

## **Faculty Open Letter to President Claudine Gay**

Dear President Gay,

As faculty and officers of Harvard, we have been gravely concerned about the unfolding violence in Palestine and Israel over the past few days. Many of us took issue with your [October 9 and October 10 statements](#), which reproduced the differential valuing of Israeli and Palestinian lives. We write today regarding a matter much more local and directly related to your leadership: students' safety and wellbeing. The administration's refusal to actively protect the free speech of Palestinian, Arab, Black, and Muslim students has had a chilling and dangerous effect across campus. Indeed, the failure to even mention the words "Palestine" or "Palestinians"—except in one passing reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—or to condemn the killing of Palestinian civilians, is to willfully ignore the fact that it is Palestinian and allied students who are being targeted on our campus.

Over the last week, a number of students have been subjected to a concerted and escalating campaign of harassment, intimidation, and racist hate speech, both online and on campus. Some students have received death threats in reaction to their affiliation—perceived or real—with groups critical of Israeli policies or viewpoints. In several instances, Palestinian, Arab, Black, and Muslim students have been targeted not for any viewpoints expressed but for the very fact of being members of those communities. Large mobile screens displaying the photos and names of Harvard students and calling them "anti-Semites" circulated in Harvard Square. Photos of these displays, which [The Crimson](#) terms "[doxxing trucks](#)," have been circulating on social media, further endangering students' safety. Several students reported that their family members were located online and thereafter harassed and directly threatened.

Some of our students are being attacked and/or threatened on our campus and broader area and in the media even as their relatives and loved ones are being bombarded in Gaza or imprisoned in the West Bank. By now, we all know that Hamas launched its surprise attack against Israel, including the kibbutzim massacres, on October 7. Hamas's offensive caused unjustifiable and condemnable civilian casualties. The violence did not begin then. Systemic Israeli state violence has defined Palestinian life in Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip since 1948. [The dispossession of Palestinian land by ever-expanding settlements](#), the [construction of educational institutions on settlement land](#) to solidify the occupation, the routine [incarceration](#) and [killing of Palestinian protestors](#), [the eviction of Palestinians and destruction of their homes](#), and the [gunning down of Palestinian journalists](#) are but a few examples. In this situation, every measure of self-defense by a people without a state or an army against a US-backed nuclear power has been subject to immediate censure. The Gaza Strip, described by Human Rights Watch as the [world's largest open-air prison](#), has been under Israeli blockade since 2007. Restrictions on access to food, water, medical aid, electricity, and basic life necessities have defined the everyday lives of the over 2.4 million Palestinians in Gaza, [55% of whom are children](#) and more than 70% of whom are refugees denied the right of return to their homes. Israel waged wars on Gaza in 2008-09, 2014, 2021, and 2022, which together led to the killing of almost 4,000 Palestinians.

Yet, this moment is like no other. There has been an [unprecedented](#) loss of Palestinian, Israeli, and other lives in the last seven days. Open calls for the outright eradication of Palestinians are echoing

in the United States and abroad. Palestinian families have been killed in their entirety in one blow. All signs indicate that this is just the beginning. As Israel continues its indiscriminate bombing of civilian spaces—homes, schools, universities, hospitals, ambulances—it has also cut off civilian infrastructures of food, water, fuel, and medicine essential for the sustenance of life. This kind of collective punishment against civilians, whom the Israeli government has long racially dehumanized and now describes as “[human animals](#),” is illegal under international law.

For us at Harvard, too, this moment is like no other. Your presidential inauguration brought much needed hope and inspiration. We trusted your resolute commitment to inclusion, such that historically underrepresented and silenced communities might feel a greater sense of belonging at Harvard. We appreciate your [October 12 video response](#) in which you commit to free expression, acknowledge people’s pain and grief in this difficult moment, and reject hate and harassment based on identity, faith, and belief. We remain dismayed that you have not once mentioned the words “Palestinian” or “Palestine.” Your words and actions in the days to come will have a huge impact on all our students, on our campus, and indeed across the country. Publicly stating that you see our Palestinian students in their suffering and humanity can make a palpable difference.

We call on you, and the Harvard leadership, to publicly and unequivocally condemn the intimidation and harassment of Palestinian, Arab, Black, and Muslim students and other supporters of Palestinian liberation at Harvard. The leadership should denounce all forms of racism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia, including antisemitism and anti-Palestinian racism. The leadership should hold responsible all those involved in the attacks against our students and provide adequate measures to protect them. It is our collective responsibility to foster a safe environment for all Harvard students.

**To add your signature: <https://forms.gle/gGSQZ7e1iuZEfUVA7>**

1. Walter Johnson, Professor of History and African and African American Studies
2. Kirsten Weld, Professor of History
3. John Womack, Jr., ‘59, ‘66 Robert Woods Bliss Professor of Latin American History and Economics, Emeritus
4. Christopher Hasty, Walter W. Naumburg Professor of Music, Emeritus
5. Mary T. Bassett, François Xavier Bagnoud Professor of the Practice of Health and Human Rights, Harvard Chan School of Public Health
6. Duncan Kennedy, Carter Professor of General Jurisprudence, Harvard Law School, Emeritus
7. Cemal Kafadar, Professor of History, Vehbi Koç Professor of Turkish Studies, Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies
8. Rosie Bsheer, Frederick S. Danziger Associate Professor of History
9. Sidney Chalhoub, David and Peggy Rockefeller Professor of History and of African and African American Studies, History Department Chair
10. Lucien Castaing-Taylor, John Cowles Professor of Art and of Anthropology
11. Ali Asani, Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies and Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures

12. Ousmane Kane, Alwaleed Professor of Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society and Professor of African and African American Studies
13. Eleanor Craig, Program Director and Lecturer, Committee on Ethnicity, Migration, Rights
14. Sara Roy, Associate, Center for Middle Eastern Studies
15. Lucie White, Louis A. Horvitz Professor of Law, Harvard Law School
16. Atalia Omer, T. J. Dermot Dunphy Visiting Professor of Religion, Violence, and Peacebuilding, Harvard Divinity School
17. Vijay Iyer, Professor of African and African American Studies
18. Michelle Morse, Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School
19. Jessica Fjeld, Lecturer on Law, Harvard Law School
20. Khameer Kidia, Instructor, Harvard Medical School
21. Diane Moore, Associate Dean of Religion and Public Life at Harvard Divinity School
22. Hussein Rashid, Assistant Dean for Religion and Public Life and Lecturer on Religion and Public Life, Harvard Divinity School
23. Bram Wispelwey, Instructor, Harvard Medical School and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
24. Kayty Himmelstein, Fellow, Mass General Brigham
25. Steffie Woolhandler, Lecturer (formerly Professor), Harvard Medical School
26. David U. Himmelstein, Lecturer (formerly Associate Professor), Harvard Medical School
27. Joel Suarez, Assistant Professor in History and The Committee on Degrees in Social Studies
28. Tara K. Menon, Assistant Professor of English
29. Adaner Usmani, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Social Studies
30. Mohamed Jarraya, Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School
31. Mark Eisenberg, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School
32. Joia S. Mukherjee, Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School
33. Martha Sweezy, Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School
34. Mohamed Elbrolosy, Junior Fellow, Harvard Society of Fellows
35. Gordon Schiff, Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School
36. Christian A. Williams, Clinical Instructor, Harvard Law School
37. Kendra Albert, Clinical Instructor, Harvard Law School / Lecturer, Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality
38. Musa Syeed, Associate Senior Lecturer in English
39. Neel Mukherjee, Associate Senior Lecturer in English
40. Soham Patel, Postdoctoral Fellow, Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History
41. Sage Goodwin, Postdoctoral Fellow, Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History
42. Lorenzo Bondioli, Postdoctoral Fellow, History and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
43. Martha Biondi, Visiting Scholar in the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History
44. J.T. Roane, Visiting Scholar at the Charles Warren Center for American History

45. Jacinda Tran, Postdoctoral Fellow, Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History
46. R.H. Lossin, Postdoctoral Fellow, Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History
47. Erik Baker, Lecturer on the History of Science
48. Huma Farid, Assistant Professor in Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Biology at Harvard Medical School
49. Nader Uthman, Senior Preceptor in Arabic, Director of the Modern Language Programs, NELC
50. Sawsan Abdulrahim, Visiting Fellow, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
51. Harun Khan, Postdoctoral fellow, Department of Health Policy & Management, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
52. Matylda Figlerowicz, Junior Fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows and Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature
53. Joe Glynnias, Junior Fellow, Harvard Society of Fellows
54. Arunabh Ghosh, Associate Professor of History
55. Sanjay Jolly, Program Fellow, Harvard Law School
56. Adam Haber, Assistant Professor, Harvard Chan School of Public Health
57. Britt Rusert, Visiting Scholar, Hutchins Center for African & African American Research
58. Rebecca Hogue, Postdoctoral Fellow, Mahindra Humanities Center
59. Shinyi Hsieh, Hou Family Postdoctoral Fellow in Taiwan Studies
60. Karen Huang, Lecturer on History & Literature
61. Zaib un Nisa Aziz, Postdoctoral Fellow, Weatherhead Research Cluster on Global Transformations
62. Robyn Spencer- Antoine, Faculty Fellow, Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History
63. Adhy Kim, Lecturer in History & Literature
64. Nemesio Cervantes, Visiting Scholar at the Charles Warren Center for American History
65. Chance Bonar, Lecturer on Advanced Greek, Harvard Divinity School
66. Muhammad Habib, Preceptor in Arabic, Director of the Modern Language Programs in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
67. Alejandra Caraballo, Clinical Instructor, Harvard Law School Cyberlaw Clinic
68. Martha Ellen Katz, Instructor Harvard Medical School
69. Margareta Matache, Lecturer, Harvard Chan School of Public Health
70. David Joselit, Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Art, Film, and Visual Studies
71. Jesse B. Bump, Lecturer on Global Health Policy, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health
72. Shalini H. Shah, Instructor, Harvard Medical School
73. Jarvis T. Chen, Senior Lecturer on Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
74. Jake Ryann Sumibcay, Harvard Chan Yerby Fellow and FXB Health & Human Rights Research Fellow, Harvard Chan School of Public Health
75. Teren Sevea, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies
76. C. Namwali Serpell, Professor of English

77. Ju Yon Kim, Professor of English

78. Jon Hanson, Alan A. Stone Professor of Law

79. Steven C Caton, Khalid bin Abdullah bin Abdulrahman Al Saud Professor of  
Contemporary Arab Studies