

# Council of Graduate Students

## Michigan State University

**Resolution:** 23-FS-29

**Title:** A Resolution to Advocate for Students' Safety, Support, and Recognition

**Introduced by:** Executive board

**Introduced on:** December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Collaborators:** Working group including Representative Lindsey Sime, and graduate students Aya Aoude, Laila Kunaish, and Ishan Santra

### THE COUNCIL OF GRADUATE STUDENTS OF MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ENACTS:

**WHEREAS**, The Council of Graduate Students of Michigan State University (hereafter, COGS) and Michigan State University (hereafter, MSU) **acknowledge** that “Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg<sup>1</sup> – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe<sup>2</sup>, Odawa<sup>3</sup>, and Potawatomi<sup>4</sup> peoples. In particular, the University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan’s twelve federally-recognized Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their Homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Michigan State University more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples”<sup>5</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS**, student populations in U.S. academic institutions, especially international students, and students with connections to Palestine<sup>6</sup>, Israel<sup>6</sup>, Sudan<sup>7</sup>, Yemen<sup>8</sup>, Congo<sup>9</sup>, Ukraine<sup>10</sup>, the Middle East-North Africa<sup>11</sup>, and other countries, are facing a number of challenges, including difficulties visiting their families, issues pertaining to their visas, and stressors related to domestic and international sociopolitical events that might impact their mental health, wellbeing, and academic achievement; and,

**WHEREAS**, the MSU community could benefit greatly from accessing free resources that present a balanced and authentic view of diverse experiences and perspectives about impactful worldly events—notably, the historical roots of the 2023 Israel– Hamas war—

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.anishinabek.ca/education-resources/gdoo-sastamoo-kii-mi/who-are-the-anishinaabeg/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mnhs.org/fortsnelling/learn/native-americans/ojibwe-people>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/odawa>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.potawatomi.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://aiis.msu.edu/land/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>

<sup>7</sup> <https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/sudan-situation>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen>

<sup>9</sup> <https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/democratic-republic-congo-situation>

<sup>10</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/report-middle-east-and-north-africa/>

with the intention of fostering a more informed and inclusive academic community, enhancing critical thinking, and preparing scholars to engage with the complexities of the world; and,

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of Education and MSU **recognize** an “alarming nationwide rise in reports of antisemitism, anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and other forms of discrimination and harassment”<sup>12,13</sup> in U.S. schools and colleges since the events on October 7, 2023<sup>14</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS**, the MSU community **acknowledges** and **condemns** recent incidents of hate, violence, and discrimination that are affecting Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, Jewish, and Black students, as well as students from marginalized groups, both on and off-campus;<sup>15,16,17</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, Tariq Thabet, a Palestinian Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow who joined MSU in 2021-2022, and 15 members of his family including his children were killed in Gaza on October 29, 2023<sup>18</sup>; Tariq wanted to share that his final days in Gaza were “particularly devastating”, describing “destruction and bombardments surpassing anything we have seen before”<sup>19</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS**, Tariq Thabet, who described his journey at MSU as a “life-changing voyage that reshaped his professional perspective and empowered him to be a catalyst for change,”<sup>20</sup> had a passion for shining light on Palestine and “was determined to change the perception” of the state being associated with conflict; and,

**WHEREAS**, MSU officially **acknowledges**, in its statement on Diversity and Inclusion<sup>21</sup>, the benefit of embracing “the opportunity to learn from each other” by welcoming “a full spectrum of experiences, viewpoints, and intellectual approaches because it enriches the conversation and benefits everyone”; therefore, be it,

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/anti-arab-and-muslim-bias-incidents-rise-israel-hamas-war/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-educations-office-civil-rights-announces-list-open-title-vi-shared-ancestry-investigations-institutions-higher-education-and-k-12-schools>

<sup>14</sup> <https://president.msu.edu/communications/actions-resources/supporting-israeli-jewish-palestinian-arab-muslim-impacted-communities.html>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2023/10/31/antisemitism-college-campuses-jewish-hamas-gaza/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/03/us/palestinian-student-shooting-vermont-paralyzed/index.html>

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/17/us/6-year-old-boy-palestinian-boy-chicago-profile>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/grand-central-terminal-hate-crime-assault/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/detroit/news/michigan-islamic-community-mourns-loss-of-msu-fellow-killed-in-gaza-airstrike/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://statenews.com/article/2023/11/community-vigil-held-msu-rock-painted-to-honor-former-humphrey-fellow-tariq-thabet>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=654692220030344&set=a.317358203763749>

<sup>21</sup> <https://trustees.msu.edu/about/statement-diversity-inclusion.html>

**RESOLVED**, COGS will **work** with graduate students to create a place of connecting and reflecting, ensuring that students affected by recent events are heard, valued, and supported; and,

**RESOLVED**, COGS will **advocate** that MSU implement and maintain educational initiatives on the history of Israel and Palestine, as well as other sociopolitical events historically subjected to limited discourse, through organizing seminars and providing open resources in the library to educate and inform graduate students about international conflicts and related issues; and,

**RESOLVED**, COGS will **advocate** that MSU not retaliate against students who express their opinions and viewpoints in the form of protected speech, fostering an environment that encourages compassion and dialogue; and,

**RESOLVED**, COGS will **advocate** that MSU implement more robust institutional safety measures for all students from historically marginalized communities, encompassing initiatives such as condemning hate speech, and taking anti-Arab hate, Islamophobia, Antisemitism, and discrimination, seriously on campus by accurately defining those terms and responding to complaints in a timely and adequate manner; and,

**RESOLVED**, COGS will **call** upon MSU to officially release a public statement through official university channels, acknowledging the death of our fellow Spartan Tariq Thabet; and,

**RESOLVED**, COGS will **propose** that MSU facilitate the organization of a series of talks, workshops, or events in memory of Tariq, and his commitment to changing the perceptions about the people in Palestine; these activities can be targeted toward educating the participants on settler colonialism, Islamophobia, anti-Arab hate, Antisemitism, liberation, freedom, Indigenous communities, religion, etc.

VOTED ON:

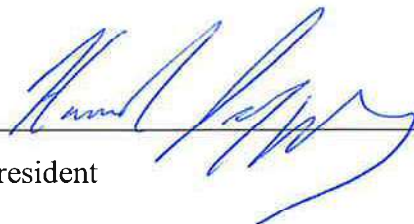
VOTE TOTALS:

30 FOR

5 AGAINST

2 ABSTAIN

  
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Recording Secretary

  
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President