Statement Of Solidarity by 20 student groups on campus

We, the undersigned, are part of the UBC Divestment Coalition and we are bringing forth a motion to divest from companies that violate the human rights of Palestinians by operating in illegal settlements and/or providing Israel with weapons, equipment, or technology used to violate Palestinian human rights.

In 2020, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights released a database of companies involved in the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements throughout occupied Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan (A/HRC/43/71). Illegal settlements are constructed on Palestinian territories through the forced displacement and dispossession of Indigenous Palestinian people. Building and maintaining the settlements is only made possible through human rights violations. UBC’s June 2020 Disclosure of Endowment Public Equity Holdings reveals our institution’s direct engagement with six of the companies on this database: Motorola Solutions Inc, General Mills Inc, Partner Communications Ltd, Bezeq the Israeli Telecommunications Corporation, Cellcom Israel Ltd, and Bank Hapoalim BM.

In addition, UBC has equity holdings in three companies that have been cited for their role in contributing to the oppression of Palestinians: Caterpillar makes bulldozers that have been used to demolish Palestinian homes and villages; Lockheed Martin manufactures weapons of war, including F-16 fighter jets that have been used by the Israeli military for over a decade in campaigns and bombings against Palestinians, many with civilian casualties; and HP provides technologies of surveillance and control used by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory.

We, therefore, contend that not only are these companies’ actions incompatible with UBC’s Responsible Investment Policy, but they are also incompatible with UBC’s commitment to truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities. UBC cannot honour this commitment while its investments demonstrate complicity with human rights violations against Indigenous peoples, whether in Turtle Island or Palestine. We cannot stand idly by as our academic institution financially engages with companies that continue to actively discriminate against Palestinian people, and commit overwhelming violence and harm. Former UBC students, faculty, and staff knew the efficacy of divestment when they successfully rallied to demand the university’s divestment from South African apartheid in the 1980s; we stand on their shoulders as we call on UBC to respect international human rights law and Palestinian lives today.

As clubs with mandates and values rooted in equality, reciprocity, inclusivity, and social and ecological justice, signing this Statement of Solidarity conveys our wide-held belief that promoting social justice causes must be inclusive and intersectional. Supporting Palestinian liberation is intrinsically a cause which is all-encompassing of complex and intersectional identities. Clubs with feminist, anti-racist, climate-justice oriented, and religiously and ethnically diverse subjectivities like ourselves are aware that extending solidarity with Palestine is an explicit extension of our work to dismantle inequality.

We find it absolutely necessary that UBC divest from these 9 companies as a clear and integral step towards achieving decolonial and socially just realities.

Signed,
In order: The Social Justice Centre, Climate Justice UBC, Independent Jewish Voices, Middle East Studies Student Association, Sprouts, Egyptian Student Association, The UBC First Generation Student Union, Beneath One Sky UBC, UBC Law and Society Chats, Pride Collective, UBC UX Hub, Sexual Assault Support Centre, Muslim Student Association, UBC Black Student Union, Trees of UBC, Sulong UBC, Sikh Student Association, Black Muslim Society, Bike Kitchen