and other reliable organisations such as Amnesty International, it can be emphatically stated that since October 7th 2023, there is good evidence to support the conclusion Israel has been guilty of widespread serious breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights in Palestine.

Of particular note in the context of current events in Gaza is the fact that the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principle judicial organ of the UN, has stated that there is plausible evidence of gross and systemic violations of human rights in the Gaza conflict and that the Israeli military is directly involved in these violations. As a result, provisional measures were ordered by the ICJ on 26th January 2024 directing Israel to take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza strip. Later, on 28th March 2024 provisional measures were ordered requiring Israel to take all necessary and effective measures to ensure, without delay and in full cooperation with the UN, the unhindered provision at scale by all concerned of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance, including food, water, electricity, fuel, shelter, clothing, hygiene and sanitation requirements, as well as medical supplies and medical care to Palestinians throughout Gaza. These orders have been ignored, and the situation is deteriorating rapidly with an ever-escalating death toll. Further evidence supporting breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights by the Israeli military are detailed later in this report.

A full summary of measures taken by both the ICC and ICJ is available in Appendix 1.

1.2 Student protest and College response

Arising from the sustained and horrific nature of the actions of the Israeli military, the ongoing loss of life and targeting of civilians, medical personnel and aid workers in Gaza, students of Trinity College ("College") in May of 2004 engaged in a protest, which included the encampment of students onsite, in an effort to convince College to sever all its links with Isreal. College was called upon to:

- a. Boycott & Divest: Sever every single tie with Israeli institutions, organisations & investments, recognising the complicity with the genocidal war crimes of the Israeli military state which has occupied Palestine. Students maintained that there was no room for diplomacy with war criminals.
- b. Solidarity: Make an unequivocal statement of solidarity condemning the ongoing genocide, destruction of infrastructure, settler-colonialism, apartheid and occupation of Palestine, living up to TCD's Mission Statement to "engage with issues of global significance" & align with the UN SDGs and honour the commitment to the decolonization of Palestine.
- c. Reparations: Recognise Trinity College Dublin's participation with Zionist genocide in destroying all Universities in Gaza (as mentioned in Demand 1) and that TCD commits to make reparation by fully supporting 100 Palestinian scholars to undertake their studies at the College.
- d. Student Amnesty: The withdrawal of all sanctions, fines and academic penalties placed upon students for protesting, for Palestine or otherwise, up to and including the disruption of the usual economic activity of the College.

Further to negotiations with the students involved in the protest, College issued a formal Statement on 8th May 2024, as follows:

"Press Statement 8th May 2024

The encampment and blockade on Trinity College Dublin's campus will end today following successful talks between the university's senior management and the protestors.

The agreement was reached at a meeting this afternoon.

With the encampment and blockade of the Book of Kells removed, plans are being put in place to return to normal university business for staff, students, and members of the public.

Senior Dean Prof. Eoin O'Sullivan, who led the talks for Trinity, said: "We are glad that this agreement has been reached and are committed to further constructive engagement on the issues raised. We thank the students for their engagement."

Trinity will continue to engage with all students and staff who are impacted by these issues.

Trinity reaffirms its position on the following issues:

Gaza

We fully understand the driving force behind the encampment on our campus and we are in solidarity with the students in our horror at what is happening in Gaza. We abhor and condemn all violence and war, including the atrocities of October 7th, the taking of hostages and the continuing ferocious and disproportionate onslaught in Gaza. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the dehumanisation of its people is obscene. We support the International Court of Justice's position that 'Israel must take all measures within its power to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide in relation to members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip.'

A real and lasting solution that respects the human rights of everyone needs to be found.

Divestment

Trinity will complete a divestment from investments in Israeli companies that have activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and appear on the UN Blacklist in this regard. This process is expected to be completed by June.

Trinity will endeavour to divest from investments in other Israeli companies. This issue will be considered by a taskforce (more below) as a first step.

On review, Trinity can confirm that its supplier list currently contains just one Israeli company which will remain until March 2025 for contractual reasons.

Supporting Palestinian scholars

Since January 2024 we have been working with local and international stakeholders including We Are Not Numbers (WANN), a youth-led, Palestinian non-profit project in the Gaza Strip to facilitate access to Trinity for students from Gaza seeking to continue their education. To date, we have identified places for eight scholars - six postgraduates and two undergraduates.

All fees have been waived for these scholars and Trinity will use its Sanctuary Fund to provide accommodation. The places are in the School of Business, School of Law, School of Medicine, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies, School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and the International Foundation Programme.

We are committed to doing more and indicated this to the Palestinian authorities via the Ambassador earlier this year.

Taskforce

As outlined in our previous statement (dated 6 May 2024), Trinity is setting up a taskforce to address a number of issues. This taskforce will operate within the formal structures of the College as its recommendations will ultimately need to be made to relevant principal committees, which is in accordance with the academic governance of the university.

The student and staff voice will be essential to inform the terms of reference of the taskforce.

The taskforce process will also review Trinity's student exchanges with Israel. Recommendations from the taskforce will be brought to the relevant principal committees of the university.

This taskforce will have an external chair and will include student and staff representatives.

Further measures will include:

- *The Associate Vice Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will work with students to tackle concerns that have been expressed regarding all forms of racism.*
- *The Chair of the Trinity Legacies Review Working Group has agreed to receive a late submission in relation to renaming The X Library.*
- *Trinity welcomes the resolution of this matter.*
- *Trinity welcomes the engagement with students and looks forward to resuming the normal activities of the College.”¹*

¹ Trinity College Dublin, 'Student encampment and blockade at Trinity to end' (08 May 2024)

https://www.tcd.ie/news_events/articles/2024/student-encampment-and-blockade-at-trinity-to-end/

Accessed 13 May 2025.

2. Establishment of the Taskforce and its membership

In accordance with the decisions of the University Board² and Council,³ the AILL Taskforce was established with the following membership. All nominees of College Officers were approved by the Chair and granted permanent membership for the lifetime of the Taskforce.

Chair: *Mary Irvine* (former President of the High Court)

Secretariat: The Senior Dean (in attendance)

The Secretary to the College /Director of Governance (or their nominee) (in attendance)

Ordinary Members (26)

(3) TCD Students Union (TCDSU):

3 members to be nominated by the President of the TCDSU

Jenny Maguire

Patrick Keegan

Dr David Landy

(2) Central Societies Committee (CSC):

2 members to be nominated by the Chair of the (CSC)

Faith Olopade

Jack Palmer

(4) Group of Unions (IFUT, SIPTU, UNITE, Crafts Unions):

Crafts Union: Philip Stuart & Graham Fitzpatrick (alternate)

IFUT: Dr John Walsh & Conor O'Kelly (alternate)

SIPTU: Jack Ferguson & Sarah Guerin (alternate)

UNITE: Cieran Perry & Maurice Sweeney (alternate)

(1) The Vice-Provost & Chief Academic Officer (or their nominee)

² Trinity College Dublin University Board Minutes (09.10.2024) BD/24-25/006.

³ Trinity College Dublin University Council Minutes (16.10.2024) CL/24-25/006.

Professor Martine Smith (nominee)

(1) The Chief Operating Officer (or their nominee)

Breda Walls (nominee)

(1) The Vice-President for Global Engagement (or their nominee)

Sinead Corcoran (nominee) / Dr Emma Stokes

(1) The Chair of the Fellows (or their nominee)

Professor Cliona O'Farrelly

(1) The Director of Human Resources (or their nominee)

Mary Leahy

(1) The Librarian and College Archivist (or their nominee)

Helen Shenton

(1) The Dean of Research (or their nominee)

Professor Sinéad Ryan

(1) Associate Vice-Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (or their nominee)

Professor Lorraine Leeson

(1) The Dean of Faculty of AHSS (or their nominee)

Professor Andrew Loxley (nominee)

(1) The Dean of Faculty of HS (or their nominee)

Professor Catherine Comiskey (nominee)

(1) The Dean of Faculty of STEM (or their nominee)

Professor Karen Wiltshire (nominee)

(1) The Chief Innovation & Enterprise Officer (or their nominee)

Dr Michelle Olmstead

(1) The Chief Financial Officer (or their nominee)

Louise Ryan

(1) The Chief Advancement Officer (or their nominee)

David O'Shea (nominee)

(3) Three External / Internal Members to be nominated by the Chair of the College Board. (Only two were ultimately nominated.)

David Donoghue

Sunniva McDonagh, Senior Counsel

3. Terms of Reference and the Taskforce’s response thereto

3.1 Terms of Reference

From the date of its establishment and throughout the currency of its work the Taskforce has been mindful of the Terms of Reference set for its consideration by the Board of the College.

The Terms of Reference, as amended,⁴ required the Taskforce to:

- address the issues raised in the resolution statement (8th May 2024) arising from the encampment regarding the conflict in Palestine by developing a set of specific principles to inform current and future links and exchanges between Trinity College Dublin and higher education institutions, commercial enterprises and/or other relevant bodies, in jurisdictions involved in breaches of International Humanitarian law and/or serious human rights violations;
- consider the interplay of individual academic freedom and institutional autonomy of Trinity College Dublin;
- consider if Trinity College Dublin should issue official, institutional declarations on matters of social, cultural and political significance; and
- consider how to better support constructive disagreement and viewpoint diversity in Trinity college.

3.2 Principles requested by the Board

It is to be inferred from the truly shocking circumstances in which it was established that the Taskforce would carry out its work and provide the set of principles requested by the Board as a matter of some urgency. The Statement of the College of 8th May 2024 conveyed that sense of urgency in referencing the horror of the “continuing ferocious and disproportionate onslaught” on

⁴ The original words “ethical principles” have been removed and replaced with “specific principles” as the latter better describes requirements of Board and the outputs prepared by the Taskforce.

Reference to “armed conflict” has been removed as International Humanitarian Law considerations only arise in this context, thereby rendering the term redundant.

The words “serious human rights violations” have been added to encompass human rights violations which do not arise in the context of armed conflict.

the citizens of Gaza. The worsening of conditions for those living in Gaza since 8th May 2024 as a result of the continued direct targeting of civilians, the indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas and the blocking of humanitarian aid, have been to the forefront of the Taskforce's mind in its efforts to produce this report in as tight a time frame as possible.

It is also clear from the Terms of Reference that the Board was hopeful that the principles requested would be produced in relatively short order given that the same were sought to assist the Board in deciding how it should deal with its current links to institutes of higher education, commercial enterprises or other entities connected with Israel. The principles proposed by the Taskforce are set out at Para 7.1 of this report.

3.3 Procedures developed by the Taskforce

While the Board did not specifically request the Taskforce to prepare a set of procedures to accompany the principles referred to in the first of the terms of reference, in order to ensure consistency in such decisions as the Board might make in the future in relation to other countries considered to be in breach of international humanitarian law or guilty of serious human rights violations, the Taskforce has prepared a procedure that it considers should be followed by the Board in such circumstances. The procedure is set out at para 7.2 of this report.

3.4 Establishment of Human Rights Oversight Working Group (HROWG)

Because College is likely in the coming years to find itself with connections, academic and otherwise, to countries which may be involved in violations of international humanitarian law and/or guilty of serious human rights violations, the Taskforce is satisfied that a new body will need to be established in order to provide advice to the Board in such circumstances. Likewise, it considers that a mechanism needs to be established to ensure that College's current and future relationships with academic institutions, commercial enterprises and other entities, as well as its involvement in joint or multilateral collaborations are ethical. For these reasons the Taskforce has recommended the establishment of a Human Rights Oversight Working Group (HROWG) to carry out the aforementioned roles. The role proposed for the HROWG is set out in more detail at clause 4 of the said procedures.

3.5 Application of the Principles and Procedures by Taskforce

In order to make its recommendations to the Board, the Taskforce has considered all of the evidence relevant to the issues connected to the first of the terms of reference against the backdrop of the principles and procedures now proposed. In so doing the Taskforce has illustrated to the Board how, it might deal with its links to institutes of higher education or other enterprises located in a “country of concern”. (For the definition of “country of concern” see para 4.1 of the proposed procedures).

3.6 The making of recommendations by the Taskforce.

Whilst the Terms of Reference do not specifically request the Taskforce to provide recommendations to the Board concerning the issues referred to it for its consideration, it seems implicit from the Press Statement of 8th May 2024, which gave an assurance that the “recommendations of the Taskforce” would be “brought to the relevant principal committees of the university”, that the Board expected the Taskforce to make recommendations in its report. Indeed, regardless of that statement, the Taskforce believes it would be contrary to the spirit of the Terms of Reference and an abrogation of its duties to fail to make such recommendations given that (i) a year has now elapsed since the statement of 8th March 2024 (ii) the evidence of breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights law in Gaza continues to grow (iii) the Board is likely to want to act with urgency, if only to make interim decisions that might hold until the HROWG is in a position to make more fully developed recommendations to the Board and (iv) the Taskforce has considered the materials that would likely be relied upon by HROWG if advising the Board in the present circumstances.

The Taskforce acknowledges that it is entirely a matter for the Board whether the principles and procedures now proposed or the recommendations made are accepted.

4. Approach of the Taskforce

4.1 Consultation with the College Community

Following a decision of the Taskforce at its first meeting (22.11.2024), the Secretariat of the Taskforce issued a call for submissions from the College community (02.12.2024) on the following issues:

- Which ethical principles should inform current and future links and exchanges between Trinity College Dublin and higher education institutions, commercial enterprises, and/or other relevant bodies in jurisdictions involved in armed conflict and/or where there are violations of international law?
- How do we balance individual academic freedom and institutional autonomy in Trinity College Dublin?
- Should Trinity issue official, institutional declarations on matters of social, cultural and political significance?
- How can we support constructive disagreement and viewpoint diversity in Trinity College Dublin?

By the closing date (extended from 10.01.2024 to 24.01.2024), a total of 77 submissions were received from across the College community. Of these, 68 represent submissions from individual community members primarily in their personal capacity and 9 represent group submissions from a variety of organisations and Schools within College. A summary of these submissions appears in Appendix 2.

4.2 Materials relied upon

The Taskforce explored a wide range of materials emanating from bodies such as ICC, ICJ, UN, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, as well as articles authored by a number of legal scholars, in order to allow it reach what it considers to be fair conclusions regarding the matters upon which its advice was sought. It concentrated its enquiries on the events of 7th October 2023, the manner of Israel's response to those shocking events and the relationship between the Israeli military and Israeli universities.

4.3 Expert Presentations to the Taskforce

The Taskforce was pleased to have had the assistance of a number of experts who made extremely helpful presentations in relation the issues at hand.

Dr John Walsh, Ussher Assistant Professor in Higher Education at Trinity College Dublin, presented to the Taskforce on the Trinity Policy on Academic Freedom. He gave historical context to the idea of Academic Freedom and briefly outlined the relevant legislative frameworks and principals outlined in the College policy. Dr Walsh further discussed the implications of Academic Freedom as interpreted in universities both nationally and internationally and outlined potential threats with reference to recent policy changes in other countries.

Prof Linda Hogan, Professor of Ecumenics at Trinity College Dublin identified the ethical principles she believed should guide the College's international relationships (i.e. human rights; justice; solidarity; respect for cultural diversity; honesty, transparency, and accountability; academic freedom; dialogue, engagement and non-violence; inclusion, equality and non-discrimination; non-exploitation; environmental sustainability and the interests of future generations). She argued these principles should be applied with consistency, equity and robustness on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the purpose of any collaboration and the degree to which a potential partner facilitates wrongdoing.

Dr Catherine Conlon, Head of School at the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Trinity College Dublin, spoke to the Taskforce on behalf of the School of Social Work & Social Policy, which had engaged with its staff and students to provide a group submission from the School from the position of Trinity being a public university with the remit of seeking and disseminating knowledge. It was the opinion of the School that an institution established on a basis of profit or other such purposes is different from a university established for the pursuit of scholarly knowledge, and that the latter must be a place where people should be free to exercise communication, notwithstanding respect for civil disobedience.

Omar Barghouti, co-founder of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel and the Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions Movement, spoke with the Taskforce on the history of the Israeli Palestinian Conflict, and why institutions are being called upon to end pre-existing relationships with universities and other bodies that are found to be implicated in breaches of international law. Building on discussions which occurred during previous presentations, Mr Barghouti emphasised that Academic Freedom must be viewed as being inter-related with other rights and not above them, noting that privileging Academic Freedom risks diminishing other rights.

4.4 Meetings of the Taskforce and its Sub-Committees

Because of the broad canvass of the terms of reference and the urgency of providing a report to the Board, a number of sub committees were established. These met on numerous occasions for the purposes of providing specific advices to the Taskforce. The Taskforce itself met together (most attending in person but with some online in person or online) on 14 occasions in order to address the issues in the terms of reference. The dates of these meetings are provided in Appendix 3.

4.5 Legal and Ethical principles

In carrying out its work the Taskforce has, where relevant, taken into account the function of universities as provided for by Legislation;⁵ and the mission of College and principles underpinning its Governance, particularly insofar as they concern academic freedom, adherence to ethical standards and the pursuit of the highest standards of education and research.

4.6 Actions taken by other universities

The Taskforce also benefited from considering the reports (or summaries thereof where so provided) of many other universities which were caused to consider their relationships with institutes of Higher Education in the State of Israel or territory in respect of which it is unlawful occupation and their involvement in joint or multilateral collaborations involving Israeli institutions or commercial enterprises. A summary of the actions taken by other universities is set out in Appendix 4.

⁵ Universities Act 1997, s13 and s14.

5. Academic freedom and institutional autonomy

The second of the terms of reference specifically asks the Taskforce to “consider the interplay of individual academic freedom and institutional autonomy of Trinity College Dublin” and the Taskforce hopes that the discussion in the section which follows below fulfils that requirement. The Taskforce also hopes that this short discourse, provided as it is at this stage of the report, will assist the reader in better understanding these two intertwined concepts which find their way into the Taskforce’s recommendations. This section is designed to consider principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, in the light of Trinity’s policy on academic freedom and similar policies adopted by the European Universities Association and other Irish universities.

Academic freedom is designed to protect academics and university institutions from dictation by state or other authorities in relation to freedom of expression, teaching, and research. The Trinity College policy positions academic freedom as ‘a defining characteristic of the university’, which encompasses ‘...the freedom to conduct research, teach, speak and publish, subject to the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, without interference or penalty, no matter where the search for truth and understanding may lead’ (TCD [Policy on Academic Freedom](#)).

In the Irish higher education context, academic freedom is exercised within a supportive legal framework. The Universities Act, 1997 states explicitly that the university shall “... have the right and responsibility to preserve the traditional principles of academic freedom in the conduct of its internal affairs”. In Trinity, the responsibility of the university to guarantee to “respect, defend, and vindicate the traditional principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression...” is set out in the Statutes (restated 2010), and reflected in the University’s [Policy on Academic Freedom](#), recognising that “such freedoms are fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge and the advancement of truth” and extend across all staff. Academic freedom and freedom of expression are distinct but interrelated concepts which are both supported by the Statutes.

Academic freedom and university autonomy are inextricably intertwined, the latter an essential safeguard for the former, as the EUA acknowledges (2010): ‘Academic freedom is closely linked to the autonomy of academic institutions. Only in an autonomous and secure environment can students, teachers and researchers carry out their academic work free from undue external influence or restriction’. It would be counter-productive and incompatible with both Trinity and EUA policies to separate academic freedom and institutional autonomy or attempt to privilege one over the other. It logically follows that academic freedom and university autonomy must both be given due weight in making any decision.

Academic freedom is a complex and multifaceted concept (EUA, 2010), implying both rights and responsibilities. The right to academic freedom implies a responsibility to act ethically and respect the rights of others with whom individual academics and the university may be engaged (EUA, 2010, [2019](#)). The responsibility set out by the EUA (2010) to frame academic freedom within 'rigorous scientific, professional, ethical and quality standards' extends beyond the individual to institutional relationships and partnerships. The EUA sets out explicitly that 'This includes ethical conduct, respect for the rights of others and awareness of the impact of research on humans and their environment, as well as employment obligations.' Several European universities have ended institutional links with Israeli institutions of higher education based on concerns relating to international law, human rights and guidance by the international judicial authorities (see decision by the University of Ghent). A decision to terminate such relationships is consistent with responsible exercise of academic freedom. Moreover, academic freedom envisages protection for individuals and groups (and implicitly the university itself) taking controversial or unpopular positions, where these are undertaken in pursuit of truth and reflect rigorous ethical and professional standards.

An important feature of the TCD policy is a negative principle of restraint, which requires that 'College will not actively disadvantage any particular area or type of research' (subject to law and good academic practice). It would clearly be injurious to academic freedom for the Board to instruct an individual academic on any individual contacts, informal discussions or meetings they may have. Yet equally no individual can reasonably expect the College to commit to a formal institutional relationship which is contrary to its values or the exercise of academic freedom framed by law and by rigorous ethical and professional standards. Any international or national research programme involving research funding, actions or student exchange (e.g., Horizon 2020, Tempus, Erasmus+) constitutes an institutional relationship, regardless of the scale of the programme. In this context academic freedom must be exercised in line with ethical and professional standards, as well as national and international law.

On the basis outlined above, it is reasonable to conclude that a policy decision to avoid academic connections with universities providing support for the military in states involved in breaches of international humanitarian law or systematic human rights violations would not only be consistent with academic freedom but would also be a responsible and reasonable exercise of academic freedom.

6. Further consideration of factual and legal circumstances.

6.1 General

The Taskforce has worked diligently to obtain as much authoritative and independent evidence as possible concerning the facts material to its deliberations and in particular those relevant to the drafting of the principles and procedures now proposed and the making of its recommendations.

At the outset of this report the Taskforce highlighted some of the actions of the Israeli military since the 7th October 2023 which are of enormous concern. In addition to those mentioned, the Taskforce believes that there is good evidence to suggest that Israel, in the manner in which it is seeking to engage with Hamas, is acting in breach of international humanitarian law and in particular the provisions of the Geneva Convention.

The Taskforce has found no evidence to suggest that in pursuing its attacks against Hamas in Gaza the Israeli military is seeking to (i) distinguish between civilians and Hamas (ii) minimise incidental civilian losses (iii) avoid pursuing its objectives in densely populated areas (iv) avoid damaging or attacking medical facilities or (v) ensure that food and medical supplies can reach the civilian population. In addition to these apparent breaches of international humanitarian law, there is good prima facie evidence to suggest that the entire population of Gaza is being punished for the acts of Hamas in the apparent cutting off of water, electricity and food.

The Taskforce is aware that these actions on the part of the Israeli military are taking place within a broader historical and political context. And the Taskforce is well versed in the arguments advanced by the Israeli State in support of its actions in Palestine over several decades. Nonetheless, the Israeli State has been the subject of sustained scrutiny by international human rights organisations concerning its treatment of Palestinians for many years. This scrutiny has led the ICJ to issue an advisory opinion stating that Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories is unlawful.⁶ This opinion was followed by a United Nations General Assembly resolution⁷ in September 2024 calling for an end to Israel's unlawful presence in the Palestinian territories.

⁶ International Court of Justice. 2024. "Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem"

⁷ [UN General Assembly demands Israel end 'unlawful presence' in Occupied Palestinian Territory | The United Nations Office at Geneva](#)

6.2 Connection between the State of Israel and Israeli Universities.

The Taskforce is satisfied from the materials it has considered that there is sufficient evidence to justify it concluding that Israeli universities play a significant and ongoing role in supporting the policies of the Israeli State in relation to its actions in Palestine. This includes their involvement in the development of military technologies, their contributions to academic and legal frameworks that support the State's territorial policies, and their participation in programmes that align with national security objectives.

Recent studies by a number of European universities have highlighted the close relationships between Israeli universities and the country's military and security sectors. One such study was that carried out by Tilburg University which concluded that Israeli universities are intertwined with government, military intelligence, and military industries across domains of education, research and commercial relationships.

Based on its findings, the Advisory Committee of Tilburg University concluded that there was "a high risk" that its various partner institutions in Israel were involved in the current war and human rights violations in Gaza, in part "because of the large and historically grown intertwining of Israeli universities with the government, military intelligence and military industries in Israel". For further detail on the evidence guiding the conclusions reached by the Advisory Committee, the reader is referred particularly to pages 14-18 of the Tilburg report and the summary contained in Appendix 5.

The conclusions reached by Tilburg's Advisory Committee align with those reached by the Taskforce from its consideration of the materials it has reviewed. It is satisfied that Israeli universities contribute to the development of military technology, provide training in cooperation with the Israeli military and defence industries, and support national security objectives through academic research and other programmes. The Taskforce also notes growing concerns about increased restrictions on academic freedom and expression with universities cooperating with the State in repressing dissenting views among staff and students, especially in the wake of October 7th.⁸

⁸ Adalah, 'Repression of Palestinian Students in Israeli Universities and Colleges' (2024).

<<https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/11116>> Accessed 27 May 2025.

7. Draft Principles and Procedures

As a result of its investigations, research and deliberations the Taskforce recommends that the following principles and procedures should inform current and future links and exchanges between Trinity College Dublin and higher education institutions, commercial enterprises and/or other relevant bodies, in jurisdictions involved in breaches of International Humanitarian law and/or serious human rights violations.

7.1 Draft Principles

College (Board, Council or Principal Committees of Board and Council), will:

1. act in a manner that is honest, responsible, consistent and transparent;
2. uphold human rights, international law and democratic values, including judgments of the ICC and ICJ;
3. protect and promote academic freedom in line with College policy, national law and international human rights law;
4. protect and promote freedom of expression and freedom of conscience for the College community as a whole;
5. uphold the legitimacy of cultural and viewpoint diversity in the College community in the context of College policy, national law, international human rights law, and democratic values;
6. have regard to the benefits of dialogue with individuals, particularly in higher education institutions in jurisdictions affected by conflict and / or human rights violations;
7. be accountable in respect of its decisions relating to its international institutional academic and business partnerships, investments and other relationships in the context of international human rights law;
8. consider in respect of the creation or maintenance of international partnerships, investments and relationships:
 - i. whom the relationship in question may benefit.
 - ii. any risks and / or adverse implications.
 - iii. whether it is in accordance with national and international human rights law and will respect human rights and dignity, encompassing direct and indirect impacts.
 - iv. whether it will respect climate and environmental sustainability and the interests of future generations; and
9. abide by the commitments it has entered into in relation to creating an inclusive environment, offering education opportunities and fostering a sense of belonging for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland.

7.2 Draft Procedures

1. Based on the foregoing principles, a standing Human Rights Oversight Working Group (HROWG) will be established by College Board. Its membership will consist of a Chair (who will be a member of the College community), staff and student representatives from the College community and some external representatives. It will seek relevant expertise as required.
2. The Group will report regularly to the Board. It will operate according to terms of reference which it will prepare on the basis of guidance provided in this report and subject to any reasonable direction from the Board.
3. It will conduct its work at all times in accordance with the principles set out above.
4. The role of the Group will be to:
 - i. in the first instance identify countries which are to be regarded as ‘countries of concern’ relying on evidence based assessments of each, either at the request of the Board or on its own initiative and to make recommendations to the Board for appropriate action in relation to a country of concern, including any territories in respect of which that State is in illegal occupation. A country of concern is one in respect of which it is reasonable to conclude, on the available evidence, is in breach of international humanitarian law or in serious violation of human rights as found by the United Nations, the International Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court.
 - ii. examine the ethical and where appropriate legal implications of College’s current or potential relationships with institutions or entities in a country of concern.
 - iii. examine the ethical and, where appropriate, legal implications of continued participation in current academic projects or new academic collaborations which involve institutions of that State.
 - iv. consider the ethical and, where appropriate, legal implications of College’s investments in, or commercial relationships with, individual entities in a country of concern (or in any territories in respect of which the latter is in illegal occupation) and the implications of engaging with providers of goods and services from that State.

- v. consider, either of its own motion or at the request of the Board, individual proposals for the creation or renewal of a College partnership or other relationship with an institution in a country of concern.
 - vi. convey the results of its examinations, considerations and conclusions to the Board and all relevant procurement bodies.
5. The Group will keep under review on an ongoing basis all developments relevant to College's international academic, institutional and commercial partnerships and other relationships in a country of concern.
 6. In cases of multilateral consortia involving partners from a country of concern, the Group will examine the involvement of College in any such consortium and make recommendations to the Board. This is of particular relevance in the context of the European Union Research and Innovation funding programmes.
 7. The Board may from time to time propose issues for consideration by the Group and seek its recommendations. It may designate a small number of priority issues from the outset.
 8. The Group will communicate the results of its work clearly and promptly to all relevant parties, College Offices and Council and Board.
 9. In the implementation of Board decisions, the right to freedom of conscience will be fully respected. This right will be communicated clearly to the College community.
 10. In the light of the recommendations made to it by the Group, the Board may decide to suspend or terminate existing projects, investments, partnerships or other relationships with institutional partners in a country of concern. It may also decide to refrain indefinitely from authorising new or continuing institutional cooperation or contractual relationships with partners.
 11. If the Board decides to alter or refuses a request to alter in any way College's relationship with an institutional partner or College's financial or other contractual relationships with a third party in a designated country of concern, it shall publish the details of any such decision and the reasons for same.
 12. The designation of a state as a country of concern shall be kept under review by the Board.

7.3 Freedom of conscience.

A sub-committee was established by the Taskforce to consider the freedom of conscience implications of the implementation of decisions of the Board under the proposed principles and procedures. Because of the complexity of the issue, the sub-committee concluded that a different forum to that of the Taskforce would have to be found to allow for further detailed exploration of the issue and the development of guidance on the matter following which these procedures might be amended appropriately.

8. First of the terms of reference: College's connections to Israel

The Taskforce has applied the procedures set out in section 7 of this report to the following 5 types of relationships in order to make recommendations to the Board:

- (i). College's Investments portfolio - companies or institutions implicated in human rights violations in Israel or the OPT and other Israeli companies not so implicated.
- (ii). College's relationships with Israeli suppliers.
- (iii). College's commercial relationships.
- (iv). College's links to institutes of Higher Education in Israel.
- (v). College's collaborative funded research projects with institutions or entities involving Israel such as the European Union's Horizon and Erasmus programmes.

8.1 Investments

Factual Background

As of the 7th of October 2023, College had a portfolio of investments which included a number of Israeli companies operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT).

In its Press Statement of the 8th of May 2024, College gave an undertaking to "complete a divestment from Israeli Companies that have activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and appear on the UN Blacklist in this regard". The Statement went on to report that "Trinity will endeavour to divest from investments in other Israeli companies. This issue will be considered by a Taskforce as a first step."

The background to the creation of the UN blacklist was a resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in March 2016 that called for the creation of a database of businesses involved in activities related to Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. The resolution was motivated by the belief that these settlements were illegal under international law and that businesses operating in these areas might be contributing to human rights abuses against the Palestinian population.

In May 2024, College's Financial Services Division (FSD) engaged with Irish Life Investment Managers (ILIM), who are the investment managers of the Trinity Endowment Fund (TEF) equity portfolios, and

they identified 4 stockholdings of Israeli companies operating in the OPT which appeared on the UN Blacklist. TEF is the anchor investor in the bespoke equity funds which were set-up in accordance with TEF's investment criteria (ex-fossil fuel, ex-tobacco, ex-weapons, positive weighting towards climate focused companies). In May 2024, ILIM notified the other investors in the equity funds of Trinity's divestment instruction and that the divestment would be completed at the next portfolio rebalance date. Rebalancing takes place at six monthly intervals.

FSD also instructed ILIM to ensure that holdings in all Israeli companies that appear on the UN Blacklist with operations in the OPT would be excluded from any future TEF equity portfolio restructuring/reallocation. ILIM later confirmed to FSD that the 4 stockholdings of Israeli companies that had appeared on the UN Blacklist had been removed from the TEF equity portfolio as of 30 June 2024.

College's Sustainable Investment Policy was also updated to reflect College's decision to divest from investment in Israeli companies with operations in the OPT and which appear on the UN Blacklist. The updated Sustainable Investment Policy was approved by Investment Committee in September 2024 and subsequently by Finance Committee and the Board.

Currently, the TEF has no investments in Israeli companies which appear on the UN Blacklist (last updated on a 30 June 2023) and are active in the OPT.

Consideration and Conclusion

Insofar as College has divested itself of all of its investments in companies on the UN Blacklist operating in the OPT, the Taskforce would observe that, viewed through the prism of the principles and procedures now recommended to the Board, the actions of College would appear to have been entirely appropriate. Relevant to the principles is the fact that the settlements concerned are considered contrary to international law and the maintenance by College of its investments in companies associated with businesses in the occupied territories had potential adverse implications for the human rights and dignity of Palestinians living there.

Application of principles and procedures to College's current investments in companies not on the UN blacklist and not connected to the OPT but headquartered in Israel.

Factual background

TEF's equity fund portfolio currently holds stocks in 9 companies which are headquartered in Israel but which do not appear on the UN blacklist and are not active in the OPT. These stocks represent 0.052% of the equity fund portfolio with a total approximate value of €120k at 31 March 2025 (most recently available quarterly data). The names of these companies and approximate stock values are as set out below. Further brief details concerning these 9 companies (sourced from the online Financial Times database) concerning their respective enterprises are set out in Appendix 6.

Camtek Ltd €3,335.

CyberArk Software Ltd €15,332

Energix Renewable Energies

Global-E Online Ltd €264

Monday.Com Ltd €19,359

NICE Ltd €21,370

Nova Ltd €9,124

Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd €25,924

Wix.com Ltd €19,360

Consideration

The Taskforce has considered College's current investments in companies headquartered in Israel but which do not appear on the UN blacklist and are not active in the OPT against the backdrop of the principles and procedures now proposed. Having done so, it is satisfied that in light of the manner of Israel's response to the events of 7th October 2023, Israel should be identified as a "country of concern" for the purposes of the proposed procedures. On that basis the Taskforce proceeded to consider whether the maintenance by College of its investments in companies headquartered in Israel, is consistent with the proposed principles which require College to uphold human rights, international law and democratic values (including judgments of the ICC and ICJ) and ensure that its investments do not adversely affect, either directly or indirectly, the dignity and human rights of others.

For the purposes of addressing this question, the Taskforce first obtained information available in the public domain in relation to each of the 9 companies mentioned. It wanted to investigate if there was evidence to link any of these companies directly to Israel's military operations in Gaza through the provision of knowledge, services, equipment or other types of support. A positive conclusion in

any instance would have led the Taskforce to recommend that the continued investment in the stock of that company would offend the principles proposed.

While researches uncovered evidence to suggest that a small number of these companies could be said to have provided direct support of some kind to the State of Israel potentially relevant to its operations in Gaza, the Taskforce has decided not to make any recommendation to the Board based on this evidence. While a case-by-case approach to a consideration of the appropriateness of any investment on the part of College would normally be warranted, the same is not necessary in this instance. This is because, as a general principle, the Taskforce believes that the Board should consider it ethically and ideologically objectionable for College to invest in any company that contributes to the finances of a country of concern by paying taxes to that state. It is those taxes that ultimately make possible that State's pursuit of the policies which offend international humanitarian and human rights law. In so saying the Taskforce is mindful of the extent of the egregious behaviour that must exist before a state can be so categorised and of the possibility that there may be the exceptional case in which the existence of other factors might justify a departure from that principle. Having regard to the procedures proposed, the Taskforce has concluded that at this time it would be in breach of the proposed principles for College to invest in any company headquartered in Israel given that:

- (i) all are paying taxes to the State of Israel thereby increasing the funds available to allow it pursue its war in Gaza in a manner considered to be in breach of international humanitarian law and in violation of the human rights of Palestinian citizens. These companies thereby indirectly contribute to the ongoing war;
- (ii) there are no legal impediments that would prohibit or curtail the ability of College to divest itself of its investments in these companies;
- (iii) while divestment may not be entirely straightforward in that there are other investors in the fund whose consent may be required to change the investment parameters, and the alteration can only be made on the next rebalancing date, those difficulties do not trump the legal and ethical reasons justifying divestment.

Recommendation of Taskforce

1. College should take all steps necessary to divest from any investments in companies headquartered in Israel.

2. College should notify its fund managers to alter investment parameters to exclude all Israeli companies, not only those on the UN blacklist and which are active in the OPT, but also those headquartered in Israel.

8.2 Supplier relationships

Factual Background

College's Financial Services Division ("FSD") has confirmed for the Taskforce that College has currently no supply contracts with any companies headquartered in Israel. In May 2024, the University had a contract in place with the Israeli supplier Enspire Science. This contract expired on 31/03/2025 and was not renewed. The last payment to the supplier was on 20/03/2025. The supplier was classified as 'inactive' on the Oracle financial system on 01/04/2025 and does not appear on any supplier list.

Consideration

Notwithstanding the fact that College has currently no supply contracts with companies headquartered in Israel, the Taskforce considered it important to consider the implications of the proposed principles and procedures for any such future contracts.

Having considered the information furnished by FSD regarding the manner in which it secures suppliers and the ethical obligations identified in the proposed principles, the Taskforce is satisfied that, subject to National and European Union law, College should not source supplies from companies headquartered in Israel while Israel remains a country of concern.

As College is obliged, under the proposed principles, to uphold human rights and respect international humanitarian law, it would be unethical in such circumstances for College to continue a commercial relationship that would have the effect of increasing the funds available to Israel to pursue a war that is being conducted in breach of peremptory norms.

In general, the Taskforce is of the view that College's supply contracts should be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure that they comply with the principles now proposed as the imposition of blanket prohibitions risks unintended and/or unjust consequences. However, the Taskforce recognises that in the case of supply agreements with companies headquartered in Israel, it is hard to see how any such agreement could be considered compliant with the proposed principles. It is on

this basis that the Taskforce makes its recommendation to the Board in respect of possible future supply contracts with companies headquartered in Israel.

Recommendation of Taskforce

1. Subject only to National and European Union law, while Israel is considered to be a country of concern, College should not enter into supply agreements with any companies headquartered in Israel.
2. College should review its procurement policy to ensure that supply contracts accord with the principles and procedures now proposed.

8.3 Commercial Relationships

Factual Background

Further to a request made by the Taskforce, the Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer reviewed all existing commercial relationships between College and Israeli commercial entities. The results of that review have identified the existence of three commercial relationships.

Consideration

Having considered the nature of the three commercial relationships identified, the Taskforce is satisfied that none of these can be described as a collaborative agreement between College and an Israeli entity. The three agreements exist only for the purposes of protecting College's Intellectual Property rights. That being so, the Taskforce is satisfied that the continuance of these agreements creates no moral or legal dilemma for College and that they do not offend the principles now proposed by the Taskforce.

Notwithstanding the fact that no commercial relationships currently exist between College and Israeli commercial entities, the Taskforce considers that it should nonetheless make recommendations to the Board concerning the possibility of College entering into such relationships at a future time.

For the reasons already expressed in relation to College's investments and supply contracts,

and in particular in order for College to remain true to the principles now proposed, the Taskforce recommends that until such time as HROWG reports the Board should not enter into any new commercial relationships with Israeli entities.

Recommendation of the Taskforce

1. Subject only to National and European Union law, while Israel is considered to be a country of concern College should not enter into any new commercial relationships with Israeli entities.
2. College should review its policy in relation to commercial relationships to ensure that it is in compliance with the principles and procedures now proposed.

8.4 Links to Institutions of Higher Education

In response to a request from the Taskforce for information concerning institutional educational relationships between College and Institutes of Higher Education in Israel, the Office of the Vice President for Global Engagement has advised that, as of 9th April 2025, College has only two formal agreements with universities in Israel. The first of these expires in July 2025 and the later in July 2026. The institutions concerned are the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI) and Bar Ilan University (BIU).

The agreements concerned both arise as a result of College's request for funds from what is commonly known in academic circles as the Erasmus+ programme. This is an EU programme which provides funding, inter alia, to support education, training, youth projects and sport in Europe. In the case of the two agreements under consideration, the underlying funding was provided via the Erasmus+ programme to support student and staff mobility between College and other universities in Europe and also mobility between students and staff in College and the Israeli universities earlier mentioned. Notably, regardless of circumstances as they exist in Palestine, the European Commission has not excluded Israel from involvement in Erasmus+ projects.

The rationale set out in the Erasmus+ grant applications which led to the agreements concerned was that mobility between students and faculty members in NMES and HUJI had in the past provided key opportunities for research coordination and cross-regional exchange. It was anticipated that further funding would allow for the expansion of existing academic collaborations between the institutions and would lead to increased outputs in the form of additional teaching and research collaborations in disciplines in which expertise is held in both institutions and across Arts & Humanities. Due to

current circumstances in Israel, mobility under the agreements under consideration has been inbound only since October 2023.

Consideration

The Taskforce accepts what it has been told by the Office of the Vice President for Global Engagement regarding the value it has placed on College's institutional relationships with HUJI and BIU over many years. It accepts that College and the HUJI are recognised locally and internationally as the lead research universities of their respective countries and that in the area of academic staff mobility, previous projects have contributed to both curriculum development, teaching, learning and research. It has taken account of the fact that Israeli scholars in a wide range of areas have visited TCD and contributed to programmes through lectures, seminars and discussions on disciplinary developments and that due to the academic flow between College and HUJI Modern Hebrew has now been introduced as an undergraduate language offering and that a plan is in place to develop Israel Studies as part of Middle Eastern Studies. All of these facts have been considered by the Taskforce in coming to its conclusions.

Regrettably the Taskforce is of the opinion that the agreements between College and HUJI and BIU have to be viewed against the backdrop of the connections known to exist between Israeli Universities and the Israeli military. As stated earlier in this report, the Taskforce takes the view that the materials considered provides a good evidential basis from which to conclude that Israeli Universities should be considered to be closely connected to the State of Israel and in that sense must be treated as entities which indirectly support the policies of the Israeli State.

In making its recommendations to the Board, the Taskforce recognises that without funding from the Erasmus+ programme, some students and/or staff may find it more difficult to pursue collaboration with colleagues in an Israeli University. Yet the exercise of academic freedom, in accordance with rigorous ethical and professional standards, cannot reasonably require the College to enter institutional agreements to secure funding for specific activities or priorities of staff or students, without regard to the wider legal or ethical context. The College may decide that support for particular institutional relationships is contrary to its principles and may not be consistent with the exercise of academic freedom in accordance with the law and with rigorous ethical and professional standards, and with the reasonable exercise of institutional autonomy. College cannot be required to enter into institutional agreements which are contrary to its principles, as is the case here while Israel remains a country of concern.

The Taskforce has noted the approach taken by other universities who also concluded that their student/staff exchange programmes with Israeli Universities should be suspended having regard to the connection between those Universities and the actions of the Israeli military.

That being so, and applying the principles and procedures now proposed, the Taskforce has concluded that while Israel is considered a country of concern, no further applications should be made to the Erasmus+ programme for funds to support mobility of staff and students between College and Israeli Universities. Each application made to College to obtain funding for any project must be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the project in respect of which funds are to be sought conforms to College principles.

Recommendation of Taskforce

1. While Israel is considered a country of concern, College should enter into no new student or staff mobility exchange programmes with Israeli universities.

8.5 Research contracts

Factual Background

The Taskforce has identified seven research contracts that involve partnerships or consortia with at least one Israeli-based Institute of Higher Education (IHE) and all of which are under EU funding streams. One is funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, with the remaining six funded under other Horizon Europe funding streams. Trinity College is a Lead Coordinator of one of these research consortia.

Consideration

The Taskforce has considered the above agreements in the context of the principles and procedures now proposed. Importantly, the Taskforce has found no evidence that current research activities with academic partners in Israel contribute to human rights violations. It is also mindful of the fact that legally binding obligations underscore each of these consortium agreements and that for this reason College cannot unilaterally withdraw from the projects. Likewise, there is no legal basis upon which College could demand that Israeli institutions participating in these consortia be required to withdraw from same. Relevant to this issue, is the fact that in June 2024 the European Commission

was asked by the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) whether the participation of Israeli entities in Horizon Europe could be reconsidered, given the rulings of the ICJ and Israel's ongoing military actions. In response on the 20th of June 2024 the European Commission indicated that it would not intervene to take any general measures against Israeli entities. It also clarified that if one member wished to remove a partner from a consortium, a specific application would have to be submitted in respect of that project and the funding agency would have to assess any such application on the case-by-case basis. Furthermore, the Taskforce understands that even if College could get the consent of the consortium, the European Commission has the final say.

The Taskforce further understands that in July 2024 Ghent University also raised the question regarding Israel's participation in Horizon Europe through other diplomatic channels, given that the Association Agreement between Israel and the European Union states that relations between the parties are based on respect for human rights. However, the reply received by Ghent University on the 5th of July 2024 indicated that it was unlikely that Israel would be excluded from Horizon Europe in the short term.

in light of the aforementioned facts, the Taskforce does not recommend that College seek to withdraw from the above-mentioned consortium agreements. However, it recommends that while Israel is considered to be a country of concern, and for the reasons already discussed in relation to College's links to institutions of higher education, no future funded research agreements intended to involve Israeli institutions or other Israeli organisations should be entered into. Furthermore, all future funded research projects should be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that they comply with the principles and procedures now proposed.

In making this recommendation, the Taskforce recognises that the impact of the recommendation may be unevenly distributed across the research community within College. The Taskforce further notes that the recommendations concern institutional agreements, and do not preclude individual collaborations between scholars.

Recommendation of Taskforce

1. While Israel is considered a country of concern, no new institutional research agreements involving Israeli Institutes of Higher Education or other Israeli organisations should be submitted or approved.
2. College should support initiatives within Europe that challenge the inclusion of Israeli organisations in EU-funded research programmes.

9. Should Trinity College issue official statements on matters of cultural, social or political significance?

Factual background

The Taskforce reviewed the many submissions which it received in relation to this issue. While a wide range of views were forthcoming, the greater majority of the submissions were not in favour of College making statements on matters of cultural, social and political significance. Those opposed to the making of official statements claimed that official statements could never be considered democratic or representative of the College community as a whole, given the many differing that exist concerning cultural, social and political matters. The arguments both in favour and in opposition to the issuing of statements of this nature are fully explored in Appendix 2.

Notwithstanding the varied views expressed in the submissions, the Taskforce itself was unanimous in the view that College should not issue official statements on matters of cultural, social or political significance, other than in circumstances where the matter concerned has a direct link to College or is coupled with some strategic action to be taken by College.

Amongst the Taskforce's reasons for so concluding is the fact that the core mission of a university is to educate, research and promote critical thinking. It is intended to be a place where members of the community can safely debate controversial issues and hold diverse viewpoints without fear of adverse repercussions.

College's function is not to take sides in matters of cultural, social or political significance. Official statements made by College on potentially polarising topics risk stifling debate, and have the potential to deepen divisions within the university community, making it a potentially hostile environment for those whose ideological beliefs are different to those voiced by College in such statements.

Official statements also carry the risk of alienating members of the academic community who disagree with those statements, potentially impacting open discourse allied to which such statements could create implicit pressure on faculty staff or students to conform to a particular viewpoint, potentially chilling academic freedom. One submission went so far as to maintain that statements of the type under consideration would usually be broadly in line with public opinion and would likely be seen as an effort on the part of College to get "brownie points" at no cost to the College.

Recognising that there may be circumstances in which official statements may need to be made by College, the Taskforce is of the view that the Board needs to put in place a procedure to be followed if exceptional circumstances warrant such action.

Recommendations of Taskforce

1. College should not, save in exceptional circumstances of the type mentioned above, make official statements concerning cultural, social or political matters.
2. The Board should put in place a procedure to be followed should exceptional circumstances warrant the making of any public statement.

10. How can the College better support constructive disagreement and viewpoint diversity?

Very few of the submissions furnished to the Taskforce were directed to this issue. However, the Taskforce finds itself in full agreement with one of the submissions in which the contributor submitted that College must provide regular open forums for debate and safe places for discussion. The submission further urged College to take action to encourage respectful dialogue in relation to contentious issues, take every opportunity to strengthen pluralism and do all it can to make College a hub for free thought.

The Taskforce has little to add to the submission just mentioned save to emphasise the importance of College ensuring the maintenance of all existing supports for staff and students, but particularly for those who may be affected by armed conflict.

11. Concluding remarks

In furnishing this report the Taskforce considers it important to state that it recognises that Universities, as organs of society, have an independent responsibility to have regard for international humanitarian law and to protect human rights. It follows that in face of the evidence discussed at some length in this report, the Taskforce is of the view that College is bound to consider the potential negative humanitarian law or human rights implications that might result from its own activities and those of its external partners. Hopefully this report has identified some of those implications and the ways in which the same can be mitigated, prevented or brought to an end.

12. Unanimity

The Taskforce would like to conclude by noting that its members were unanimous in the making of the findings and recommendations contained in this report.

Appendix 1. Summary of Measures taken by the ICC and ICJ

Recent Measures adopted by the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Recent Measures adopted by the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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By request of the Secretariat of the 'Taskforce on Academic and Institutional International Links and Related Matters', in furtherance of the aims laid down under the [Terms of Reference](#) approved by College Board ([9th October 2024](#)) and College Council ([16th October 2024](#)), the forthcoming summary on recent measures taken by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been drafted. In particular, the Secretariat has requested that this summary refer to 19th July 2024 Advisory Opinion from the ICJ on Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Including East Jerusalem, the Requests for the Indication of Provisional Measures in Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v Israel), and the 21st November 2024 arrest warrants issued by Pre-Trial Chamber I of the ICC in its composition for the Situation in the State of Palestine. It is beyond the remit of the present document to provide any analysis of the aforementioned measures or related matters.

III International Court of Justice

Established under Article 92 of the [United Nations Charter](#), the ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN) and is composed of 15 independent judges from different States who are each elected for a term of 9 years. The jurisdiction of the ICJ is two-fold. The ICJ has competence over all cases referred to it by (i) Parties to its [Statute](#) (all UN Members are automatically parties) and (ii) other States, subject to the conditions laid down by the UN Security Council. The ICJ may also provide an advisory opinion on any legal question at the request the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council, or other organs of the UN and specialised agencies on legal questions arising within the scope of their activities. All Members of the UN are obliged to comply with decisions of the ICJ. Should a Member fail to perform their obligations, the other party may have recourse to the UN Security Council which may make recommendations or decide upon measures necessary to give effect to the judgment.

III.I Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem – Advisory Opinion

On 17th January 2023, the UN General Assembly submitted a [request for advisory opinion](#) to the ICJ on legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. This request posed the following questions:

- (a) What are the legal consequences arising from the ongoing violation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, from its prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and from its adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures?
- (b) How do the policies and practices of Israel referred to (...) above affect the legal status of the occupation, and what are the legal consequences that arise for all States and the United Nations from this status?

On 19th July 2024, the ICJ delivered the [advisory opinion](#) requested, wherein it outlined the following legal consequences for the State of Israel, legal consequence for other States, and legal consequences for the United Nations.

Legal Consequences for the State of Israel

- “the state of Israel’s continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful”;

- The ICJ is of the opinion that the continued presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory amounts to a wrongful act of a continuing character which has been brought about by Israel's violations of the prohibition on the acquisition of territory by force and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.
- “the State of Israel is under an obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible”;
 - The ICJ reaffirmed the position adopted in its 9th July 2004 [Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#) that the obligation of a State responsible for an internationally wrongful act to put an end to that act is well established in general international law.
- “the State of Israel is under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities, and to evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory”;
 - This includes the repeal of all legislation and measures creating or maintaining the unlawful situation including those which discriminate against the Palestinian people and aimed at modifying the demographic composition of the territory.
- “the State of Israel has the obligation to make reparation for the damage caused to all the natural or legal persons concerned in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”;
 - Citing the [Factory at Chorzów](#) case, the ICJ affirmed the principle that “reparation must, as far as possible, wipe out all consequences of the illegal act and reestablish the situation that would, in all probability, have existed if that act had not been committed”. In the context of the present conflict, this includes the return of all land and other immovable property, all assets seized since the start of the occupation in 1967, and all cultural property and assets taken from Palestinians and Palestinian institutions. Further, this includes dismantling the parts of the wall constructed by Israel which are situated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and allowing displaced Palestinians to return to their original place of residence. Should restitution prove materially impossible, Israel is under obligation to provide compensation to those who have suffered any form of material damage.

Legal Consequences for other States

- “all States are under an obligation not to recognize as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and not to

render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by continued presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

- The ICJ asserted that the State of Israel, in violating the obligation to respect the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, the obligation arising from the prohibition of use of force to acquire territory, and other obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, has violated obligations *erga omnes*, or owed towards all, thereby triggering the legal interest of all other States in protecting associated rights. Resulting, all States are under an obligation not to recognize changes in the physical character or demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the territory occupied by Israel on or since 5 June 1967. This, in turn, obliges all States to distinguish between dealings with Israel in its own and territory and those in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and, in such distinction:
 - abstain from treaty relations with Israel in all cases where it purports to act on behalf of the Occupied Palestinian Territory or part thereof on matters concerned the Occupied Palestinian Territory or part thereof;
 - abstain from entering into economic or trade dealings with Israel concerning the Occupied Palestinian Territory or part thereof which may entrench its unlawful presence in the territory
 - abstain, in the establishment and maintenance of diplomatic missions in Israel, from any recognition of its illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
 - take steps to prevent trade or investment relations that assist in the maintenance of the illegal situation created by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
 - not recognise as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,
 - not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel's illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

- ensure that any impediment resulting from the illegal presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to the exercise of the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination is brought to an end; and
- for those States parties to the [Fourth Geneva Convention](#), to ensure compliance by Israel with international humanitarian law.

Legal Consequences for the United Nations

- “international organizations, including the United Nations, are under an obligation not to recognize as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory” and that
 - The obligation of non-recognition also applies to international organizations in view of the serious breaches of obligations *erga omnes*.
- “the United Nations, and especially the General Assembly, which requested this opinion, and the Security Council, should consider the precise modalities and further action required to bring to an end as rapidly as possible the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”.
 - It is for the General Assembly and the Security Council to consider what further action required taking into account the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ.

Welcoming the ICJ Advisory Opinion, the UN General Assembly adopted a [non-binding resolution](#) on 18th September 2024 which gave effect to the opinions expressed by the ICJ and demanded that Israel bring to an end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory within 12 months from the adoption of the resolution. The resolution further calls upon all States:

- (a) “To take steps to ensure that their nationals, and companies and entities under their jurisdiction, as well as their authorities, do not act in any way that would entail recognition or provide aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel’s illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
- (b) To take steps towards ceasing the importation of any products originating from Israeli settlements, as well as the provision and transfer of arms, munitions and related equipment to Israel, the occupying Power, in all cases where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that they may be used in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

- (c) To implement sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, against natural and legal persons engaged in the maintenance of Israel's unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in relation to settler violence;
- (d) To support accountability efforts for all victims".

The resolution was [adopted](#) with 124 votes in favour (including Ireland), 14 against, and 43 abstaining.

III.II Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v Israel) – Provisional Measures

On 29th December 2023, South Africa filed an [application](#) with the ICJ instituting proceedings against Israel alleged violations of the [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#) in the Gaza Strip. This application requests that the ICJ declare:

- (1) "that the Republic of South Africa and the State of Israel each have a duty to act in accordance with their obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, in relation to the members of the Palestinian group, to take all reasonable measures within their power to prevent genocide; and
- (2) that the State of Israel:
 - a. has breached and continues to breach its obligations under the Genocide Convention, in particular the obligations provided under Article I, read in conjunction with Article II, and Articles III (a), III (c), III (d), III (e), IV, V and VI;
 - b. must cease forthwith any acts and measures in breach of those obligations, including such acts or measures which would be capable of killing or continuing to kill Palestinians, or causing or continuing to cause serious bodily or mental harm to Palestinians or deliberately inflicting on their group, or continuing to inflict on their group, conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, and fully respect its obligations under the Genocide Convention in particular Articles I, III (a), III (b), III (c), III (d), III (e), IV, V and VI;
 - c. must ensure that persons committing genocide, conspiring to commit genocide, directly and publicly inciting genocide, attempting to commit genocide and complicit in genocide contrary to Articles I, III (a), III (b), III (c), III (d), III (e) are punished by a competent national or international tribunal, as required by Articles I, IV, V and VI;

- d. to that end and in furtherance of those obligations arising under Articles I, IV, V and VI, must collect and conserve evidence and ensure, allow and/or not inhibit directly or indirectly the collection and conservation of evidence of genocidal acts committed against Palestinians in Gaza, including such members of the group displaced from Gaza;
- e. must perform the obligations of reparation in the interest of Palestinian victims, including but not limited to allowing the safe and dignified return of forcibly displaced and/or abducted Palestinians to their homes, respect for their full human rights and protection against further discrimination, persecution, and other related acts, and provide for the reconstruction of that it has destroyed in Gaza, consistent with the obligation to prevent genocide under Article I; and
- f. must offer assurances and guarantees of non-repetition of violations of the Genocide Convention, in particular the obligations provided under Articles I, III (a), III (b), III (c), III (d), III (e), IV, V and VI.”

Proceedings are currently ongoing, with [intervention by a number of third States](#) (including [Ireland](#)), and adjudication on the primary relief sought by South Africa has not yet been delivered.

However, on 26th January 2024 responded to the request for indication of provisional measures in the application by South Africa through and [Order](#) which provided that:

- “The State of Israel shall, in accordance with its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II of this Convention, in particular:
 - a. killing members of the group;
 - b. causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
 - c. deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; and
 - d. imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.”
- “The State of Israel shall ensure with immediate effect that its military does not commit any of the acts described (...) above.”

- “The State of Israel shall take all measures within its power to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide in relation to members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip.”
- “The State of Israel shall take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.”
- “The State of Israel shall take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of Article II and Article III of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide against members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip.”
- “The State of Israel shall submit a report to the Court on all measures taken to give effect to this Order within one month as from the date of this Order.”

By [Order](#) on 28th March 2024 in response to a [request](#) by South Africa on 6th March 2024, the ICJ reaffirmed the provisional measures indicated in its Order of 26th January 2024 and further indicated that:

- “The State of Israel shall, in conformity with its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and in view of the worsening conditions of life faced by Palestinians in Gaza, in particular the spread of famine and starvation:
 - Take all necessary and effective measures to ensure, without delay, in full co-operation with the United Nations, the unhindered provision at scale by all concerned of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance including food, water, electricity, fuel, shelter, clothing, hygiene and sanitation requirements, as well as medical supplies and medical care to Palestinians throughout Gaza, including by increasing the capacity and number of land crossing points and maintaining them open for as long as necessary;
 - Ensure with immediate effect that its military does not commit acts which constitute a violation of any of the rights of the Palestinians in Gaza as a protected group under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, including preventing, through any action, the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance;

- The State of Israel shall submit a report to the Court on all measures taken to give effect to this Order, within one month as from the date of this Order.”

South Africa further submitted an urgent [request](#) for the modification and indication of provisional measures 10th May 2024 in relation to “Israel’s ongoing military assault on Rafah”. In response, the ICJ issued an [Order](#) on 24th May 2024 reaffirming the provisional measures indicated in its Orders of 26th January 2024 and 28th March 2024 and providing:

- “The State of Israel shall, in conformity with its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and in view of the worsening conditions of life faced by civilians in the Rafah Governorate:
 - Immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah Governorate, which may inflict on the Palestinian group in Gaza conditions of life that could bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
 - Maintain open the Rafah crossing for unhindered provision at scale of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance;
 - Take effective measures to ensure the unimpeded access to the Gaza Strip of any commission of inquiry, fact-finding mission or other investigative body mandated by competent organs of the United Nations to investigate allegations of genocide;
- The State of Israel shall submit a report to the Court on all measures taken to give effect to this Order, within one month as from the date of this Order.”

IV International Criminal Court

Established under Article 1 of the [Rome Statute](#) adopted on 17th July 1998, the ICC is a permanent institution which exercises jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. While the ICC is an independent institution, it has entered [relationship agreement](#) with the UN to facilitate cooperation through mutual recognition of responsibilities, status, and mandates. The ICC exercises its jurisdiction only over crimes of the most serious international concern and is complementary to national criminal jurisdictions. States which are Party to the Rome Statute accept the jurisdiction of the ICC and the ICC may exercise this jurisdiction where one or more of these States is “the State on the territory of which the conduct in question occurred” or “the State of which the person accused of the crime is a national”. Investigations are instigated at the discretion of the Prosecutor on the basis of information on crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court and, having concluded that there is a reasonable basis to proceed, the Prosecutor will make a submission to the Pre-Trial Chamber for authorization of an investigation. After the initiation of an investigation, the Pre-Trial Chamber will issue warrants of arrest of persons where it is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to believe that such persons have committed a crime within the jurisdiction of the Court. It is then incumbent upon any State Party which has received a request for arrest to take steps to arrest such persons and, subject to procedure before the national courts of the State Party, surrender such persons to the ICC. The Pre-Trial Chamber will then hold a hearing to confirm the charges on which the Prosecutor intends to seek trial and a Trial Chamber will be constituted. Upon conviction, the ICC may impose penalties including imprisonment, a fine, and/or the forfeiture of proceeds, property and assets derived directly or indirectly from the crime.

IV.I Situation in the State of Palestine

Following Palestine’s [accession](#) to the Rome Statute, [referral](#) by the State of Palestine to the ICC Prosecutor, and a [preliminary examination](#), ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced on 20th December 2019 [announced](#) that there was reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation into the situation in Palestine. Specifically, the investigation would proceed on the basis that “(i) war crimes have been or are being committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip; (ii) potential cases arising from the situation would be admissible; and (iii) there are no substantial reasons to believe that an investigation would not serve the interests of justice.” The Prosecutor, therefore, [sought a ruling](#) from Pre-Trial Chamber I on 22nd January 2020 on the scope of the territorial jurisdiction of the ICC in the situation in Palestine. On 5th February 2021, Pre-Trial Chamber

I [found](#) that Palestine is a State Party to the Rome Statute, that it therefore qualifies as a State on the territory of which the conduct in question occurred, and that the Court's territorial jurisdiction extends to the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, namely Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Thereafter, the Prosecutor [confirmed](#) on 3rd March 2021 the initiation of an investigation respecting the Situation in the State of Palestine which would cover alleged crimes committed in the jurisdiction of the ICC.

IV.I.I Arrest Warrants

On 20th May 2024, ICC Prosecutor Karim AA Khan [announced](#) the filing of applications for warrants of arrest Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Diab Al-Masri, and Ismail Haniyeh on the grounds that they bear responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of Israel and the State of Palestine from at least 7th October 2023. Further filing of applications for warrants of arrest related to Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Defence of Israel Yoav Gallant on grounds that they bear criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of the State of Palestine from at least 8th October 2023. On 21st November 2024, Pre-Trial Chamber I [rejected](#) a challenge by the State of Israel to the jurisdiction of the ICC in issuing the requested warrants.

On 21st November 2024, the ICC issued arrest warrants for [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) and [Yoav Gallant](#) relating to charges of being responsible for the war crimes of starvation as a method of warfare and of intentionally directing an attack against the civilian population; and the crimes against humanity of murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts from at least 8th October 2023 until 20th May 2024. A warrant was also issued for Hamas leader [Mohammad Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri](#) relating to charges of being responsible for the crimes against humanity of murder; extermination; torture; and rape and other forms of sexual violence; as well as the war crimes of murder, cruel treatment, torture,; taking hostages; outrages upon personal dignity; and rape and other forms of sexual violence, committed on the territory of the State of Israel and the State of Palestine from at least 7th October 2023. However, Pre-Trial Chamber I [terminated](#) proceedings against Al-Masri on 26th February 2025 following [notification](#) of his death.

As Article 63 of the Rome Statute guarantees that the accused be present during a trial before the ICC, a trial will not proceed until those persons for whom arrest warrants have been issued either voluntarily surrender themselves or are arrested and surrendered by a State party.

Appendix 2. Summary of Submissions

AIII Consultation Submissions Summary

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I Introduction

In accordance with the [Terms of Reference](#) approved by both Board (09.10.2024) and Council (16.10.2024) and following a decision of the Taskforce on Academic and Institutional Links and Related Matters ('the Taskforce') at its first meeting (22.11.2024), the Secretariat of the Taskforce issued a call for submissions from the College community (02.12.2024) on the following issues:

- Which ethical principles should inform current and future links and exchanges between Trinity College Dublin and higher education institutions, commercial enterprises, and/or other relevant bodies in jurisdictions involved in armed conflict and/or there are violations of international law?
- How do we balance individual academic freedom and institutional autonomy in Trinity College Dublin?
- Should Trinity issue official, institutional declarations on matters of social, cultural and political significance?
- How can we support constructive disagreement and viewpoint diversity in Trinity College Dublin?

By the closing date (extended from 10.01.2024 to 24.01.2024), a total of 77 submissions were received from across the College community. Of these, 68 represent submissions from individual community members primarily in their personal capacity and 9 represent group submissions from a variety of organisations and Schools operating within College.

This document aims to serve as a supplementary aid for the benefit of the Taskforce by providing a general summary of the contents of these submissions. It is neither possible nor desirable for this summary to be exhaustive as many of the submissions contain complex, nuanced analyses which merit direct engagement from the Taskforce. No fact-checking of assertions posited within the submissions has been performed in the preparation of this document. Members of the Taskforce are strongly encouraged to read and consider the submissions in full as they will inform deliberations going forward.

The forthcoming summary was prepared through thematic analysis methods using NVivo 14.⁹ In keeping with the Terms of Reference and the call for submissions, the following structure is adopted:

⁹ NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software frequently used for thematic analysis. NVivo14 in particular was chosen here as it is the most recent generation which does not integrate Artificial Intelligence.

1. Ethical Principles
2. Balancing Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy
3. Institutional Declarations
4. Disagreement and Viewpoint Diversity

Given the context within which the Taskforce was established and paying heed to the concerns of a significant number of submissions, a further section is included:

5. Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

II Ethical Principles

Insofar as submissions directly addressed the first question, the ethical principles proposed to inform College's current and future institutional and enterprise links with organisations in jurisdictions involved in armed conflict largely adhere to the set of principles expressed by (Submission 1):

- Respect for the equal dignity of each person, expressed in respect for human rights, international humanitarian and human rights law;
- Justice;
- Solidarity and respect for cultural diversity;
- Honesty, transparency, and accountability;
- Academic freedom, adherence to professional standards of academic and research integrity, and support for academics and academic institutions under threat;
- A commitment to dialogue, engagement, and non-violence;
- Mutual participation, mutual benefit, and non-exploitation;
- Environmental sustainability and interests of future generations; and
- Consistency and equity in the application of the ethical principles.

It is noted that (Submission 1) proposes these principles to "inform our academic and institutional links, both national and international, regardless of whether they are in regions that are experiencing conflict or not".

Several of these principles are explored further within other submissions and warrant some expansion here. In particular, the principles of solidarity and respect for cultural diversity; honesty, transparency, and accountability; academic freedom, adherence to professional standards of academic and research integrity, and support for academics and academic institutions under threat; and consistency and equity in the application of the ethical principles will be addressed in turn.

II.1 Solidarity and respect for cultural diversity

Diversity of perspectives has emerged as a consistent theme within the submissions in relation to all four questions. Specially referring to the first question, (Submission 2) states that "the process for seeking to apply the principles must have the capacity to take on board multiple perspectives". This position is supported and expanded upon by (Submission 3) which justifies the stance on several grounds:

- The university is an inclusive place of community which is made, shaped, and utilized by stakeholders for diverse purposes and who hold diverse views.
- The rights of all stakeholders to use the university for these purposes free of violence or intimidation are respected by community members.
- We value independence of thought. The expression and exchange of diverse viewpoints is an essential component of university life and supports our institutional goal to produce graduates who can act as responsible national and global citizens.
- The expression and exchange of viewpoints may, at times, be thought provoking, uncomfortable or upsetting. It should be violent, intimidating or break the law.
- As a place which facilitates such exchange, the university plays a unique and trusted role in society which should be valued and defended.
- Institutionally, we should combat our bias toward connecting and exchanging with Global North countries which have commonalities with one another with respect to social justice issues that are to the fore. These issues are at variance in many respects to the imperatives of the Global South. We should develop our viewpoint diversity by increasing our exchange with the Global South.

Further, a number of submissions specifically propose that priority should be given to ensuring solidarity with minority, marginalised, oppressed, displaced, and vulnerable groups.

II.II Honesty, transparency and accountability

While a general understanding of honesty has placed the responsibility upon College to conduct itself honestly, it has also been proposed that honesty on the part of other institutions should serve as a criterion upon which the appropriateness of a partnership can be determined. In particular, (Submission 4) raises concerns over the perpetuation of misinformation stating “we should be guided by facts and relevant expertise and equip students and staff and the public with the tools to tackle misinformation which can polarise views.” As to transparency at an institutional level (Submission 5) posits that “TCD needs to be able to explain how it conducts its engagement activities while respecting academic freedom, human rights, and core institutional values” and that College “make clear the core values that guide (its) engagement processes”. At the level of the individual, (Submission 6) states that

“While TCD academics and operational staff need to be able to make judgments about their international engagements, both for research and teaching, there should be transparency about any academic or operational connections with international universities, enterprises or services, in any

country beyond the EU. The distinction between engagement with ‘for profit’ and ‘not for profit’ enterprises should be acknowledged.”

Accountability was addressed in several submissions. (Submission 4) suggests that “we should recognise the impact that our platform has and hold ourselves accountable for that impact” and further proposes that specific efforts are made to:

- “Hold ourselves accountable for international partnerships which may be in contravention with our sustainability values (i.e. countries responsible for ecocide and large-scale environmental destruction)
- Monitor and evaluate the ethical implications of continued or future partnerships in such contexts. We should have a standard process for assessing the costs and benefits of research partnerships in these contexts.”

As a further facet of accountability, a number of submissions reference the need for College to acknowledge the potential for undesirable consequences of decisions on current and future links/partnerships. Specifically, (Submission 2) draws attention to “multiple implications for Trinity, including but not limited to impacts on diversity of our community, financial impacts and reputational impacts”. (Submission 7) provides some discussion on the practical consequences of such decisions by reference to Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

II.III Academic freedom, adherence to professional standards of academic and research integrity, and support for academics and academic institutions under threat

The broader discussion surrounding academic freedom is addressed through responses to the second question. However, it is necessary to note here in the context of ethical principles that several submissions raised the issue of non-interference from external parties. As noted by (Submission 8), “freedom in research and training is the fundamental principle of university life, and governments and universities, each as far as in them lies, must ensure respect for this fundamental requirement”. Concerns have been raised regarding influence which funders might apply (Submission 9) and, relatedly, the ethics of accepting funding “from donors who have been actively contributing to our climate, environmental, and social crises through their prioritisation of profit over planetary health and social equity and well-being” (Submission 10).

II.IV Consistency and equity in the application of the ethical principles

As noted above, opinion across submissions generally aligns and adheres to the ethical principles identified within (Submission 1). This then bears out the statement by (Submission 1) that;

“There may be a reasonable degree of convergence among colleagues on the ethical principles that should inform the university’s academic and institutional linkages. However, the difficult work relates to applying the principles in the complex conditions of life. This requires a detailed, precise, and nuanced assessment of each relationship, in order that the ethical principles are applied consistently, comprehensively, and sincerely.”

At the core is the responsibility to target the application of principles to relationships with individuals and institutions rather than entire jurisdictions. (Submission 11) proposes that “exchange links and academic cooperation should be viewed within the framework of diplomatic cooperation - and therefore not based on any failings of the government that that institution is based in. Unless the physical safety of students is at risk, academics or institutions should not be held accountable for the actions of their governments.” This is explored further by (Submission 1) who identifies specific issues with a sweeping application of principles based upon jurisdictions:

- “Focusing on jurisdictions rather than prospective partners fails to appropriately recognise the distinction between citizens and their governments and risks essentialising people based on nationality, ethnicity, race, or religion” and
- “In terms of academic collaborations, universities are often places of political challenge and dissent, so a focus on jurisdiction rather than institution risks undermining the institutions and scholars that challenge the policies and activities of authoritarian or imperialistic governments”.

A number of submissions further raise concerns that a focus on jurisdiction rather than individual partnerships would amount to hypocrisy. (Submission 12) largely represents this perspective in stating that:

“Almost all states in the world are involved in armed conflicts these days. If they don’t use weapons, they develop or manufacture or buy or trade them. (...) And universities are generally very much involved in these activities, especially development and its political and economic basis.”

Further, (Submission 13) asserts:

“In the interests of balance, we must be careful to be equitable: we cannot consider one war to be more or less legitimate than another, one aggressor as more or less culpable than another. As Orwell reminds us, war is war. The victims are, overwhelmingly, people who never wanted to be involved in the first place.”

In applying principles to each partnership, there is a general sense that considerations should take account of all activities of current/prospective partner institutions. (Submission 1) suggests that specific categories of inquiry should include finance and investments, corporate relationships and suppliers (including supply chain), philanthropy, research collaborations, and educational partnerships. It has further been suggested that College ensure that such institutions operate within a framework of corresponding ethical principles. (Submission 14) suggests that this application of ethical principles ties in with the principle of transparency in that “there could be a detailed and transparent vetting process established before entering into international agreements, partnerships etc, which would have the advantage of avoiding reputational damage after the fact.”

Further, the notion that the application of principles must align with international humanitarian and human rights law was widely asserted across submissions. Per (Submission 3), “those who violate international law damage the university’s ability to play a trusted role in society and therefore render themselves unsuitable members of the university community”. This is further expressed through (Submission 15) which asserts that “institutional relationships must uphold international humanitarian and human rights law, avoiding partnerships that normalise or benefit from violations”. However, (Submission 8) draws the distinction between mere allegations that such laws have been breached and binding judgments to that effect:

“Allegations of violation of international law are easy to make and can be used as political statements, but they have no relevance to academic issues and they have no standing in law. An actual finding by a recognised tribunal of a violation of international law might be relevant to some aspect of academic work, but the circumstances would need to be drawn to pertain to named, individual academics.”

(Submission 1) promotes a number of considerations for the assessment of partnerships with institutions in the context of such violations:

- “The purpose of the collaboration, and whether the purpose is oriented towards a fundamental good (e.g. conflict resolution in a region experiencing political violence, or human rights promotion within politically constrained circumstances, or vaccine roll-out that requires collaboration with armed groups), and whether the partner is essential to achievement of that good;
- The nature of any wrongdoing and the role of the prospective partner, specifically whether a prospective partner consistently, knowingly, and directly enables or facilitates serious wrongdoing, for example human rights abuses. An ethics or human rights assessment

generally undertakes such an assessment by doing a threshold analysis in which the nature, scale and seriousness of any unethical behaviour is considered;

- The nature of the partnership and the degree of proximity to any wrongdoing; and
- Whether the cooperation is direct or indirect. In cases of indirect cooperation, the principle of proportionality is generally invoked.”

As (Submission 1) further notes, “this process of ethical reasoning allows for an assessment to be made about which relationships would involve a form of unacceptable complicity in the wrongdoing of another”.

As a final note on application of ethical principles, (Submission 1) cautions that:

“Inequitable treatment of prospective partners, often linked to western neocolonial or religious bias represents a significant problem in the application of ethical and human rights-based principles and it is important that, as we evaluate our relationships, we resist inconsistent, partial, self-serving, cynical, or formulaic applications of these principles. The most effective way that the university can ensure that such hazards are avoided and that our ethical principles are applied in a morally robust, equitable manner is by committing to a comprehensive ethical and human rights-based assessment of partnerships, particularly where certain threshold conditions have been met.”

III Balancing Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy

As with responses to the first question, there is limited conflict or contradiction between submissions relating to the second question. Rather discussion largely centred on the protection of academic freedom, limits to academic freedom, the complementary nature of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, and the difficulty facing non-academic staff who are not afforded equivalent agency in their associations. Each will be addressed in turn.

III.I Protection of academic freedom

(Submission 8) provides a particularly helpful overview of the justifications for both institutional and individual academic freedom and the related protections deriving from both legislation and policy. In terms of institutional academic freedom, (Submission 8) explains that:

“the university needs to be protected from state interference and to be free to establish its own curriculum and teaching programme, to engage in hiring without outside interference, to admit students at various levels according to its own academic procedures, to set up its own procedures of governance, and to foster research.”

This is complemented by individual academic freedom which “pertains to all aspects of research, teaching, association, free speech outside the university, and other areas”. (Submission 8) draws attention to the definition of academic freedom within the College [‘Policy on Academic Freedom’](#):

“Academic freedom is valued as a defining characteristic of the university. It includes the freedom, subject to the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, to conduct research, teach, speak and publish without interference or penalty, no matter where the search for truth and understanding may lead. No member of the college community should feel that their position in the College is made insecure because of the expression of a particular opinion. This extends to all manner of opinions on social, cultural, or political topics related to academic work. Academic freedom encourages the exploration of new ideas, the testing of received wisdom and, ultimately, the search for truth; it is a sine qua non for free inquiry. In the past, threats to academic freedom, and hence to freedom of intellectual enquiry and expression, have originated from individuals and groups within and outside the university using their power to prevent the expression of opinions contrary to theirs; such instances have been well documented.”

As noted in a number of submissions, this principle requires that College encourage diverse viewpoints and protect those which might be considered dissenting. (Submission 14) states, “free thought and debate have their own intrinsic worth, but are also a necessity to effectively address

social and environmental challenges effectively, globally in a spirit of mutual cooperation and benefit”.

III.II Limits to academic freedom

(Submission 8) further notes some justifiable constraints on the exercise of academic freedom, namely: “teaching must meet academic standards and follow agreed procedures for ensuring that students are treated fairly, research can be subject to ethical review, (and) procedures that affect individuals (such as hiring and promotion) must operate within the law”. (Submission 16) further explores indirect constraints on academic freedom which derive from funding shortfalls. In particular, “while all academic staff might be entitled to academic freedom under the letter of the law, it is obvious that those who are precariously employed do not enjoy the same academic freedom as those who are permanent/tenured.” Further, (Submission 16) references the “growth of corporate/industry partnerships being encouraged by the university” in response to “government funding shortfalls” and that such partnerships “pose a direct threat to academic freedom”. (Submission 17) references College’s approach to tobacco industry engagement and proposes that “this provides a model for other forms of engagement relating to Trinity’s research, teaching, and operational relationships”.

Several submissions also make reference to the responsibilities which attach to academic freedom. (Submission 18) proposes that there also exists a duty “to question and test received wisdom, to put forward new ideas and to state controversial or unpopular opinion”. (Submission 19) raises the question of ethical conflicts querying “how far can inquisitiveness (i.e. academic freedom) be allowed to go if it clashes with responsibility (i.e. to uphold justice)”.

On the question of whether College might directly interfere with the academic freedom of individuals, (Submission 8) states:

“I am aware (...) that arguments have been put forward to the effect that the university, in an exercise of its own decision-making powers, could forbid academic contacts with specified countries, could require syllabus changes in the interest of some other agenda, (...) and so on. This exercise of autonomy is repression, pure and simple. It is not a change to the definition of academic freedom; it is a violation of it. I am not sure if the Taskforce means to get into this area, but just to be clear, the university does not have the authority to enforce any attempts to curtail the academic freedom of the individual. As I have mentioned above, there are always constraints on the grounds of academic standards, research ethics, health and safety, and the law of the land. Even these restraints must be handled with care: academics who have good academic reasons to visit ‘danger’ zones where College insurers are reluctant to provide coverage must be allowed to proceed at their own risks and

subject to College's satisfactory exercise of its duty of care by providing advice. I cite this example to make the point that it is College's obligation to do everything possible to facilitate academics' efforts to find truth, wherever it may be."

III.III Complementary nature of academic freedom and institutional autonomy

Several submissions identify that the second question implies a conflict between academic freedom and institutional autonomy. In general, it is asserted that these principles are actually "complementary parts of the same process" (Submission 8). However this does not necessarily mean that exercise of either must align with the aims of the other. (Submission 20) notes the requirement "that there be no restriction on the free pursuit of knowledge, no censorship of views, or restrictions on association or research collaboration at an individual level, for any member of the College community" while also acknowledging "that this does not mean that the institution must support, facilitate, and defend every activity that individual academics wish to pursue where those desires directly harm other or create the conditions for such harm". In this vein, a number of submissions assert that the maintenance or establishment of collaborations should be a matter left to individual academics. However, as (Submission 21) suggests that "this does not mean that the university cannot decide (...) to break formal links with countries and institutions that are operating in contradiction to our stated values".

(Submission 22) does, however, notes that undue pressure may be placed upon academics as employees by the institution as their employer stating:

"Academics are the employees and Trinity is the employer, and within business ethics it seems pretty clear that it's wrong for employers to use the fact that they dominate employees to force their morals onto them. This is classic paternalism, and it's of a sort that would be hard to justify, given that academics are in a position to judge what they ought to do for themselves. And it also exploits the fact of employee domination, since employees are forced to comply and don't always reasonably have exit alternatives."

Given that there does not necessarily exist an inherent conflict, (Submission 23) states that "establishing transparent policies that respect both principles is essential, ensuring academic pursuits are not compromised by undue external or internal influence".

III.IV Non-academic staff not afforded equivalent agency

(Submission 4) asserts:

"If academics have the freedom to act on their conscience in these matters, professional, administrative, and other staff at Trinity should be empowered to do the same. (...) Currently an

academic has the freedom to balance the costs and benefits of who they collaborate with or what service providers they pay, but there is a cascade of other affected staff who must then also work with this partner even if it does not align with their own values. There is no parity of esteem if administrative, technical, and other staff cannot similarly object on moral grounds to working to support international partnerships which involve institutions linked to governments that violate international law. As there is currently no official stance on whether professional staff at Trinity may opt out of supporting projects of this nature, there are risks and implications for personal career development and professional relationships across and beyond College for professional staff who may not wish to support research activities that include collaborations with institutions complicit in human rights violations.”

As an example of the cascading engagement of non-academic staff resulting from academic collaboration, (Submission 24) illustrates that such staff in the Research Development Office would be “expected to provide support for that application, while staff in the Contracts Office would be expected to review and sign the Grant Agreement and Consortium Agreement (...), staff in FSD would be expected to support the financial aspects of project management post-award, HR would be expected to support recruitment of project staff, the Data Protection Office, IT Services Department, the Library’s Research Information Systems and Services team, members of Trinity Innovation and staff in various administrative roles in Schools, Centres and Research Institutes may be expected to support aspects of project implementation”. (Submission 24) further notes that staff may not be made aware of the nature of projects which they may have objected to had they been made aware.

(Submission 25) proposes that all staff should be given freedom to decline professional engagement in these circumstances. (Submission 24) draws attention to the power imbalance which can often be present between academic and non-academic staff and states that commitments are needed to ensure that this relationship is not utilised to compel staff to act against their moral values. (Submission 4) further states that “professional and technical staff should be empowered and protected by College if they wish to speak out against human rights violations, and there should be a pathway for them to refuse to participate in work that includes partnerships with institutions complicit in human rights violations”.

IV Institutional Declarations

In response to the third question, a significant proportion of responses opposed the issuance of institutional declarations on matters of social, cultural, or political significance in all circumstances. The justifications for this opposition might be described as being based primarily on scepticism over the capacity of College to issue such declarations, difficulty in representing all members of the College community, and that other forms of response are more effective. In instances of approval for institutional declarations, these submissions usually preferred that the decision to issue such declarations be made on a case by case by basis and subject to a number of stipulations. The arguments opposed to and in favour of institutional declarations will be presented in turn.

IV.I Capacity of College to issue institutional declarations

Within this category, opinion generally found the issuing of institutional declarations to be beyond the role of College. (Submission 8) states that:

“Trinity College does what it does best by providing a forum for teaching, research, and community outreach. It is not built for the purpose of taking stands on broader political issues. If it does venture into this area, it is neither likely to remain true to the mission of the university nor to be politically effective.”

Further, (Submission 3) deem institutional declarations as “at odds with our valued place in society as a facilitator of discussion and debate”.

(Submission 22) proposes that the appropriateness of such declarations lies within the debate on the broader purpose of universities. This submission identifies two primary considerations:

- “If it turns out that the function of universities purely concerns the production of certain kinds of citizens, those sufficiently educated to contribute to a robust democracy (...), then I’m not sure what business it would be of Trinity’s to issue statements about foreign wars.”
- “If universities themselves are supposed to have a social impact through providing a venue for social criticism (...), then this does provide some license for broader involvement.”

However, (Submission 22) further suggests that regardless of whether College is considered sufficiently qualified to issue declarations, there is not necessarily any moral imperative to do so. It has also been questioned whether College has sufficient expertise to issue declarations consistently on all matters which it might be expected to address if a precedent is set. This concern is compounded by the fact that declarations would have to be made based upon the facts available at the time which may subsequently be proven to have been based upon inaccurate reports and/or

propaganda. In particular, attention has been drawn to statements issued on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict which has set an expectation that statements be issued on other conflicts.

(Submission 26) questions the practical capacity of College to issue declarations which are contrary to the foreign policy of the Irish State given the institutional dependence on funding from the government and the constraints of the Higher Education Authority Act 2022.

IV.II Difficulty representing all members of College community

Given the diverse range of perspectives across the College community, it is unlikely that an institutional declaration could adequately represent or address all viewpoints. (Submission 27) expresses that College “should adopt an explicitly apolitical stance if it is to show a genuine commitment to the wellbeing of its entire community, and not just sections thereof” and should make clear “that it is committed to the welfare of all its constituents and to fostering solidarity within the College community, in the name of universal principles of peace, justice, equality, reconciliation and human rights”. Further, the inability of College to represent all views within institutional declarations necessarily means that certain perspectives will become dissenting views. The holders of such dissenting views may then be placed in a position where they are also subject to the consequences of declarations which do not represent their viewpoint.

In acknowledging the difficulty facing College in representing the diverse viewpoints of the community, a number of submissions prefer reliance on the existing empowerment of individual members to issue statements in their personal capacity rather than purporting to represent the entirety of the community.

IV.III Alternative responses more appropriate

A number of commitments and initiatives already active at Trinity are cited as being both more appropriate and effective than institutional declarations. (Submission 28) notes that:

“College makes statements on social issues through its actions. Some examples are: Trinity is a University of Sanctuary (...), a participant in Athena SWAN (...), works with the Irish Refugee Council (...), and has a Civic Engagement Plan “to address societal issues, promote democratic values, and foster positive social change.” (...) These actions are more powerful than words alone and exemplify Trinity’s values more than a statement alone, which unfortunately sometimes be taken as a soundbite or out of context.”

The practical impact of these initiatives is exemplified by (Submission 19) through discussion of the Trinity as a University of Sanctuary:

“I would like to suggest that Sanctuary work provides one practical way to act on ethical grounds in relation to conflict and human rights violations. Universities of Sanctuary are institutions committed to creating a culture of welcome and inclusion for people seeking international protection. At the moment, through University of Sanctuary we support some Gazan students on Masters courses in Trinity, with more to come when the situation permits. Supporting those in need of safety and/or taking actions to support third level institutions impacted by conflict are an important means of putting ethical commitments to human dignity and rights into practice.”

(Submission 29) acknowledges that there is scope for institutional declarations but states that these should only follow meaningful policy decisions which leverage College’s gravitas to “achieve meaningful, material change on matters of concern”.

IV.IV Issuing institutional declarations on a case-by-case basis

There is a general sense within submissions that there should not be a default towards issuing institutional declarations. Rather, there is a preference for establishing a framework of ethical and values-driven principles and open dialogue for determining whether a declaration should be issued. This framework should be “fair, transparent, and consistent” (Submission 4) and “seek to balance competing rights and obligations” through stakeholder engagement (Submission 30). (Submission 31) notes that the nature of the university may oblige College to “take political positions on issues in the name of cosmopolitanism, liberalism, and democracy” which may not always be politically, ethically, or financially straightforward and require that any position is adopted “on a case-by-case basis, underpinned by robust ethical principles, and mindful of the fact that this will throw up inconsistencies”. (Submission 14) further notes that such declarations should serve as an affirmation of College’s values and principles and should “refer to the necessity to respect international and humanitarian law” and “call for peaceful resolution in the spirit of mutual respect and consideration. (Submission 21) proposes that College’s efforts to rectify past complicity should necessarily translate to a willingness to issue statements on contemporary issues stating:

“If the university rightly abhors its past complicity with the enslavement of human beings and the illicit removal of human remains and is willing to publicly do something about it and make a clear statement on university values it should also be willing and able to make clear statements on the major challenges facing society today, whether that is condemning genocide, divesting from activities and relationships that run counter to university’s laudable and impressive commitment to climate action, or indeed participating actively (...) in debates about the future of our shared island. There are many further challenges out there which we cannot foresee but we should as a university adopt a position that allows courageous societal leadership”.

IV.V Conditions for issuing institutional declarations

As (Submission 19) notes, “in a time when universities are much more globalised in their functions and aspirations and where the core functions include ‘service to society’ and ‘civic engagement’, ethical decisions about positions and engagements are unavoidable”. This reflects the position in a number of submissions that the adoption of a neutral stance is not always possible or desirable. However, some specific stipulations have been proposed. In particular, it has been proposed that both declarations and the decision-making process behind such declarations should be clear and transparent. Per (Submission 32):

“We already make political pronouncements, because education is political. Aligning ourselves with the Sustainable Development Goals or Athena Swan or TAP or the University of Sanctuary in our research is in fact a public and political declaration of value. And so we need to acknowledge that Trinity already does make political decisions and pronounce on ethical commitments. We need to be better at transparency in those commitments and more consistent, and even more clear in our public leadership in doing so.”

(Submission 33) further proposes “the aims of (...) declaration(s) should be clearly defined” including negative definition by stating “issues, populations, calls to action etc” that are not intended to be included.

It has also been proposed that College must only issue institutional declarations where “there is a mandate from the university to do so” (Submission 34) which should be determined through “tried and tested mechanisms (...) to gauge community consensus” (Submission 23).

Further, (Submission 6) posits that any declaration “should be couched in general terms rather than taking specific positions in particular conflicts” and “reference should be made to international norms and laws on humanitarian and political actions”.

V Facilitating disagreement and viewpoint diversity

How can we support constructive disagreement and viewpoint diversity in Trinity College Dublin?

As (Submission 1) states, “universities should especially be spaces for dialogue in a world where these spaces are increasingly difficult to create, defend and sustain” and that “conversations among colleagues and with students are difficult, and it is important to acknowledge these difficulties”.

(Submission 1) proposes that the facilitation of such dialogue be based upon the principles of pluralism and equal dignity. Much of the discussion on disagreement and viewpoint diversity aligns closely with these principles. Further, particular weight is given to the need for College to promote its existing policies and restrict external influences.

V.1 Pluralism

(Submission 1) notes that “a fundamental aspect of our role as educators is to enable our students to frame and reframe fundamental questions of meaning and purpose, to identify the itineraries of silence in our cultural and political traditions, to challenge inherited orthodoxies, and to develop new forms of ethical and political imaginary” and that “in order to do this the university needs to be a determinedly pluralist space where minority voice are enabled to speak, where people gather in a spirit of encounter, and where there is a commitment to a shared good in our dialogue (...) that is both procedural and substantive”. (Submission 27) further promotes this sense in asserting that College should:

- “(Adopt) a firm apolitical position,
- Not (allow) the loudest voice on campus (...) to dictate the College agenda on (...) conflicts,
- (Include) and (listen) to the full range of voices within the student and staff body rather than ignoring, excluding and alienating them, (and)
- (Encourage) solidarity among the College community instead of fostering division and polarisation”.

Multiple submissions assert that the pursuit of pluralism imposes an obligation on College to foster a culture which is conducive to open dialogue. In particular, this requires that efforts “be made so that an opposing view to a seemingly widely accepted stance is propped up against potentially overwhelming conversational friction while ensuring majority opinions can still be made freely” (Submission 35). (Submission 3) suggests “support (for) the development of staff and student skill regarding constructive disagreement” and that “we should continue to develop students’ critical thinking skills and their ability to assess information sources, not least due to the influence that

misinformation and disinformation can have on our viewpoints”. This includes the “need to include multiple perspectives and stakeholders in our teaching and educate students to respect multiple diverse perspectives” (Submission 36) and to support dialogue in the classroom through “discussions of topical themes, texts etc” which can “often evolve into constructive disagreement and viewpoint diversity”. (Submission 1) states that the facilitation of such a culture “requires practices through which we can be accountable to each other for our speech, through which we can properly honour the moral distress that so many feel, and through which can sustain honesty in the face of moral complexity.”

There is generally support for the establishment of institutional initiatives which would facilitate dialogue within the community. There appears to be particular favour for the establishment and promotion of public fora such as town hall meetings. (Submission 2) proposes that College “create intentional spaces and activities for safe and constructive learning and discussion” as “intentionality in enabling interactions (is) key in enabling individuals in our community (...) to develop the skills and knowledge to understand how to constructively disagree with others” and that “by fostering these skills we can articulate the Trinity expectation for all of our community to be able to acknowledge respectfully that others will likely hold other viewpoints”. (Submission 37) asserts that “we should act as an ‘academe’ and play an active role in society as intellectual scrutinisers and contributors by providing a forum for discourse, debate and dissemination of knowledge on every societal challenge as it arises” and that “there are many ways this could be implemented e.g. as ‘rapid response’ talks, or (...) College-based seminar series with local, national or international experts invited to talk on topical issues”.

Several submissions have also drawn attention to the institutional obligation “to respect freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and ensure a free and safe environment for protestors, free from any discrimination, criminalisation, stigmatisation or reprisal, where peaceful assemblies may only be dispersed in exceptional circumstances” (Submission 5). (Submission 4) suggests that this obligation extends to respecting peaceful protest “without rhetoric that there is a right or wrong way to protest”. In supporting this obligation, (Submission 33), however, asserts that “the university should do intensive work to ensure the immediate safety of those with differing opinions” and that “opportunities for counter demonstrations should be made”.

V.II Equal dignity

(Submission 1) provides helpful direction on the concept and promotion of equal dignity:

“The commitment to the equal dignity of each person is so obvious it seems banal. However, if we are committed to the idea of the equal dignity of each person then it means that each person counts

for one, and no one counts for more than one. At the institutional level the commitment to equal dignity means that the university should be a consistent and unequivocal voice for peace, non-violence and for respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. A commitment to equal dignity would put an ethical limit on the forms our speech takes within the university community. It would involve institutional practices that work within an agreed normative boundary based on a shared commitment to equal dignity. It would lead us to insist on the use of language, images and symbols that do no harm or dehumanise the other, and to resist any language that advocates or valorises any form of violence. The commitment to equal dignity would also mean that, in our practices, we show empathy with colleagues and students who feel threatened by the unfolding parameter of our debate, those who see in it echoes of past atrocities, and those for whom it is a painful reminder of their experiences of war, violence, and displacement.”

In practice, it has been proposed that equal dignity is achieved by abandonment of institutional hierarchies in discourse to ensure equal exchange of viewpoints. Further, that efforts should be made to avoid the assumption of a homogenous viewpoint (Submission 12) and that commitments to diversity and inclusion are ensured by avoiding instances of particular viewpoints being condemned as unacceptable (Submission 38). A widely held perspective is that College must take active steps to prevent and tackle instances in which individuals or groups within the community are isolated or targeted for their viewpoints. This includes providing “guidance on ‘holding the other’ opinion/person with respectful regard including, and most of all when the other viewpoint is the anathema of their own” (Submission 28) and ensuring that College “fully inform our community on all aspects of each conflict so that individuals can form their own set of principles” (Submission 37). As (Submission 39) proposes, this requires a commitment to thoughtful discourse rather than conflict.

Numerous submissions assert, however, that a commitment to equal dignity does oblige, or permit, support for viewpoints which are inherently unethical. In particular, there is no obligations to support viewpoints which promote injustice (Submission 24), racial inequality (Submission 40), or breaches of international and human rights law (Submission 4). This further explored by (Submission 20) who asserts that while “it is important to support marginalised voices (...), it is important to bear in mind views held by a minority of the campus community are necessarily marginalised views in so far as they represent the position of powerful actors inside and outside College” and that “it is not the role of College to protect or make space for those who argue, for example, that there are biological differences between people of different races and/or genders that determine their intellectual ability” as “this would be creating a space that would reduce rather than nurture

diversity and would harm to members of the College community and rightly risk damaging to reputation of the institution”.

V.III Promotion of existing policies and restriction on external influences

A number of submissions reference the need for College to promote and express commitment to existing policies. In the context of disagreement and viewpoint diversity, opinion has generally focused on the '[Policy on Academic Freedom](#)' and the '[Dignity and Respect Policy](#)'. In particular, reference is made to section 4.1 of the Policy on Academic Freedom which states:

“Policies should recognise that freedom of expression is a core value in the College. No policy should be adopted that would, inadvertently or otherwise curtail freedom of expression among either students or staff. Likewise decisions made by College Officers in the performance of their duties should give due importance of the benefit to the academic community, and society as a whole, that flows from freedom of expression. Staff and students should understand the obligations and responsibilities that freedom of expression brings.”

(Submission 28) draws attention to the merits of the Dignity and Respect Policy and proposes that the “boundaries on discussion on contentious issues on the principles in these policies would be welcome”. Conversely, (Submission 8) suggests that the current policy has not made adequate provision to ensure that the dignity of others is sufficiently protected and should go further to identify and protect overlooked social groups who may feel isolated or threatened.

On the matter of external influences, (Submission 33) suggests that “Trinity should not give platforms to outside actors who advocacy is against the standards of Trinity’s code of conduct and ethics” or “who are sanctioned by local and/or international law”. (Submission 26) identifies the role of “online platforms that are owned, operated or dominated by US technology corporations, where unseen algorithms form and guide public opinion in directions that include support for new wars and the widening of existing ones” as a pressing concern. In this vein, (Submission 41) proposes that efforts are made to reduce online discourse and promote in person discussion.

VI Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

As expressed in the introduction of this document, a significant number of submissions have raised issues which necessitate some space specifically devoted to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. The proceeding section will, in particular, present concerns surrounding the composition of the Taskforce and the scope of its Terms of Reference, the issues arising from an institutional response which specifically targets Israel, the call for an academic boycott of Israeli institutions, the call for continued divestment, and the recent developments of ceasefire and the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

VI.I Composition of Taskforce and scope of Terms of Reference

Submissions across the spectrum of viewpoints and ideologies have expressed concern over the impartiality of the Taskforce resulting from its composition. In particular, concern relates to a perceived over-representation of College operations personnel and administrators. It has been proposed that representation should be balanced by an increased student membership and academic experts who are sufficiently qualified to advise and deliberate on the nuances of topics which may come before the Taskforce. It has also been noted that there may be a marked ideological imbalance within the membership and that assurances should be made as to how bias will be counterbalanced. It has been proposed that concerns regarding membership could be addressed by the establishment of a committee within the existing governance structures.

Several submissions object to the general scope established under the Terms of Reference. These objections largely relate to context within which the Taskforce was established, namely the May 2024 student encampment and blockade, and College's [statement](#) on 08.05.2024 which specifically provided that:

“The taskforce process will also review Trinity’s student exchanges with Israel. Recommendations from the taskforce will be brought to the relevant principal committees of the university.”

These submissions therefore assert that the Terms of Reference are currently over-expansive and do not satisfy the obligations of the Taskforce as no direct reference is made to the specific issues and context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Further submissions do not condemn the broadness of the Terms of Reference but urge the Taskforce to focus its immediate attention on an institutional response to the urgency and gravity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

VI.II Institutional response targeting Israeli institutions

Given the quantity of ongoing conflicts affecting and involving different jurisdictions and peoples across the world, a number of submissions endorse the perspective that any institutional response

which specifically targets Israeli institutions in the absence of a similar response to other conflicts would amount to an exercise in antisemitism. (Submission 42) responds to this assertion by stating that Israel has already been “singled out in the extraordinary immunity from sanction it has been afford from the United, European nations, and EU institutions” with the “European Union (having) signed a preferential trade agreement with Israel and European universities have expanded research collaborations and educational exchanges with Israeli universities (...leading to...) effective immunity”. This submission further cites the serious, prevalent, and long-term breaches of international law which may be supported by sustained institutional ties, thus risking complicity on the part of College, as a justification for a targeted response. A number of submissions note that the maintenance of academic links with Israeli institutions despite the seriousness and persistence of breaches is in itself a unique situation which does not arise in the context of many conflicts. It has, however, also been noted that the Taskforce must remain cognisant of the potential consequences which would flow from any targeted response. In particular, actions contrary to the position adopted by the jurisdictions and corporations with whom College is heavily linked could have unforeseen impacts.

VI.III Academic boycott

(Submission 43), (Submission 44), (Submission 45), (Submission 46), (Submission 42), (Submission 47) and (Submission 48) and a number of individual submissions call for an immediate boycott of Israeli institutions given the apparently central role which these institutions play in the ongoing conflict. These submissions provide discussion of the role which these institutions play and the responses of other universities to the conflict. It is proposed that College align its position with that taken by these universities. This boycott may include halting all exchanges with Israeli institutions, revoking institutional memoranda of understanding, the prevention of future institutional links being formed, discontinuing collaboration, not accepting funding from Israeli institutions and companies, etc. Particular attention is drawn to multilateral research conducted through Horizon Europe; while a withdrawal from ongoing research projects is not recommended, it is recommended that College does not enter any new Horizon Europe partnerships which are connected to Israel.

Of note here is that these submissions call for such a boycott to be conducted in line with the [Palestinian Campaign on the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel \(PACBI\) Guidelines](#). In response to concerns that a boycott would undermine the principle of academic freedom and indiscriminately impact academics within the boycotted institutions, the submissions assert that an adherence to PACBI guidelines requires that it is institutions rather than individual academic that are boycotted. Further, it is not proposed that individual Trinity academics be prevented from forming links in their own capacity but, rather, that they are prevented from binding College to these links. Therefore, it is

suggested that a boycott would relate only to official institutional links. It has further been proposed that College has an obligation under its commitment to academic freedom and its status as a University of Sanctuary to firmly oppose to 'scholasticide', a practice involving the systemic destruction of education systems through arrest of educators and students and the destruction of infrastructure including schools, universities, and libraries.

VI.IV Divestment

Per College's statement on 08.05.2024:

"Trinity will complete a divestment from investments in Israeli companies that have activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and appear on the UN Blacklist in this regard. This process is expected to be completed by June.

Trinity will endeavour to divest from investments in other Israeli companies. This issue will be considered by a taskforce (more below) as a first step.

On review, Trinity can confirm that its supplier list currently contains just one Israeli company which will remain until March 2025 for contractual reasons."

While this divestment is generally welcomed, a number of submissions assert that it does not go far enough in its commitment and should guarantee divestment from all Israeli organisations and any organisations on the [BDS Blacklist](#). It has been proposed that College ensure that divestment applies not only to Israeli organisations but also those complicit in, or profiting from, the ongoing conflict. It has also been asserted that College's procurement policies should be reviewed to ensure that they reflect this commitment.

The submissions mentioned above, as well as (Submission 48), identify specific organisations which College should divest from. They further provide methods through which College can determine the permissibility of investments and procured services under its divestment commitment.

VI.V Recent developments

After the initial deadline for submissions had passed on 10.01.2025, significant developments occurred in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Namely the agreement of a temporary ceasefire on 15.01.2025 and the [Irish Government's endorsement of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism](#) on 16.01.2025. While the deadline for submissions was extended to 24.01.2024, it is unsurprising that the vast majority of submissions were submitted without the benefit of knowledge on these two developments. However, (Submission 42) and (Submission 8) were amended during the extension period to address the updates and may be of use to the Taskforce in assessing if/how this impacts upon its considerations.

Appendix 3. List of Meetings

Taskforce Meetings

Friday 22nd November 2024

Friday 17th January 2025

Friday 7th February 2025

Monday 17th February 2025 (presentations)

Friday 21st February 2025

Friday 7th March 2025

Friday 21st March 2025

Friday 4th April 2025

Thursday 17th April 2025

Friday 25th April 2025

Friday 2nd May 2025

Friday 16th May 2025

Tuesday 20th May 2025

Friday 23rd May 2025

Subcommittee Meetings

Tuesday 18th March 2025

Tuesday 25th March 2025

Friday 28th March 2025

Tuesday 1st April 2025

Wednesday 9th April 2025

Appendix 4. Summaries of actions of other universities

I Tilburg University

The Advisory Committee on Partnerships (the Advisory ‘Committee’) at Tilburg University were asked by the institution’s Executive Board to advise on the following question: “considering its academic and institutional values, what are the (moral) responsibilities of our university and what options for action follow from this in the context of the Israel-Gaza conflict?”¹⁰ Following an investigation, the Advisory Committee found that:

- “the International Court of Justice and other leading UN entities state that there is plausible evidence of gross and systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Gaza conflict;
- the Israeli defense is directly involved in these violations;
- there is a high degree of interconnectedness between Tilburg University's partner universities under investigation and the Israeli defense;
- the partner universities do not take a sufficiently critical stance towards the aforementioned violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”¹¹

Based upon this findings, the Advisory Committee advised that “Tilburg University cannot remain passive and must take action”¹² and made the following recommendations:

1. “Exchange: Do not send students and staff from Tilburg University to the Israeli partner universities but maintain the possibility of receiving students and staff from the Israeli partners.
2. Research: Suspend, within the legal and administrative frameworks, the research collaborations with academic partners in Israel.
3. Future Partnerships: Apply the precautionary principle and ensure that new research, education, and business collaborations with partners and activities that may contribute to systematic and gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms are submitted to the Advisory Committee.

¹⁰ Tilburg University, *Israel-Gaza: Collaborations with Academic Partners* (2024) 9.

<<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/sites/default/files/download/Definitief%20Advies%20Engels.pdf>>

Accessed 27 May 2025.

¹¹ *ibid* 5.

¹² *ibid* 22.

4. Awareness: Create awareness among Tilburg University staff regarding sensitive collaborations. Ensure that researchers reflect on with whom research is conducted prior to entering into partnerships. Ensure proper embedding of the normative rights assessment framework and associated governance. Establish an implementation plan that ensures greater knowledge of human rights and better awareness of with whom research is done among Tilburg University staff. To this end, implement the Quick Scan sensitive partnerships. Ensure that it is accompanied by an information campaign on human rights and knowledge security (dual use).¹³

The Executive Board at Tilburg University provided an update on 7th May 2025 which outlined actions taken on foot of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.¹⁴ Drawing a distinction between institutional cooperation and collaboration between individual staff members or projects, the Executive Board advised all staff who wish to engage in future collaborations to “carry out careful and critical assessment to ensure that the project does not contribute to potential human rights violations”. Following refusal to engage in dialogue by Bar-Ilan University and Reichman University, the decision was taken to unilaterally suspend institutional cooperation. In practice, this means that no staff or students will be sent from Tilburg University to these institutions until “substantial change in the situation gives reason to re-engage in dialogue or re-examine the situation”. No action was taken in relation to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem as dialogue is ongoing and has not been concluded.

II University of Galway

The working group to review links with Israeli and Palestinian institutions and industry at the University of Galway (the ‘Working Group’) was tasked with conducting a review “to establish a mechanism for analysing the links between the University of Galway and Israeli and Palestinian higher education institutions and take appropriate actions in response to the review”.¹⁵ In particular, the Working Group found the following:

¹³ *ibid* 23.

¹⁴ Tilburg University, ‘Tilburg University suspends ties with 2 Israeli universities’ (2025) <<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/about/organization/advisory-committee-collaborations/collaborations-partners-israel/tilburg-university-suspends-ties-two-israeli-universities>> Accessed 27 May 2025.

¹⁵ University of Galway, ‘Terms of Reference UMT Working Group for Reviewing links with Israeli and Palestinian Institutions and Industry’ (2024) 3. <<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/media/sanctuary/Terms-of-Reference-Working-Group---Links-with-Israeli-and-Palestinian-institutions-.pdf>> Accessed 27 May 2025.

- Investments and Suppliers: The university did not hold investments in any Israeli companies directly or indirectly, 5 Israeli companies supplied services to the University, and 8 non-Israeli companies which appeared on one or more blacklists were listed on the University's supplier system.¹⁶
- Institutional Partnerships and Mobility Agreements: The University did not have any institutional partnerships, Erasmus, international mobility, or exchange agreements with Israeli higher education institutions.¹⁷
- Research Collaboration: There were 11 research consortia in which the University and Israeli institutions were partners and a further 3 were recently concluded and no longer active. Over the period 2018-2023, 210 co-authored works listed academics from both University of Galway and Israeli institutions.
- Palestinian Higher Education Institutions / Scholars: Israel is committing 'scholasticide' through the destruction of higher education institutional buildings in Gaza.

Considering these findings, the Working Group recommended:

1. Human Rights Impact Assessment: That "the University expand on the current commitment to develop a Supply Chain Code of Conduct based on the revision of our current Supplier Charter" and develop "a Human Rights Policy with an associated set of guidelines outlined in a Human Rights Impact Assessment which will be applied to the broad range of institutional relationships, business and research".
2. Investments and Suppliers: That the position of not having any Israeli companies in investment portfolios is maintained and that the university "does not invest in other complicit companies or institutions implicated in human rights violations". That the international companies which appear on lists are subject to analysis under the Human Rights Impact Assessment once current contractual obligations are concluded. That blacklists are continuously monitored to ensure that Israeli suppliers to the University are not included in future. That current contractual obligations are adhered to and that supplier relationships are assessed and approved in accordance with a revised Supply Chain Code of Conduct.
3. Institutional Partnership and Mobility Agreements: That the University maintains the position of having no institutional partnerships, Erasmus, international mobility or exchange

¹⁶ University of Galway, 'Report on the Review of Links with Israeli and Palestinian Institutions and Industry' (2024) 8. <<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/media/sanctuary/Final-Report-of-the-Working-Group-to-Review-Links-with-Israeli-and-Palestinian-Institutions-and-Industry-July-2024.pdf>> Accessed 27 May 2025.

¹⁷ *ibid* 9.

agreements with Israeli higher education institutions. That the proposed Human Rights Policy is applied to all future institutional partnerships and mobility agreements.

4. Research Collaborations: That the Human Rights Impact Assessment is applied to active research consortia and, where a negative impact is established, explore whether cooperation with Israeli partners can be discontinued and, if not, take the necessary steps to withdraw from the consortia. All future research consortia should be subject to the Human Rights Impact Assessment. No recommendations are made on individual researcher collaborations.
5. Supports for Palestinian Institutions/Scholars: That links to Palestinian institutions are strengthened through the establishment of a strategic research and teaching fund which prioritises initiatives that assist academic institutions in Gaza and displaced Palestinian university students and staff, the provision of additional funding for a further 10 University of Sanctuary scholarships for displaced Palestinian students, and provision of funding for hosting up to 5 Palestinian Scholars at Risk.
6. Supporting Diversity and Inclusion of all Staff and Students: That current measures to support diversity and inclusion are maintained. That enhanced initiatives to raise awareness of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity are established.¹⁸

Following the publication of the Working Group's review, the University of Galway announced that it is supporting a Palestinian student to pursue a PhD, that it will establish a number of undergraduate scholarships for Palestinian students ahead of the 2025/2026 academic year, and has commenced the process of identifying and supporting a Palestinian academic to continue their career at the University through the Scholars at Risk programme.¹⁹

III Ghent University

The Committee on Human Rights Policy and Dual-Use Research (the 'Committee') at Ghent University undertook to reassess ongoing institutional cooperation agreements involving Israeli partners. The Committee found:

- Ghent University had 18 ongoing multi-partner collaborations involving Israeli partners funded through Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe and 1 multi-partner collaboration with an

¹⁸ *ibid* 10.

¹⁹ University of Galway, 'Supporting Palestinian Scholarship'

<<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/sanctuary/israel-palestine/>> Accessed 27 May 2025.

Israeli partner funded through Erasmus+. The Committee did not identify any risk of human rights violations related to these projects.

- Collaboration with Israeli government organisations are highly problematic in light of the International Court of Justice rulings and the University human rights policy.
- Collaboration with Israeli academic institutions which display a high degree of interdependence with the Israeli government, army, and/or security services are problematic considering the risk that these institutions are implicated in human rights violations.

Based on these findings, the Committee recommended:

1. That steps should be taken to see if project collaboration with Israeli institutions involved in human rights violations can be discontinued and, if this is not possible, steps should be taken to withdraw from the project.
2. Ongoing collaborations with partners not involved in serious human rights violations can continue. Where further research establishes a link between an Israeli partner institution and the Israeli government, steps should be taken to end cooperation with that partner.
3. That Ghent University and other European universities should take a leading role in making a plea to the European Union to suspend Israel's participation in European research and education programmes.

On 31 May 2025, Ghent University released a statement expressing the intention to follow these recommendations in their entirety.²⁰ The decision affected 12 research consortia under Horizon Europe and one Erasmus+ educational collaboration. The University initiated processes to either remove Israeli partners from these projects or withdraw its own participation, depending on feasibility and contractual obligations. By September and October 2024, Ghent University had analysed each affected project to determine appropriate courses of action. The University emphasized its commitment to upholding human rights standards while minimizing disruptions to researchers and respecting existing agreements.²¹

²⁰ Ghent University, 'Cooperation with Israeli partners - update 31 May 2024' (2024).

<<https://www.ugent.be/en/news-events/cooperation-with-israeli-partners-update-31-may-2024>> Accessed 27 May 2025.

²¹ Universiteit Gent, 'Discontinuing the Collaborations with Israeli Academic Institutions and Government Agencies: Update on the Decision taken by Ghent University on 31 May 2024' (2024) 4.

<<https://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/mission/human-rights/israel-8november2024.pdf>> Accessed 27 May 2025.

IV Resources consulted by the taskforce in considering the actions taken by other universities

	Date	Institution	Publication	Link
1	6/12/2024	Tilburg University	<i>Israel-Gaza: Collaborations with Academic Partners</i>	https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/sites/default/files/download/Definitief%20Advies%20Engels.pdf
2	2013	National University of Ireland (NUI)	<i>Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct</i>	https://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/HumanRights.pdf
3	06/2024	University of Galway	<i>Report on the Review of Links with Israeli and Palestinian Institutions and Industry</i>	https://www.universityofgalway.ie/media/sanctuary/Final-Report-of-the-Working-Group-to-Review-Links-with-Israeli-and-Palestinian-Institutions-and-Industry-July-2024.pdf
4	23/10/2019	Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad	<i>Recommendations for implementing a human rights assessments at the Flemish universities</i>	https://vlir.be/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/01-_2019_Human-rights-assessment-at-the-Flemish-universities.pdf
5	11/06/2024	Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam	<i>Framework Advisory Committee Sensitive Collaborations Version 1</i>	https://www.eur.nl/en/media/2024-07-framework-acsc-2024-06-11
6	11/12/2024	Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam	<i>Qualitative Assessment Model Sensitive Collaborations</i>	https://www.eur.nl/en/media/2024-11-20241112-acsc-qualitative-assessment-model-sensitive-collaborationsversiewebpage

7	30/08/2024	University of Antwerp	<i>Serious Breaches of Obligations Arising from Peremptory Norms of General International Law & Consequences for Institutional Cooperation with Universities in Israel</i>	https://medialibrary.uantwerpen.be/files/7154/746c261e-9427-4832-b1d0-9a47f79bdee2.pdf
8	2022	Universiteit Gent	<i>Developments on the War in Ukraine</i>	https://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/mission/human-rights/statement-russia.pdf
9	17/05/2024	Universiteit Gent	<i>Response of the Committee on Human Rights Policy to the Questions Received from 'Gent Students for Palestine'</i>	https://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/mission/human-rights/response-students.pdf
10	22/12/2023	Universiteit Gent	<i>Collaborations with Israeli and Palestinian Organisations: Update</i>	https://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/mission/human-rights/israel-palestine-update.pdf
11	23/11/2023	Universiteit Gent	<i>Clarification on Collaborations between Ghent University and Israeli and Palestinian Universities</i>	https://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/mission/human-rights/israel-palestine.pdf

12	8/11/2024	Universiteit Gent	<i>Discontinuing the Collaborations with Israeli Academic Institutions and Government Agencies: Update on the Decision taken by Ghent University on 31 May 2024</i>	https://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/mi ssion/human-rights/israel-8november2024.pdf
13	6/05/2024	Universiteit Gent	<i>Application of Ghent University's human rights policy to cooperation with Israeli partners (internal group mail of 6 May 2024)</i>	https://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/mi ssion/human-rights/cooperationisrael.pdf
14	30/05/2024	Universiteit Gent	<i>Advice on Current Collaborations between Ghent University and Israeli Entities</i>	https://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/mi ssion/human-rights/advice-israel-30may2024.pdf
15	16/05/2024	Universiteit Gent	<i>Advice of the Committee on Human Rights Policy and Dual-Use Research on Collaborations with Israeli Entities</i>	https://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/mi ssion/human-rights/advice-israel-16may2024.pdf/@@download/file/20240516%20Advies%20CMDUO%20IL%20(EN).pdf

Appendix 5. Summary of findings of Tilbury University regarding links between the military and Israeli universities

The following key findings supporting the conclusion of the Advisory Committee of Tilburg University in concluding that Israeli universities are intertwined with government, military intelligence, and military industries.

Education: “All public Israeli universities offer their facilities and expertise for the education and training of future military and intelligence personnel” through, amongst others, the Atuda program. This program offers deferred military service and partial-coverage of tuition to students in exchange for extended military service upon completion and is run by the IDF and the Israeli Ministry of Defence in cooperation with weapons manufacturers and the Administration for the Development of Weapons and Technological Services. Private universities are not part of Atuda but may run pre-military preparation courses. Tel Aviv University trains students for military intelligence; Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, and Bar-Ilan University offer programs for military, intelligence, and arms industry workers; and University of Haifa houses the Israeli National Defense College, the IDF War College, and the Tactical Command College.²²

Research and Commercial relationships: A number of universities also have “centers, think tanks, and institutes where research is conducted or advice is given on national security and military strategies (...) and which also maintain close ties to defense”. These links arise through specified purpose of a center (such as the Centre for Security Science and Technology at Technion), employment of persons who previously held senior positions in the Israeli military and security services (such as the Institute for National Security Studies and the Yuval Ne’eman Workshop for Science, Technology, and Security at Tel Aviv University, the International Counter Terrorism Institute at Reichman University. And the Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University), through the provision of funding from the Israeli Military of Defence or funding and facilities from weapons companies (Technion, Tel Aviv University, Ben Gurion University, Ariel University, and Bar-Ilan University), university commercial branches that provide knowledge about military applications (T3 at Technion, Yissum at Hebrew University, BIRAD at Bar-Ilan University, and Ramot at Tel Aviv University), or investments in industries involved in Israeli activities in Gaza (such as investment by Tel Aviv University in startups developing drones for use in Gaza).²³

²² Tilburg University Committee on Partnerships, *Israel-Gaza: Collaborations with Academic Partners* (2024) 15.

²³ Tilburg University Committee on Partnerships, *Israel-Gaza: Collaborations with Academic Partners* (2024) 16.

Expressions of support: While there is limited evidence of Israeli academic institutions explicitly condemning the activities in the OPT, a number of universities, including Tel Aviv University, Bar-Ilan University, and Reichman University, have published express statements of support from the aforementioned think tanks and centres on their websites.²⁴

Academic freedom: The current climate in Israel inspires doubt surrounding the ability of academics to speak out critically against the activities in the OPT. Specific reference was made to Palestinian Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kervorkian who was suspended from Hebrew University and subsequently arrested and detained for accusing Israel of genocide, the negative public reaction and ‘naming and shaming’ of academics critical of Israel activities, and difficulties faced by Palestinian students in Israeli institutions who wish to speak critically.²⁵

²⁴ Tilburg University Committee on Partnerships, *Israel-Gaza: Collaborations with Academic Partners* (2024) 17.

²⁵ Tilburg University Committee on Partnerships, *Israel-Gaza: Collaborations with Academic Partners* (2024) 17.

Appendix 6. Details of companies in respect of which divestment is recommended

Camtek Ltd €3,335 Israel Information Technology. • Camtek Ltd develops and manufactures high-end inspection and metrology equipment for the semiconductor industry. Camtek's systems inspect and measure wafers throughout the production process of semiconductor devices.

CyberArk Software Ltd €15,332 Israel Information Technology. • CyberArk Software Ltd is a provider of information technology (IT) security solutions that protect organisations from cyber-attacks.

Energix Renewable Energies Ltd €5,563 Israel Utilities. • Energix Renewable Energies Ltd is engaged in the alternative energy sector and invests in wind energy projects.

Global-E Online Ltd €264 Israel Information Technology. Global-E Online Ltd is engaged primarily in software development, having developed an e-commerce platform known as Global-e, which enables direct-to-consumer cross-border e-commerce.

Monday.Com Ltd €19,359 Israel Information Technology • Monday.Com Ltd is engaged primarily in the software sector and provides a cloud-based platform that enables its users to create custom applications and project management software to enhance team collaboration and streamline workflows across business functions including project management, CRM and marketing.

NICE Ltd €21,370 Israel Information Technology. • NICE Ltd. is a global enterprise software provider focused on Customer Interactions Solutions, Financial Crime and Compliance Solutions. The Company serves contact centres, back-office operations and retail branches across various industries including communications, banking, insurance, healthcare, business process outsourcing etc.

Nova Ltd €9,124 Israel Information Technology. • Nova Ltd provides metrology solutions for the semiconductor manufacturing industry, offering in-line optical and x-ray stand-alone metrology systems, as well as integrated optical metrology systems.

Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd €25,924 • Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd is a pharmaceutical company which operates via three segments - North America, Europe and International Markets - with each segment managing the product portfolio in its region including generics, specialty and over-the-counter products.

Wix.com Ltd €19,360 Israel Information Technology. Wix.com Ltd is engaged in the provision of a web development platform enabling businesses and organisations to take businesses, brands and workflow online. The Company provides solutions to operate various aspects of business online, such as selling goods, taking reservations, scheduling and confirming appointments in specific

verticals, including retail and online stores, service providers, hotel and property management, music and restaurants.