To Whom It May Concern,

My name is [name] and I am a student currently enrolled in [University name] I am writing to express my deep disappointment regarding the recent statements made by [University name] concerning the recent violence between Israel and Gaza.

These statements, while intended to address the recent situation, have presented a one-sided perspective showing solidarity and concern only for Israel with no acknowledgment of the ongoing and historical suffering and death of Palestinians. This is an unbalanced and biased stance that can be harmful to the institution’s reputation and, more importantly, to the numerous students, faculty, and staff within your district who identify as Muslim, Palestinian, Arab, or Jewish. Studies by CAIR-CA and other organizations have shown that these marginalized students are already at an increased risk of peer-to-peer bullying, discrimination, and harassment from school administrators and faculty. When educators and academic institutions make one-sided public statements on the situation in Palestine and Israel that fail to acknowledge the realities, struggles, and humanity of Muslim, Palestinian, and Arab students, this can contribute to a hostile school environment, bullying, harassment, and retaliation.

I want to take this as an opportunity to not only discourage this unfair perspective but to educate our faculty, administration, and leadership. Over the past 75 years, the Palestinian people have experienced immense suffering, displacement, and a 15-year-long inhumane siege and blockade in Gaza, which has been described as “the largest open-air prison” by human rights organizations. The blockade, which has been ruthlessly imposed by Israel by land, sea, and air has effectively deprived Palestinian residents of freedom of movement and crippled Gaza’s economy. It has severely restricted access to basic human needs, like food, clean water, electricity, and medicine. Israel’s war crimes against Palestinians of all faiths have been well documented by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, B’Tselem, and others who have unequivocally declared Israel an apartheid state.

The United Nations has repeatedly deemed Israel’s aggressions in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank as “illegal under international law” and a “substantial obstacle to peace.” The death toll of the conflict in Palestine-Israel is disproportionately borne by the Palestinians. Between 2008 and 2021, at least 5,739 Palestinians and 251 Israelis were killed. According to the UN, the conflict has taken the lives of 23 Palestinians for each Israeli. Over the same time period, at least 121,438 Palestinians and 5,682 Israelis were injured.

Since Oct. 7, 2023, a significant escalation in violence has resulted in a catastrophic humanitarian disaster in Gaza. As of Jan. 12, 2024, the updated figures reveal a tragic toll, with Palestinian deaths surpassing 23,357, while Israeli deaths from the Oct. 7 attacks are estimated to be 1,200. The bombardment of Gaza has displaced 1.9 million people, destroyed critical infrastructure like hospitals, schools, bakeries, mosques, and churches, and caused a life-threatening humanitarian crisis. Human rights organizations and advocates from all over the world have stated that Israel’s cutting off of food, water, fuel, and healthcare amounts to war crimes.  These current statistics highlight the ongoing impact of the conflict, underscoring the urgency for resolution and international attention. It is essential that your school keep in mind that the Palestinian people have endured decades of dispossession, dehumanization, and annexation under the illegal Israeli occupation and apartheid system. Their humanity should be recognized and respected as they face the devastating consequences of violence, including the recent Israeli airstrikes in Gaza.

This letter is not asking you to ignore the suffering of Israelis and it in no way condones violence perpetrated on civilians. It does, however, challenge you to identify the overwhelming hypocrisy of the recent statements—noting that no such unilateral support was previously offered to Palestinians who have been occupied, brutalized, and terrorized for over seven decades.

For decades, those of us in the academic and activist community who have openly criticized Zionism have had to face relentless harassment, threats to our safety, nonsensical accusations of antisemitism, and have had our careers and academic pursuits threatened. Your statements enable those inside and outside our community to continue these attacks—attacks that are now emboldened by your recent careless and dangerous rhetoric. I urge you to be thoughtful and steadfast in your understanding of the nuanced, complex, and long-lasting political crisis to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all students, faculty, and staff.

I am calling on all school faculty, administrators, staff, and leadership to adopt a balanced view that ensures a welcoming and safe environment. I ask that in lieu of the recent biased statements, you also issue a statement affirming the pain and suffering of the Palestinians—especially the more than two million Palestinians in occupied Gaza, half of whom are children—and who have been called “human animals” by Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. These humans, who are being indiscriminately bombed by Israel at this very moment, are also worthy of your outrage.

I look forward to your prompt response to my correspondence.

Sincerely,

[Your name and contact information]