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IU Faculty and Staff for Israel Profoundly Concerned about Antisemitism Expressed at Anti-Israel Campus Student Protests

An Open Letter to IU Trustees, Bloomington Administrators, and Bloomington Faculty

We are a group of IU faculty and staff profoundly concerned about the escalating rise of antisemitism and harassment of Jews besetting IU and other American campuses, including this past week's activities in Bloomington and at many other universities.

We are committed to free speech as a fundamental right. But there is an important difference between protected speech and harassment. We have received reliable reports that the behavior of some protesters has crossed over to targeted harassment of Jewish students. Freedom of speech is threatened by these kinds of violent actions, and we oppose them.

We urge our colleagues and friends at Indiana University to remember that Hamas' atrocious assault on Israel on October 7, 2023 was the largest and most violent attack on Jews since the end of the Holocaust. It exemplifies the very definition of genocide: "the deliberate killing of a large number of a people or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation." As clearly stated in its Charter, Hamas's explicit aim is to kill Jews and destroy Israel. Thus, those at IU and other campuses who vocally align themselves with Hamas are enablers of annihilationist Jew-hatred. We are resolved to stand against them.

We also urge our colleagues and friends to remember that IU has a longstanding policy in place against proposals to boycott and "divest" from Israel. So does the state of Indiana. We wholeheartedly support our university's academic ties to Israeli universities and welcome Israeli students, faculty members, and artists to Bloomington. Some of our leading faculty members and most outstanding students are Israelis. We are grateful to have them with us.

We also oppose the pervasive, ill-informed, and mean-spirited indictments of Israel as a “racist, apartheid, fascist, and genocidal” state. Israel is none of those things, but it’s now routinely denounced as such by those – including many on Dunn Meadow -- who chant “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” and call for an “Intifada Revolution.”

The first of these calls, now chanted almost liturgically, would result in the end of the world’s only Jewish majority state, a democracy in which members of minority groups, including Arabs, enjoy the same rights as Jewish citizens. Israel’s universities champion academic freedom, and all Israeli citizens have the right to vote and can freely choose their government. Thus, we regard the call to nullify Israel and all it has achieved over the past 75 years as reprehensible.

Do those who cry out “Intifada, Intifada” know that they are calling for actions that have led to some 140 terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, which killed over 1,000 of them? Some clearly do. For according to eyewitness reports, there were people in Dunn Meadow who loudly proclaimed, “We are Hamas” and “Death to all Jewish people.” Did they know – or care – they were expressing sentiments of the most vicious sort?

These outrageous actions are deeply troubling to a great many people in Bloomington, across the United States, and around the world. Under the cover of a militant anti-Zionism, antisemitism has been heightened to a level of virulence not seen in decades. Left unchecked, it can do no end of damage, not only to Jewish lives but to the foundations of liberal democracy itself.

Over the years, IU has proven to be a welcoming campus for people of many different backgrounds, including large numbers of Jewish faculty members, students, and staff. We want to keep it that way, and we urge the IU leadership, as well as our colleagues and friends, to join us in opposing any and all moves to undermine the campus climate through virulent expressions of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel hostility. Such behavior is antagonistic to common decency and should have no place among us.

Signed by:

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