



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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To: UCSB Chancellor Henry Yang; UCSB Executive Vice Chancellor David Marshall

Re: Gaza solidarity encampment

We, faculty members of the Sociology Department at UC Santa Barbara, write to show our support for the peaceful protests in solidarity with Gaza on our campus. We are gravely concerned about the violence that has been unleashed against pro-Palestinian student encampments and rallies across the United States *by their own college and university administrators*, including at UCLA and UC San Diego. We urge our university leadership to take a different approach. Our leadership and administrators must remember that these are our students. We must protect them at all costs, especially as we, their educators and mentors, have provided them with some of the critical thinking skills and knowledge that have led them to their courageous stance. For this reason, they should be encouraged, nurtured, and taken seriously, as they provide a guiding light for our entire campus to follow.

The student protesters, in addition to being peaceful, are making clear-eyed demands. The university should meet with the students, hear their concerns, and act accordingly. Should you, our administrative leadership, disagree with any of protestors' arguments and demands, we urge you to provide them (and the entire UCSB community) with an explicit argument, logic, and rationale for your perspective (and actions), including how it upholds the vision and mission of the University of California, including academic freedom. The pro-Palestinian protesters have laid out their ethical and moral commitments, and how those lead to their behaviors on campus, including encampments, in solidarity with Gaza.

As college faculty, instructors, and researchers at UCSB, we are complicit in the "plausible genocide" against the people in Gaza, as articulated in the International Court of Justice preliminary ruling in the South African case against Israel. For this reason, it is our duty to support our students who are demanding divestment from entities supporting the military assault against Gaza, which has obliterated most of its institutions, including all its colleges/universities. As faculty, we understand the importance of educational institutions for a people and we grieve and are distraught at the destruction of these institutions – and others, including hospitals and libraries – in Gaza. The leadership of our university should understand the enormity and criminality of leveling educational (and other) institutions to the ground.

Following the failure of administrators at colleges and universities elsewhere across the United States (and abroad) to protect their own students, and following the lead of our colleagues in the Sociology Department at UCLA, we call on UCSB to:

- (1) Assure and protect the right to peaceful protests.
- (2) No external police (or other state coercive presence) in response to peaceful protests on campus.
- (3) No disciplinary action against student protesters.
- (4) Engage in substantive negotiations with students over their demands.