Board of Directors Meeting # 8a October 23, 2023 – 7:00 pm UC 441



**Members Present:** Jonah Greenhut, Daniel Spinner, Jake Levy, Mason Friebe, Mauricio Fernandez, Daniel Neiterman, Noam Einy, Natalie Wilkinson, Abdul Rafe Khan, Rachel Marcus, Ethan Gouveia, Samantha Scott, Chikaima Ifezue, Jayden Khan, Naomi Amayaevbo, Eknoor Walia, Marcus Aldred-Ganhao

Executive Present: Shaima Alam, Junpyo Lee, Samar Tariq

Chair: Cameron Olesen Policy & Transition Coordinator: Colleen Bovay Scribe: Nikki Tu

**PLEASE NOTE:** this session was initially conducted in-camera, in accordance with the CSA Rules of Order. Per a majority vote of the Board of Directors on February 28, 2024, these in-camera minutes have been declared public and have been posted as such.

MOTION: To move In Camera.

Moved: Jake Levy Seconded: Marcus Aldred-Ganhao

# **Motion Carried**

A few members inquired the process of clarifying a conflict of interest. The Chair clarified that a conflict of interest would indicate a member who stands to benefit financially, by position, or obtaining power. A member may be biased but that is not a conflict of interest.

Member Wilkinson mentioned that some members in the room would benefit from silencing others' voices. In turn, they gain social power and personal gain.

The Chair clarified that point does not compromise their position; there is no allocation of funds or power. The Chair reminded all members to remain unbiased and that they have a duty to their organization and to their constituency.

For the benefit of members who have not participated in an in-camera session, the Chair provided an overview of expectations.

# 8a.11.1. A Statement on the Current Middle East Conflict



**WHEREAS** On Wednesday October 18 a statement was approved by the CSA Board of Directors regarding the ongoing conflict in the Middle East;

**WHEREAS** This statement was extremely one-sided and perpetuates a dangerous narrative for the Palestinian students on campus;

**WHEREAS** With death tolls increasing, and millions of Palestinians being displaced, it is unjust to only put out a statement pushing one side of the conflict;

**WHEREAS** to properly represent the campus constituency, another statement needs to be published to ensure students feel supported by their student association;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the following statement (statement 1) be approved and shared with the student population on the CSA Instagram account;

**AND FURTHER** that the following statement (statement 2) be approved and shared with the student population on the CSA website;

Moved: Naomi Amayaevbo Seconded: Natalie Wilkinson

Member Wilkinson wanted to acknowledge that she was silent during the October 18 meeting. She further wanted to acknowledge the privilege she had to be silent in the first place, the privilege to not worry about family members or herself being forced out of their home, privilege of not worrying about access to food, water, or healthcare. The statement brought forward on October 18 only focused on one side of the story that perpetuated a dangerous narrative of the welfare of the oppressors over the oppressed. She was disappointed with the lack of respect and civility shown during the last meeting as no notice was given for the statement, and as members were texting and talking in group chats while not giving the respect they should as others shared their stories. We need to act in the students' best interest and the statement published did not consider the full student body, only one group. Palestinian students have been receiving threats, and many students feel silenced, as seen in the comments of the post. The current statement constructed was in consultation with the Palestinian Association, the Middle Eastern Student Association, the Muslim Student Association, and more. The publishing of this statement ensures students feel reflected within the student body. They were silenced on Thursday; they should not be silenced today. The statement from October 18 has no evidence and as an educational institution we must fight misinformation. Palestine has been colonized by the settler colony of Israel.

**MOTION**: to extend Member Wilkinson's speaking time by 5 additional minutes.

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**Moved**: Jonah Greenhut **Seconded**: Eknoor Walia

## **Motion Carried**

Member Wilkinson stated that Palestine has been faced with military occupation, land possession, and suffered marginalization of its citizens. The settler colony of Israel has cut off food, water, electricity, and medical supplies to Gaza. 2 million Gazan Palestinians have to rely on humanitarian aid. Gaza has been facing Israeli airstrikes. Once people are left without running water, food, and electricity, the outbreak of disease is imminent. Hospitals have been getting bombed and are on the brink of collapse. There were already signs of ethnic cleansing by Israel in 1948 with 750,000 Palestinians evicted. She implored the board to do research. This new statement addresses the root of the harm and contextualizes the conflict. More Palestinians lives have been lost by far. She asked members to vote yes in support for this statement and asked the board to understand their own privilege.

**MOTION**: to extend Member Amayaevbo's speaking time to 10-minutes.

Moved: Naomi Amayaevbo Seconded: Eknoor Walia

## **Motion Carried**

Member Amayaevbo mentioned the last statement brought a lot of facts but only pertaining to one side, and the CSA is supposed to represent all sides. Many voices do not feel represented or supported by the previous statement. The new statement includes voices that were not in the last one. There have been many student groups and associations that have been consulted in creating this new one. As a board member your duty is to represent all students in your constituency. As a board member there is no reason to make a pre-made statement without the consultation from all parties involved in this situation, it shows incompetence. Board directors need to be held accountable for all their choices including public voting. We should be able to answer questions students may have, they need to know who put forward, supported, or was against the motion. There is no point in redacting names.

The Chair clarified that members should not have technology present. Members who wish to take notes will need to request paper from the Chair or PTC and return to them afterwards to destruct.



Member Amayaevbo continued by stating lives have been lost on all sides, Palestine, Israel, Jewish, Muslim, and many others which needs to be acknowledged. We need to represent all student voices and not just personal opinions. She hoped all board directors can understand that not being heard is a problem many minorities face, people are dying in all ends, and it is not just one population. She hoped the board of directors can realize the privilege in Canada, being able to eat and not worry about tomorrow. This situation is bigger than us, we can never just be a one-sided statement. She hopes the board directors can approve this motion and see through any personal gains or privileges.

**MOTION**: to extend Member Walia's speaking time to 11-minutes.

**Moved**: Eknoor Walia **Seconded**: Daniel Neiterman

## **Motion Carried**

Member Walia announced that the following statement is from a Palestinian student on-campus who could not be here because our guests were asked to leave. The following is a summary of the statement.

The statements made by the CSA board of directors while intended to address the current situation had inadvertently presented a one-side perspective focusing on Israel without acknowledging the ongoing historical suffering of loss of life by Palestinians. This can have a detrimental impact on the reputation of our institution as it affects students, faculty, and staff who identify as Palestinian, Jewish, Muslim, or Arab. When academic institutions make a statement about complex international issues, they have a responsibility to ensure statements are informed and considerate of the diverse perspectives in their community. Failure to do so can contribute to a hostile environment including bullying and harassment for certain demographics. We need to condemn the actions that violate international law. We need to condemn the actions of Hamas, Israel's use of white phosphorus bombs, the interruption of essential services, collective punishment, attacks on medical facilities, and the targeting of civilians. The statement fails to include the words Palestine or Gaza even once. Such an omission is concerning when the board's mandate is to represent all students. As an Arab Muslim, the omission of Palestine or Gaza creates a sense of discomfort, particularly due to rising Islamophobia. Over 4,000 Palestinians have been killed since October 7, half being children. 75 years of immense suffering, displacement and 15 yearlong blockades in Gaza have left a mark on Palestinians. Between 2008-2021, at least 5,739 Palestinians and 251 Israelis have been killed. We must recognize the air strikes by Israel in Gaza, the illegal harvesting of organs of Palestinians, when soldiers consistently assaulted



worshippers during Ramadan, and the countless torture and rape of innocent children and women. Where was the board's condemnation for these actions? It is our sincere hope that the board can issue a more balanced statement that includes the suffering of all parties. We believe through open and informed dialogue; we can create a safe environment.

**MOTION**: to extend Member Levy's speaking time to 7-minutes.

Moved: Jake Levy Seconded: Jonah Greenhut

## **Motion Carried**

Member Levy felt that he is being called out by members of the board for not bringing the motion to the board with notice, despite that the board ultimately waived their right to notice by suspending the rules of order to allow the item on the agenda. The statement posted had a lot of backlash and the threats made were predominantly expressed towards the "board members who did this". One of his friends had threats stating people know where he lives, and they can come deal with him. All threats in all directions are unacceptable, and he hopes all comments can be turned off permanently.

VP External, Samar Tariq, believed there was a recording sound from Member Levy. Member Levy clarified that it was a sound of moving his notes. The Chair reminded the board that all recording is not permitted within in-camera sessions as it violates confidentiality. Member Levy stated that the sound is a WhatsApp notification and is unable to turn it off but will try if anyone knows how to.

VP External, Samar Tariq inquired about the process if the board loses confidence for an in-camera session, more specifically the hybrid structure of the meeting. The PTC provided an option of online members needing to turn on their cameras. The Chair clarified that everyone has signed a legal document pertaining to confidentiality.

Member Levy expressed that the current statement brought forward has a lot of incorrect facts and antisemitic language and would like to address a few of the claims. The first one being that Palestinians are oppressed, which he does not believe to be true. Palestinians face tremendous hardships as result of the current conflicts.

The Chair interrupted to request for members to minimize their outbursts while others are speaking.



Member Amayaevbo raised a point of information to ask what facts the speaker has regarding how the killing of a minority is not oppression.

Member Levy stated that much of this hardship stems from failures of the leaders of Gaza and the Palestinians to hold democratic elections to protect their human rights. If there was no threat of terrorism, Israel would not have to have these security measures. There used be many checkpoints in the Westbank which almost all have been removed due to the lack of threat. Before the war, Israel approved over 15,000 work permits for Palestinian civilians to enter Israel daily for work, which allows them to earn more. As for food and water being cut off from Gaza, Hamas kidnapped over 150 Israeli civilians, and in response, Israel stopped delivering essentials until they released the hostages. On October 18, Israel announced they would not prevent water, food, or medicine from being delivered to civilians, as long as the resources don't reach Hamas. Hamas has admitted to using hospitals as human shields. The claims about white phosphorus are incorrect. Israel used it in three past conflicts but have not used it in this war. White phosphorus is not illegal within international law.

**MOTION**: to add an additional 2-minutes to Member Levy's speaking time.

**Moved**: Jake Levy **Seconded**: Daniel Spinner

## **Motion Carried**

Member Levy wanted to talk about safety issues for him specifically and other members of the board. They have been in contact with the police as there have been threats made towards the people who supported the motion, and the release of the minutes from the prior meeting pose a safety risk. The Chair reminded Member Levy that discussion of the past meeting minutes must be saved until they are up for approval at a subsequent meeting.

Member Levy continued that for the past few days, it has been terrifying to be a Jewish student on campus. The cannon was painted free Palestine for three days, and it was not touched by anyone. Last night, someone painted it with Israeli messages, and just before this meeting, the cannon was vandalized during the day with claims of genocide.

**MOTION**: to extend Member Neiterman's speaking time to 11-minutes.

Moved: Daniel Neiterman Seconded: Daniel Spinner

# **MINUTES (In-Camera Session) - Publicized**

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#### Motion Carried

Member Neiterman noted his disappointment in the motion brought forward, as it isn't inclusive of the topic as a two-sided issue, which was previously expressed by members regarding the initial statement as well. He wished to address some of the points that have been made by members. He disagrees with comments that the initial statement presents a dangerous narrative, as the statement simply condemns the attack by a designated terrorist group, which reaffirms the CSAs policy against bigotry and hate. It did not take a political position about Israel or Palestine, deny peoples connection to the land, or undermine the right for selfdetermination for Jewish or Palestinian individuals. The statement condemns the actions of Hamas, who overwhelmingly targeted civilians, and it states the desire for peace. The statement also expresses zero tolerance for antisemitism. islamophobia, or bigotry. These declarations cannot be considered controversial, and they represent a moral stance. Member Neiterman noted the delegitimization of Israels existence as a legal state, which is misleading and lacks context regarding the Israeli Palestinian conflict. By stating that Palestine has been occupied by Israel for 75 years, they're stating that the existence of Israel constitutes an illegal occupation, which shows the inherent bias of the proposed statement. Israel withdrew all Israeli soldiers and civilians from Gaza in 2005. Hamas violently took over Gaza from the Palestinian authority in 2007 and have fired thousands of attacks on Israel since then. Member Neiterman noted the discussion of civilian causalities, as it has been misstated that Israel has targeted civilians. He cited quotes from sources that refute these claims. Member Neiterman noted that Hamas is the target of the current war, and it is internationally recognized as a terrorist group with genocidal intentions towards the Jewish community. He acknowledged the suffering occurring on each side of the current conflict and argued that the proposed statement does not support both groups. Member Neiterman addressed the claims of colonialism, noting that it is dehumanizing to the Jewish population who have Israel as their homeland. Both Israelis and Palestinians have a legitimate connection to the land and the right to self-determination. This claim fuels the conflict and does not acknowledge hundreds of years of Jewish history. Member Neiterman motivated that the proposed motion does not support inclusion and understanding at the University of Guelph, as it doesn't condemn the actions of Hamas, but rather discusses only one side of the issue. He encouraged members to vote no to the motion.

MOTION: to recess for 10-minutes.

Moved: Jonah Greenhut Seconded: Abdul Khan

#### **Motion Carried**

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MOTION: to extend the VP External's speaking time to 6-minutes.

Moved: Samar Tariq Seconded: Naomi Amayaevbo

#### **Motion Carried**

The VP External wished to speak from the perspective of an Executive. She noted that the CSA Executive has the priority of ensuring the wellbeing of the membership. She recognizes that some board members are advocating for Jewish students on campus who feel unsafe. The VP External reminded members of the motivation given by the President at the last meeting against the initial statement, noting that her warnings of what would happen, such as death threats, backlash, students not using our services, and distress to our operations have all unfolded. The warnings were ignored, and the situation we're facing now is the responsibility of those who passed the statement. The Executives who knew the risks have been dismissed by the board who haven't been in the Executive role or have the necessary knowledge of the operations. She wants the board to recognize that this was a mistake that has lost the confidence of the membership.

Member Abdul Khan wished to speak from personal experience as an international student. He noted that he has experienced a welcoming and inclusive campus since arriving in 2019, and he cares about the safety and inclusion of everyone on campus. He noted that when a statement is released just in support of a smaller minority, other people will feel that the group or organization has left them out of the picture completely, and nothing the organization has said in the past matters. Member Khan noted that it was saddening to see the prior statement get passed, and previous speakers have overlooked that we are the Central Student Association, and we're responsible for representing not just one body of students, but all students, clubs, and organizations on campus.

**MOTION:** to extend Member Abdul Khan's speaking time by an additional 1 minute.

Moved: Abdul Khan Seconded: Jonah Greenhut

#### **Motion Carried**



Member Khan continued that the prior statement was not a good look for the organization as the CSA says it values diverse backgrounds and identities. Putting out a statement that highlights the struggles of only one particular group undermines the efforts put into place by the CSA in the past.

**MOTION:** to call the question.

**Moved:** Marcus Aldred-Ganhao **Seconded:** Mauricio Fernandez

**Motion Defeated** 

MOTION: to extend Member Greenhut's speaking time to 5-minutes.

**Moved:** Jonah Greenhut **Seconded:** Natalie Wilkinson

#### **Motion Carried**

Member Greenhut noted that it has been impactful for him in the days following the release of the statement to hear from different members on the board and receive a constituent email. He hears the feedback and acknowledges that the previous statement was not ideal as it wasn't holistic enough to represent us as a student organization. The new statement presented tonight isn't holistic either, we are backtracking further on students we represent, or it may appear that way to them. He feels that the statement up for discussion does what we're trying to avoid, so he cannot support it as it's currently written. He motivated that some parts of the statement, such as referring to Israel as an illegal state, are too political when the goal is representing students. He wants to consider what amendments would make the statement passable and allow the board to move forward as a united front. Member Greenhut motivated that we may not agree, but we shouldn't be undermining each other, and the proposed statement will further enflame the situation. He explained that he has researched statements from other organizations, none of which are perfect and never will be. Member Greenhut read aloud a statement released by the University of Sussex. He identified items noted in the statement that were not utilized by the board in the initial statement, such as providing resources.

**MOTION:** to extend Member Greenhut's speaking time by an additional 2 minutes.

Moved: Jonah Greenhut

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## Seconded: Daniel Spinner

## **Motion Carried**

Member Greenhut finished reading aloud the University of Sussex statement. He motivated we need to put out a similar statement that addresses the constituents and represents their voices.

Member Spinner noted that he appreciates everyone's feedback and voice. It's not easy for him to discuss this conflict. He's not as privileged as some others on the board, and Palestinians in the community are also not as privileged. He motivated that we need a better statement to represent both sides, but the current statement should not be passed due to the misinformation included, such as the mention of Israel as an illegal state. The proposed statement does not promote a better environment on campus. Member Spinner noted that as members have spoken during this meeting, other members have disrespected their opinions by laughing and smiling.

Member Einy echoed the sentiments of previous speakers that the proposed statement will cause more division and we shouldn't sacrifice one group for the other. He motivated to focus on creating a statement that accommodates all student groups. We have to accept that the statement we posted was ill-timed and not worded as well as it should have been.

Member Amayaevbo acknowledged the comments from other speakers that this new statement doesn't voice the opinions of everybody. As one of the members bringing the statement forward, she explained that it's intended as a part-two to the situation that has already started and was started by the members who passed the previous statement. The first statement was one-sided and biased, and there's no retracting that, so this statement shows support for the other side. This side wasn't voiced properly in the first statement, and they feel unrepresented. Speakers have said there's misinformation in the statement, despite references being provided at the end of the statement. She encouraged members to visit the links provided to learn more.

## **MOTION:** to extend Member Amayaevbo's speaking time by an additional 3 minutes.

Moved: Naomi Amayaevbo Seconded: Daniel Spinner

## **Motion Carried**

Member Amayaevbo noted previous comments that Palestinians are not oppressed, along with the reasoning of work permits given by Israel. She inquired if she as an international student has not been oppressed, since she is granted a study permit to enter



Canada. She has been oppressed and experienced racism and sexism on the campus. She motivated that no one is preventing Israeli students from feeling the pain they have experienced, but the previous statement did not include the struggles of Palestinians, which cannot be retracted, so this new statement is a continuation.

MOTION: to extend Member Walia's speaking time to 4-minutes.

Moved: Eknoor Walia Seconded: Jonah Greenhut

## **Motion Carried**

Member Walia wished to return to the bottom line that we represent the entire student population. We had 40+ students attend the meeting who wanted to be guests and were turned away for the in-camera session, and many of them were representing student groups directly affected by the current conflicts in the Middle East. She thinks that indicates the direction we need to take as the board. The previous statement was written for a small subset of the university population, and the responses to the statements should show that we didn't do our jobs properly. The new statement was written with students who are directly affected by the war.

Member Greenhut raised a point of information to ask the speaker which groups were involved in forming the statement. Member Walia referred the member to the groups listed in the motion.

Member Walia encouraged the board to not think about personal politics but rather recognize the voices that want to be heard and took the effort to be here today. She hopes the board will consider approving this statement to balance and create a holistic picture of the situation.

The President thanked the board for attending the emergency meeting to put in the work for students. She feels that we've reached an impasse and board members here have made up their minds on where they stand on this statement. The last statement was approved despite warnings of the impacts on students and the organization. The Executives posted resources and a brief statement condemning all violence to try and show that we want to represent all voices. She had originally suggested a subcommittee and consultation of all groups or simply being neutral and not posting anything regarding the conflicts. A lot of students feel silenced, unheard, and unrepresented. The board should agree that we must do something based on the feedback we've now received. If board members intend to vote against the motion, we need to look at what alternative is being provided. The President noted options such as retract the prior statement and issue an apology, create a subcommittee, create a new statement with consultation, or amend



this statement to post something and show we're listening to the students. We need to make a choice to address what to do, instead of arguing over specific points.

Member Greenhut asked the Board Chair what options the Board has available within this meeting and beyond. The Board Chair reviewed the options the board has to proceed with, including tabling the item, forming a committee, bringing a new motion to a future meeting, and more.

MOTION: to extend Member Scott's speaking time to 5-minutes.

Moved: Samantha Scott Seconded: Jayden Khan

## **Motion Carried**

Member Scott noted that she feels badly for all students who are now feeling unsafe on campus due to the actions of this board. She has spoken with members of the Indigenous Student Society and other Indigenous students on campus and they are collectively disappointed with the actions of the board by not directly condemning acts of colonialism and genocide. It's made a lot of students feel left out and not supported by the CSA. As an Indigenous student who exists despite Canada's colonial efforts, she finds it disheartening to hear members denying colonialism and genocide occurring elsewhere in the world. Regarding the motion, Member Scott noted points from the CSA mandate and approach, noting that the board haven't upheld these items. She can appreciate the members who may not support this motion but still want all students to be represented. She noted that the York University student union is facing similar troubles due to a onesided statement, on the other side to our initial statement, and it's still bringing violence and conflict to campus. She worries that certain statements in the motion brought tonight could continue to increase conflict and violence towards Palestinian and Jewish students and all other members affected. She thinks the board should discuss the petition circulating online that calls for the initial statement to be retracted. She motivated that we all have our own opinions that we want reflected, but we need to keep the entire student body safe and include them in the choices we make, but many of those voices aren't sitting on the board. We should look at ways to prevent this from happening again and ensure there is accountability for the harm caused.

## **MOTION:** to call the question.

Moved: Daniel Neiterman Seconded: Marcus Aldred-Ganhao

Member Neiterman motivated that he understands the views brought up by members today, and he understands the CSA has a need to represent the collective interests,



inclusion and safety of all students. He would support a committee for proposing a new statement that addresses all sides of the conflict and that has consultation from the undersigned organizations on the current motion as well as the Jewish community. He thinks enough has been said for members to vote on the motion. He doesn't want the board to be stifled by the sunset clause and not have time to take any further actions beyond this motion.

**MOTION:** for a roll call vote for the motion to call the question.

Moved: Junpyo Lee, VP Academic

The minimum threshold of 3 members in favour of the roll call vote was met.

#### **Motion Carried**

**MOTION:** to call the question.

#### Roll Call Vote Results:

**In Favour:** Daniel Spinner, Daniel Neiterman, Mauricio Fernandez, Rachel Marcus, Jake Levy, Mason Friebe, Ethan Gouveia, Marcus Aldred-Ganhao, Chikaima Ifezue.

**Opposed:** Abdul Rafe Khan, Jonah Greenhut, Samantha Scott, Eknoor Walia, Jayden Khan, Naomi Amayaevbo, Natalie Wilkinson.

Abstained: Noam Einy.

#### **Motion Defeated**

The VP Academic wished to motivate that we retract the previous statement that was released on the website and instagram page. The Chair explained that this would be a new motion unless the member wishes to amend the current motion to include this resolution.

Multiple members made inquiries on options for moving forward and the process of motioning for these items.

The Chair recommended based on the questions being asked that it would be most proper for the board to table this item indefinitely, motion to reconsider the previous motion on this topic, rescind the existing statements temporarily, and strike a committee to send both sets of statements to the committee to be



discussed. The board can set the mandate, structure, and timeline for the committee. The Chair explained the process for if the board wants to add a new business item to the agenda, which would include reconsidering the agenda and likely needing to suspend the rules of order.

Taking into account the calls from members to retract the previous statement, the PTC recommended for the board to refer this motion to a subcommittee with a set mandate and timeline, and then following that, at the next board meeting there will be a motion coming forward for the board to receive as information the letters that CSA members have been emailing to the PTC and the Executive in response to the statement. The PTC thinks it would be most proper for the board to take these responses into consideration prior to making a motion regarding retracting the previous statement or making an apology, and that the prior statements should be treated separately to the current statements up for discussion.

MOTION: To close the In Camera session.

**Moved:** Natalie Wilkinson **Seconded:** Eknoor Walia

Member Wilkinson stated that by closing the in-camera session, our constituencies can see we want to have an open discussion and that we are proceeding on amending this situation.

## **Motion Carried**

# **MINUTES (In-Camera Session) - Publicized**

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Approved I	by the Board of Directors	Date:	February 14, 2024
Signed	Cameron Olesen Board Chair	Date:	
Signed	Colleen Bovay Policy and Transition Coordinator	Date:	