

13 June 2026

Academia for Equality calls for the immediate release of the four students from Bir Zeit University – Natalie Abu Dayyeh, Julan Abu Awad, Sama Safi, and Layla Khalil – who were arrested on June 3, and for the termination of all proceedings taken against them. Their detention has been extended until this coming Sunday (14 June), apparently with the intention of filing charges against them for membership in a banned organization.

We call for respect for the fundamental rights of Palestinian students and for an end to policies that systematically harm academic life and political space at Palestinian universities. This harm is part of a long series of attacks on Palestinian educational institutions, including the widespread destruction of universities in the Gaza Strip and the deliberate targeting of faculty members and students since the beginning of the war of annihilation in Gaza and the West Bank.

The arrest of students is part of an ongoing pattern of persecution and suppression of political and public life on Palestinian campuses since 1967, and at Bir Zeit University in particular. Over the years, students have been prosecuted and convicted in military courts for student and political activities such as organizing campus events, holding public discussions, and even for the mere act of participating in political frameworks. Countless students have been held in administrative detention for months without trial. Less than a month ago, Layan Nasir, another student at Bir Zeit University, was released after eight months of administrative detention at Damon Prison without trial.

Our position, as an organization working for democracy and equality in academia, is that political life on campuses is a vested right. Moreover, it is an important part of the personal and social development of young people seeking to acquire an education and develop their skills and social connections. Resistance to a cruel and long-standing occupation is part of this right. The purpose of the detention policy is to intimidate students. It is not only a direct attack on the detained students and the academic institutions where they study - but an assault on their freedoms: academic freedom, freedom of association, the personal freedom to learn and grow, and the social freedom to build leadership that can resist the occupation.

Academia for Equality

אקדמיה לשוויון

أكاديميون من أجل المساواة

Academia for Equality calls on universities and colleges in Israel, their presidents, faculty members, and student organizations to speak out against the students' arrest and in the face of the ongoing harm to academic freedom and the right to political organization of Palestinian students. If Israeli academia wishes to survive and desires a thriving environment, it must stand in defense of the right to academic freedom and political freedom wherever these rights are denied.

אקדמיה לשוויון | Academia for Equality | أكاديميون من أجل المساواة

<https://www.academia4equality.com/>

info@academia4equality.com