

For Immediate Release:

## **A Statement From Jewish Faculty, Staff, Students, and Alumni Regarding IU's Treatment of Student Protesters**

Actions are being taken in our name, without our consent or request. Such actions, especially those by the administration, often directly contradict the facts we see daily on the ground at campus. We condemn the actions taken by the administration, ISP, and IUPD against the students protesting on Dunn Meadow.

Being a Jewish student, staff or faculty at IU today, in the midst of the current turmoil presents a challenging experience. Prompted by events in Gaza, many American Jews are re-negotiating our relationship with the state of Israel. Our struggle has many voices. Some are centered on the Israeli hostages, others focus on the dead of both sides, and still others on the current and past plights of the people of Gaza and the Palestinians as a whole. For some, the last 200+ days have changed little other than to make them feel more unsafe and guarded, committed more than ever to longstanding institutions and communities. For others, the 200+ days of bombing Gaza has shattered us, pitting our religious and ethical values against our cultural and familial connections.

**But these experiences do not take precedence over vital truths and principles.**

One vital truth is that IU students, faculty, and staff, of all origins and beliefs, have the right to protest peacefully on our campus, especially on Dunn Meadow, the historical site of free speech for alumni going back to the Vietnam War.

Another truth is that the experiences of Jewish students, staff, and faculty in Dunn Meadow do not in any way conform to the claims made by the ISP and the President of our university. Without evidence, the administration and the ISP have charged the protesters with violent intentions and antisemitic motives. Wrongful claims that protesters plan violence and false assertions that protesters possessed "rocks and mace," directly contradict the experiences of Jewish faculty, students, and staff who have been present at Dunn Meadow since this protest began. (These unsubstantiated claims sound more like the vitriol yelled by harassing counter-protesters.)

It is unacceptable that such claims of "outside agitators" and "anti-semitic reports," unsupported by any corroborating data, have prompted the repeated use of force brought to bear on our campus by the University and the State Police of Indiana. The ISP's explanation for its brutal action is unconvincing and absurd.

Additionally, we can attest to ample Jewish participation in the protest and support of the protesters.

- Jewish students held a Seder at Dunn Meadow the first day of this protest.
- Jewish faculty are among those who stood with students, were driven to the ground, and arrested.
- Jews have tried to be heard only to be told their arrests were done to help Jews.
- Jews have stood on Dunn Meadow and watched as Chabad students and their guests yelled slurs, sexual harassment, and vulgarities at fellow students who were unengaged with them.

As Jews here on campus, we cannot allow our names to be used as an excuse or moral cover for those who would do harm, stifle free speech, or damage the institution that we have invested so much of our time, energy, and hope into. Those who claim to protect us do not speak for us.

**ISP, President Whitten, Trustees, Donors, and fellow IU community members. We are here to be clear:**

- **Do not create, credit or spread false rumors of antisemitism.**
- **Do not weaponize claims of antisemitism to stifle free speech and free assembly.**
- **The blocks on protest must stop.**
- **As Jews, we implore the administration to stop using the ISP and encouraging its violence. The students must be left in peace.**
- **Do not perpetrate violence and suppression in our name or in anyone else's name.**
- **Do not falsely invoke concerns about antisemitism to promote your repressive agenda.**

As Jews, we can promote peaceful protest while keeping all of our Jewish students, faculty, and staff safe. We can avoid tearing our community apart and losing our morals (Jewish and secular) in the process. Ironically, the repressive actions of the administration and the ISP, not the student protesters, are the source of violence and lack of safety.

Signed,

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