

Fund Education, Not Oppression

Stance: This policy platform is meant to address human rights and international law violations, and the notion that much more funding could be directed towards education in order to save students' and this nation's future if reallocated from such present actions. Furthermore, the USSA condemns all forms of human rights violations across the world by any state, including but not limited to: Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Bahrain, Syria, and even the United States itself. Lastly, USSA condemns the continued funding of the systematic oppression of Palestinians carried out by the state of Israel.

Summary:

To determine violations of human rights, USSA will use the following rationale:

I. Domestic: USSA stands against any forms of discrimination based on race, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, or sexual orientation.

- Federal: USSA will follow stances taken by the American Civil Liberties Union or through voting from the national board based on proposals for taking stance.
- State & Local: USSA state boards will follow voting based on proposals for taking stance.

II. Foreign: USSA stands against any forms of human rights violations regardless of region or stance of United States government. USSA will take stance according to—and limited to—stances taken by the United Nations Security Council which is based on the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Conventions and other violations of international law.

Therefore, this policy proposal calls for the U.S. to end military aid to the state of Israel, which has accumulated to over \$114 billion since 1949. In addition to giving the state of Israel at least \$3 billion a year, President Obama recently signed the Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012, which gives Israel an additional \$70 million in military assistance. Currently, the U.S. finances over a fifth of the Israeli defense budget with American tax payer dollars. While this money is supposedly meant to enhance Israeli security, it has been used to carry out the systematic oppression of Palestinians, the continued illegal settlement of Palestinian lands, and has funded the killing of many innocent women and children. In light of these facts, we believe that it is in our best interest as a nation to direct this money instead towards funding higher education. With student loan debt having recently topped one trillion dollars, we need to hold the United States federal government accountable for doing all that it has promised for higher learning. The country has reached a breaking point, and we are now at the crossroads of a decision that can change the world. It is once again the time for us students to stand at the forefront of justice and reclaim our right to affordable and accessible higher learning.

Long Description: Israel has displaced 1.25 million Palestinians, and since 1948. Through its lobby efforts, organizations such as AIPAC have ensured that the U.S. continue its unwavering and unconditional support for Israel. Millions of Palestinians have scarce food, water, and no access to jobs or education. In 2008, at least 1,400 Palestinians were murdered during Operation Cast Lead. Following this, a delegation of US citizens led a “freedom flotilla”, of which 9 people were murdered. There have been 48 proposed resolutions in the UN made to improve the condition of the Palestinian people, but the US has rejected them all. There is more military aid delivered to Israel than the entire country of Africa in all forms of combined. In addition, medicinal supplies in Palestine are at an all-time low, and transportation to hospitals is at the discretion of Israeli checkpoint soldiers - some of which deny this need to Palestinians in oftentimes dire situations. Settlement building and forcibly removing Palestinians from their homes, has increased consistently since 1948. Rarely is it mentioned that pre-1948, Jews and Palestinians lived side by side in peace and harmony.

However, the tides are turning. Outside of the US, more than 100 countries recognize Palestine as a sovereign nation. Also, Palestine was recently formally recognized by UNESCO, after which the US retracted funding from. Forms of art which express the resistance of the Palestinian people and their plight have symbolically elevated and expanded the Palestinian narrative to different spheres of discussion. The Palestinian struggle is increasingly carried out through peaceful means, such as non-violent marches against the security wall’s encroachment on Palestinian land and hunger strikes against solitary confinement in Israeli prisons and the unlawful and indefinite detention without trial of Palestinians, many of whom are innocent women and children. In 2010, over 50 congressmen signed a letter to President Barack Obama urging the end to the siege on Gaza, which has existed for over 45 years. Palestinians should have rights as humans first, and should not be oppressed on the basis of their ethnicity, nationality, or aspirations for liberty and self-determination. As students we need to stand for justice, as our predecessors did during the civil rights movement and in the 1980s against South African Apartheid. As the upcoming leaders of this country it is in our hands to bring change, no matter how daunting the task might be - it is our responsibility to do the “impossible”.

Tabs for sourcing:

<http://www.icrc.org/eng/war-and-law/treaties-customary-law/geneva-conventions/index.jsp> (Geneva Convention)

<http://www.aclu.org/> (ACLU)

OUTLINE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW
(University Lecture, WPL)

<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/missionreports.html>(United Nations Security Council)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nk0ZJl1YKVg> Where do the birds fly video
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/search/node/palestine> (link to more links)
<http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/> (Israeli soldiers condemning IDF Action)
<http://www.hrw.org/node/95059/section/2> (human rights watch article on Pal/Is.)
<http://www.ifamericansknew.org/> (Factoid website with legitimate sources - mainly statistics and policy)
<http://www.freepalestinemovement.org/about.html> (smaller NGO, still accredited by the UN)
<http://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/> (links to movements including CBS coverage of Palestinian Christian minority and the harm Israel caused it, and grilling of Ambassador from Israel to US on the show)
<http://www.elbitsystems.com/elbitmain/>
<http://www.bdsmovement.net/>
<http://www.bdsmovement.net/activecamps/academic-boycott> (read articles on list, can use some of previous actions to show that this is not something USSA will be doing alone)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7qzNh9TNyg> rutgers against idf soldiers
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/15/world/middleeast/deal-to-end-hunger-strike-awaits-palestinian-prisoners-approval.html> NY times article on Palestinian hunger strikes and agreement reached