

On October 12th, 2023, the Glendon College Students' Union (GCSU), the York Federation of Students (YFS), and York University Graduate Students' Association (YUGSA) released a Statement of Solidarity with Palestine. The statement has since been intentionally distorted by the media, members of the provincial government, and the York University administration, claiming that it promotes violence and discrimination. We categorically reject the claim that our statement in direct response to the dismantling of apartheid infrastructure promotes violence or hatred towards unarmed civilians; furthermore, we reject the intentional misinterpretation of our statement equating Palestinian sovereignty as a conduit for violence. The conflation of our support for Palestinian self-determination as condoning violence is deeply disturbing and rooted in racism.

York University continues to perpetuate harm in their repeated failures to keep students safe, especially through the misconstruing of both our statement and their rhetoric around the ongoing occupation. As students' unions, we have consistently opposed all forms of colonial violence and this stance, as informed by our membership, will not change. We acknowledge the grief and trauma that many students in our community are experiencing as a result of the many lives lost through an ongoing genocide. The GCSU, YFS, and YUGSA collectively represent every student at York University. Our membership is large and diverse, and we stand firmly against all forms of oppression and discrimination, including all forms of Islamophobia, Antisemitism and racism. The safety of all of our members is a priority for each of our organizations. The student movement has always been at the forefront of confronting oppression, and we stand united in our unwavering commitment to equity, justice and decolonization in the face of York University's attempt to muzzle our freedom of expression as faculty, students and staff.

Following York University's continued threats against our unions, we would like to assert and remind the administration: students' unions are independent, autonomous, and self-governed organizations. We call on York University to stop their unlawful attack on student union autonomy. This newest tactic follows decades of attempting to suppress student voices and any dissent of the administration, particularly on issues which affect the most marginalized identities on our campuses, whether it be support for Palestine or denouncing York's rampant anti-Black racism. These tactics are intentionally used because it continues to be apparent that there is power in student voices, and that student solidarity and mobilization demands and begets change.

Many of these attempts to suppress students' voices have come through the recent adoption of the *Regulation Regarding Student Organizations*. This regulation was put into effect despite widespread opposition, indicated by a [joint letter](#) from various student organizations. Less than a year after its unilateral implementation, we're seeing this power actualized through a direct attack on student autonomy and our right to organize on our campuses.

The administration's demands to retract our statement, to issue a secondary statement and that all of our democratically elected executives resign is a typical pattern of attack in line with York University's continued infringement on the democratic and independent existence of

autonomous organizations. We call on the entire York University community to condemn the administration's actions, take action against the suppression of student, staff, and faculty voices and make it clear that we, the community, say no.

We demand that York University stop their unlawful attack on student voices and repeal the *Regulation Regarding Student Organizations*.

