



Open Letter to Professor Roderick Watkins, Vice Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University

Dear Roderick,

We are writing with regard to the ongoing Palestine-Israel war.

The violence and hostage taking of October 7th, 2023 in Israel by Hamas and other groups remains deeply distressing. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, in his remarks to the [Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on January 31st, 2024](#), eloquently summarises our perspective. The response of Israel's government has been disproportionate and counter-productive. Palestinians are being subjected to mass collective punishment. Tens of thousands have been killed or maimed. The destruction of homes and infrastructure, forced and repeated displacement and the denial of relief, leaves many more exposed to famine, disease and death.

It is clear war and occupation should cease and that a just peace requires the establishment of a viable state in which Palestinians are free.

Within society at large and in our community at ARU, we need to be able to conduct a civilised discussion about what is to be done. Expressing solidarity, protesting against militarism and the slaughter of the innocents are markers of civilisation.

We have every confidence that you share our perspective and values. Likewise, we assume you will wish to work with us to ensure a safe space for all members of our community to freely express their different perspectives, to build mutual understanding in a peaceful and respectful manner in which there is no place for anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

In order to provide greater substance to our collective perspective, we are calling upon the university to establish joint committees with UCU to:

1. Investigate the ties our university has with companies which facilitate or profit from the war and where appropriate sever such links.
2. Establish ARU scholarships for refugees and displaced people affected by the war.
3. Provide support for academics who have seen their institutions destroyed.

We trust our observations and suggestions will meet with a favourable response and look forward to hearing from you.

Branch Executive, University and College Union, Anglia Ruskin University

March 8th, 2024