



Written by [James Murphy](#) on May 1, 2024

## Columbia Climate School Alumni Connect Climate Change to Gaza Conflict

Last Friday, alumni from Columbia University's Climate School sided with protesting students and called for the university's complete divestment from "entities profiting off of or complicit in Israel's apartheid, occupation, and genocide against Palestine" and end what they refer to as "Columbia's repression against activists." Until their list of demands is met, the alumni will refrain from accepting faculty positions and will cease all donations to the university.

The alumni [compared](#) Columbia's mild crackdown against the student protests to what they called "the National Guard's 1970 massacre of anti-war students at Kent State." They further found that Israel's actions were a form of colonialism that intensified climate change.

On Wednesday, New York Mayor Eric Adams confirmed that approximately 300 arrests had been made at the school. School officials claim that the arrests were made because of "actions of the protestors, not the cause they are championing." School officials report that protestors engaged in violence and vandalism, and that many of those arrested were not students and, in fact, were not associated with the university at all.

The letter written by the climate school alumni states, "Moreover, amidst the 99.9% peer-reviewed scientific consensus on anthropogenic climate change, the UN International Panel on Climate Change found with 'high confidence' that colonialism, like Israel's, drives the climate emergency."

"Columbia claims divestment, protest, and student discipline fall outside the Climate School's mandate. Science proves otherwise, that environmental justice requires divestment from war and apartheid, and that civil disobedience is integral to overcoming the climate emergency," the alumni stated.

The war in Gaza is not only bad for the combatants; it's also bad for the environment, the letter claims. "The climate crisis and the global military-industrial complex are deeply intertwined. War's devastation does not stop at human injury and death but also wreaks havoc on ecosystems and the climate via massive emissions, pollution of water and air, and environmental devastation felt for generations."



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Israel, the alumni claim, is not only guilty of crimes against Palestine, but crimes against the environment.

“The environmental injustice of Israel’s decades-long siege on Palestine, compounded by climate change, includes water shortages, ecocide, agricultural damage, and infrastructural collapse, caused by embargo, bombing, and humanitarian aid obstruction,” the alumni stated. “Along with disease and death among Palestinians, this drives waste-water system failures, rendering 97% of Palestine’s water undrinkable since at least 2018 and causing sewage to poison coastal ecosystems and harm marine wildlife.”

Without bringing up the ongoing strife in Ukraine or Sudan’s ongoing civil war, the letter claims that war and climate activism cannot coexist.

“War and a stable climate are irreconcilable,” the letter says. “The climate emergency clearly demands the abolition of the military-industrial complex,” the letter writers demand.

It’s just like Vietnam, if you believe the letter writers: “Israel’s ecocide and war crimes in Palestine echo the US in Vietnam — which, alongside Columbia’s segregationist gentrification of Harlem, sparked the University’s 1968 protests.”

As noted above, the alumni demand a Columbia’s complete divestment from “entities profiting off of or complicit in Israel’s apartheid, occupation, and genocide against Palestine,” and an amnesty for all student protesters. In addition, they would like to see the NYPD removed from campus and for Columbia to end partnerships with Israeli universities because they are “exclusionary and function as a military laboratory.”

“Without universities, there can be no climate science — and without a free Palestine, there can be no climate justice,” the letter concludes.

The letter written by the alumni of Columbia’s climate school reiterates a truth when it comes to the climate-change debate. Climate change, as posited by the Columbia Climate School, at least, is less about science than it is about the left-wing politics that infects the climate activist movement from stem to stem.



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