

SOUTH AFRICAN ACADEMICS CALL FOR UJ TO TERMINATE RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAELI INSTITUTION

Supported by: Professors Kader Asmal, Allan Boesak, Breyten Breytenbach, John Dugard, Antjie Krog, Mahmood Mamdani, Barney Pityana and Archbishop Desmond Tutu

As members of the academic community of South Africa, a country with a history of brute racism on the one hand and both academic acquiescence and resistance to it on the other, we write to you with deep concern regarding the relationship between the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU). The relationship agreement, presented as ‘merely the continuation’ of a ‘purely scientific co-operation’ is currently being reviewed owing to concerns raised by UJ students, academics and staff.

As academics we acknowledge that all of our scholarly work takes place within larger social contexts – particularly in institutions committed to social transformation. South African institutions are under an obligation to revisit relationships forged during the apartheid era with other institutions that turned a blind eye to racial oppression in the name of ‘purely scholarly’ or ‘scientific work’.

The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories has had disastrous effects on access to education for Palestinians. While Palestinians are not able to access universities and schools, Israeli universities produce the research, technology, arguments and leaders for maintaining the occupation. BGU is no exception, by maintaining links to both the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and the arms industry BGU structurally supports and facilitates the Israeli occupation. An example of BGU’s complicity is its agreement with the IDF to provide full university qualification to army pilots within a special BGU programme. Furthermore, BGU is also complicit in the general discrimination at Israeli universities against Palestinians and Palestinian citizens of Israel.

It is clear to us that any connection with an institution so heavily vested in the Israeli occupation would amount to collaboration with an occupation that denigrates the values and principles that form the basis of any vibrant democracy. These are not only the values that underpin our post-apartheid South Africa, but are also values that we believe UJ has come to respect and uphold in the democratic era.

We thus support the decision taken by UJ to reconsider the agreement between itself and BGU. Furthermore, we call for the relationship to be suspended until such a time that, at minimum, the state of Israel adheres to international law and BGU, (as did some South African universities during the struggle against South African apartheid) openly declares itself against the occupation and withdraws all privileges for the soldiers who enforce it.

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- Prof Peter Alexander (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
- Dr Stephanie Allais (UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH)
- Dr Shireen Ally (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Waheeda Amien (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Prof Kader Asmal (UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE)
- Ivor Baatjes (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
- Dr Nasima Badsha (CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY)
- Shahana Bassadien (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
- Umesh Bawa (UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE)
- Dr Rashid Begg (STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY)
- Prof Jane Bennet (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Dr Shamim Bodhanya (UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL)
- Prof Allan Boesak (STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY)
- Prof Patrick Bond (UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL)
- Prof Nico Botha (STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY)
- Prof Breyten Breytenbach (NEW YORK UNIVERSITY)
- Dr Andrea Brigaglia (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Prof Heather Brookes (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
- Dr Mariza Brooks (UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE)
- Imraan Buccus (UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL)
- Prof Ronelle Carolissen (STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY)
- Claire Ceruti (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
- Dr Janet Cherry (RHODES UNIVERSITY)

(NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY)
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- Nicola Cloete (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
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- Dr Linda Cooper (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Stanford Cronje (CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY)
- Prof Yousuf Dadoo (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA)
- Prof Suleman Dangor (UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL)
- Dr Marcelle Dawson (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
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- Prof Jane Duncan (RHODES UNIVERSITY)
- Nazeem Edwards (STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY)
- Prof Piet Erasmus (UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE)
- Dr Zimitri Erasmus (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Prof Farid Esack (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
- Dr Ahmed Essa (UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL)
- Prof Faadiel Essop (STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY)
- Prof Aslam Fataar (STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY)
- Judy Favish (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Dr Washiela Fish (UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE)
- Dr Tony Fluxman (RHODES UNIVERSITY)

- Dr Kally Forrest (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Prof Steven Friedman (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
- Dr Faaz Gierdien (STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY)
- Dr Kelly Gillespie (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Prof Clive Glaser (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Prof Daryl Glaser (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
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- Dr Heidi Grunebaum (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
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- Dr Monica Hendricks (RHODES UNIVERSITY)
- Prof Fred Hendricks (RHODES UNIVERSITY)
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- Prof Jeff Jawitz (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Prof Mohamed Jeebhay (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Prof Jennifer Jelsma (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Prof Shamil Jeppe (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Prof Iqbal Jhazbhay (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA)

- Kezia Lewins (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
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- Ayesha Mall (DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY)
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- Prof Achille Mbembe (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Prof Ebrahim Moosa (DUKE UNIVERSITY)
- Prof Najma Moosa (UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE)
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- Trevor Ngwane (UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL)
- Dr Pamela Nichols (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Dr Noor Nieftagodien (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Dr Dhiraj Kumar Nite (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
- Lulamile Ntonzima (CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY)
- Dr Monde Ntwasa (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
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- Gadija Petker (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
- Prof Innocent Pikirayi (UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA)
- Prof Kriben Pillay (UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL)
- Dr Suren Pillay (HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL)
- Richard Pithouse (RHODES UNIVERSITY)
- Prof Barney Pityana (VC) (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA)
- Dr Leonard Praeg (RHODES UNIVERSITY)
- Prof Aminur Rahim (UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE)
- Brian Ramadiro (UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE)
- Dr Thiven Reddy (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Megan Riley (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Prof Christian Rogerson (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Prof Monty Roodt (RHODES UNIVERSITY)
- Dr Shamiel Salie (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Dr Vishwas Satgar (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Dr Ursula Scheidegger (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Cassim Seedat (DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY)

- Fatima Seedat (MCGILL UNIVERSITY)
- Dr Fredrico Settler (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Dr Sa’diyya Shaikh (UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE TOWN)
- Prof Mala Singh (OPEN UNIVERSITY)
- Dr Luke Sinwell (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
- Dr Tahir Fuzile Sitoto (UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL)
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- Prof Roger Southhall (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Dr Jane Starfield (UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG)
- Prof Raymond Suttner (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA)
- Prof Leslie Swartz (STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY)
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- Prof Eric Worby (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Dr Leo Zellig (UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND)
- Rev Sthembiso Zwane (UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL)

*INSTITUTIONAL NAMES ARE FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES ONLY.

This petition was first disseminated on the 05th of September, within two days it was signed by over 100 South African academics from more than 12 SA universities. To date it has more than 200 signatories from 22 academic institutions.