Dear members of Science for Peace,

There are numerous reports of attempts by various University Administrations to censor and punish students and Faculty that criticize Israel’s actions in Gaza. Particularly alarming are the censorship attempts in Medical Schools. Given the attacks of the Israeli Defense Force on Gaza hospitals, which have destroyed most of them, it is not
surprising that many medical students and Faculty have expressed, in signed
documents and social media, their alarm for the tremendous damage inflicted on the
medical facilities in Gaza.

One example of this persecutory activity by university administrators is the indefinite
suspension of Dr. Yipeng Ge, a 4th year resident physician at the University of Ottawa
Faculty of Medicine. A professor at the University complained that Ge’s social media
posts were antisemitic. He specifically referred to a photo of a protest poster that
equated Zionism with genocide. Another example was an image of a poster with the
chant “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”, which is commonly used to call
for Palestinian liberation. Ge is an advocate for health equity, a public health graduate
from Harvard who has worked in the West Bank and with the World Health Organization.
The University suspended Ge, based on complaints of an alleged breach of conduct.

Another example of intimidatory activity against criticism of Israel’s actions in Gaza at a
university has been the interruption of an academic seminar by the Toronto police at York
University. On February 2, Dr. Muhannad Ayyash, an Associate Professor at Mount
Royal University, presented a lecture entitled “The Palestinian struggle for liberation:
aspirations for a decolonial life”. The invited lecture had been organized by York’s
Anthropology Department and there were around 30 people in attendance. The
presentation was disrupted by Toronto police officers, even though there had not been
any incidents prior to the disruption. When asked why they intervened, the police officers
stated that they were acting on behalf of York University, which had contacted them to
report “a major event”. York’s administration is now denying that it asked the police to
come to campus, though it has failed to engage with the issue in a transparent manner
or even issue a public statement about it.

A recent article by the CBC reported that physicians that support the Israeli Government
were planning to use their influence to manipulate the placement of medical students in
the medical residency program (CaRMS). This placement plays a crucial role in the
advancement of medical students towards the acquisition of a license to practice
medicine in Canada. The CBC article showed screenshots where members of a private
Facebook group discuss plans to influence CaRMS to penalize students who signed a
petition calling for an end to Israel’s bombing of Gaza hospitals.

Universities should be places in which professors and students can express their views
freely. University administrators have the responsibility to protect freedom of speech of all
members of the university community. Faculty and students have the right to express
their opinion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to advocate for Palestinian rights
without fear of surveillance or retaliation.

On February 14 we had the opportunity to listen to the excellent lecture by our vice-
president Richard Sandbrook entitled “Climate Crisis and Capitalism, is system change
the answer?” If you did not have the opportunity to attend, the edited video of the lecture
is available on our YouTube channel (see below for the link). On March 13th, at 5 PM,
Science for Peace will present a lecture by Jonathan Kuttab, a Palestinian Human
Rights lawyer and Christian pacifist who lives and practices law in the West Bank. The
title of his talk is “Palestine: Is There a Role for Non-
vioent Action?”. See below for registration links.

Jorge Filmus
President
Science for Peace

Upcoming Events
Register below:
In Person
Online via Zoom

Recent Events and Publications

Climate Crisis and Capitalism: Is System Change the Answer?
- Richard Sandbrook

The United Nations: Systemic and Individual Flaws and Failures
- Judith Deutsch

There is much to figure out about preventable human-caused death in Gaza, in climate disasters, wars, starvation. At top of the hierarchy of responsibility is the UN, yet how to understand that 153 nations voting for a ceasefire in Gaza can’t implement any action?
What is possible (Green Growth) is inadequate to the challenge of climate change, whereas what is necessary and desirable (Degrowth) is impossible in the short time available to us. To escape this impasse, we need to forego reformism and radicalism in favour of radical reformism – a supplemented Green New Deal.