

## **Oral Statement Item: 3 Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Education**

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Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) is a not-for-profit campaign, research and advocacy organisation founded and based in the United Kingdom. It was set up in 1997 and works for redress of human rights violations and a better understanding of rights and norms across confessional, ethnic, national, political and other boundaries.

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Recent crackdowns on pro-Palestine movements at universities have involved increased policing, arrests, and disciplinary actions against students and faculty. These actions are often framed as necessary to maintain order and safety, with the chilling effect of reduction of free speech and academic freedom. The main action of repression in the field of education as reported to IHRC are:

- 1) Increased Policing and Arrests: universities have seen a surge in arrests and police presence during pro-Palestine protests, with some students facing charges and potential jail time.
- 2) Disciplinary Actions: Students and faculty have faced suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary measures for their involvement in protests
- 3) Threats to Funding: Some universities have faced pressure, including threats to federal funding, to crack down on pro-Palestine activism.
- 4) Deportation and Visa Issues: Non-citizen students involved in protests have faced deportation and visa issues, with some being arrested by immigration authorities.

In many contexts and countries, students have reported that universities are placing “disproportionate” restrictions on pro-Gaza guest speakers, or calling the police on non-violent demonstrations, leading to violent clashes with officers and leaving students subject to tough police bail conditions. The effects of such repression are both self-evident and alarming: they constitute a precedent in using a disproportionate response critical voices and discourage students from expressing their views on Palestine. As also reported by UN Special Rapporteurs Gina Romero.

IHRC comes here to issue a warning on the barbaric use of counter-terrorism measures handed by the national parties in pursuit of a cheap, political point-scoring and economic gain. The divisive and hate-fuelled rhetoric based on double standards, the persistent perpetration of racialised policies, are the ingredients of this siege that silences and isolates peaceful critical views and shrinks the space for civil disobedience, to the detriment of those fundamental rights that Western States hypocritically claim to champion.