

Annual Student Meeting (Additional Meeting July 2024)

Motion 1: Should Students' Union incorporate Apartheid-Off-Campus Week in the Students' Union Liberation Calendar?

Proposer: Ahmed Kassem

Seconder: Rahma Hegy

What do you want?

In similar fashion to the pre existing liberation campaigns, we are proposing that our Students' Union recognise the plight of Palestinians by dedicating one week, per academic year to amplifying Palestinian voices, educating on the notions of Israeli apartheid and embracing Palestinian identity currently facing censorship. Therefore we ask:

Our Students' Union recognises an Apartheid-Off-Campus Week as part of its Liberation calendar. (This will typically run in late March and/or in line with national activity). For the Students' Union to set up and initiate events to support the mission of "Apartheid-Off-Campus", in line with its Liberation processes and support students to run events; such as (but not exclusive to) workshops, stalls, talks, panel discussions, film screenings etc. For QMSU to support Apartheid-Off-Campus-Week financially in line with the Liberation funding process.

Why do you want it?

For the past 19 years internationally, students have organised in the name of Apartheid-Off-Campus Week - an annual event lasting a week where a series of events take place in order to raise awareness and highlight about apartheid policies. This happens in particular focus towards highlighting Israeli apartheid against indigenous Palestinians. The aim of the week aligns more with promoting equality, human rights and combating racism rather than solely any political goals or allegiances due to its student-led network.

We recognise and see that Palestinian voices continue to be marginalised. Therefore, the aim of this week is to uplift these voices, centering them and embracing their culture and heritage. By celebrating these identities we are truly practising being the most inclusive university of its kind.

This event is nothing new to our campuses, annually societies have recognised Apartheid of Campus week. In March 2022, library square was home to a mock physical Apartheid Wall for students to write on, as initiatives like this provide fruitful conversation for students (see attached figures). With the Students' Union facilitating these events, it will actively embrace and promote the values of justice, equity, and freedom. This support will simplify the organisation and funding of such initiatives, alleviating the current pressures on students.

This motion comes in recognition of other events we have seen this year, such as "Climate Action Week" or "Decolonise QMUL" - campaigns aiming to ensure sustainable, political changes at the University. Apartheid of Campus Week, will create a Students' Union we can truly see ourselves in.

What impact will this have?

In a moment when Palestinians face dehumanisation and injustice, such an initiative would help Palestinian students on campus feel heard, celebrated and accepted. Furthermore, it will enable any student supporting the Palestinian plight for justice, to contribute and act without fear of repercussion or adversity. Its impact will also extend beyond the gates of our campus, as it would support a global call for justice and freedom.

Fundamentally, the implementation of Apartheid-Off-Campus Week will validate the efforts of the student body but also strengthen the Union's stance against all forms of discrimination and injustice. This comes with the added benefits that students and societies are more supported logistically and financially by their Students' Union, to ensure that said events can be held in a time-appropriate manner without fear of cancellation or delay. Finally, it would facilitate the promotion of these events by the Students' Union, to ensure a proper safe stage for discussion can be had.