Association of University Heads, Israel

Association of University Heads, Israel (VERA) - Statement on Violent Demonstrations and Antisemitism on US Campuses – April 2024

We, the presidents of the research universities in Israel, express our deep concern over the recent surge of severe violence, antisemitism, and anti-Israel sentiment across numerous leading universities in the United States. These disturbing events are often organized and supported by Palestinian groups, including those recognized as terrorist organizations. This troubling development has led to a climate where Israeli and Jewish students and faculty members feel compelled to hide their identities or avoid campuses altogether for fear of physical harm.

We acknowledge the efforts of our counterparts at these institutions to address these issues. We understand the complexity and challenges involved in managing incited and hateful groups, recognizing that extreme situations may require measures beyond the conventional tools available to university administrations.

Freedom of expression and the right to demonstrate are vital to the health of any democracy and are especially crucial in academic settings. We continue to uphold the importance of these freedoms, particularly in these challenging times. However, these freedoms do not include the right to engage in violence, make threats against communities, or call for the destruction of the State of Israel.

We offer our support to the Jewish and Israeli students and faculty facing these difficult circumstances. We will do our best to assist those of them who wish to join Israeli universities and find a welcoming academic and personal home.

Prof. Arie Zaban, President of Bar-Ilan University; Chairperson of Association of University Heads – VERA

Prof. Daniel Chamovitz, President of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Prof. Alon Chen, President of the Weizmann Institute of Science

Prof. Asher Cohen, President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Prof. Leo Corry, President of the Open University

Prof. Ehud Grossman, President of Ariel University

Prof. Ariel Porat, President of Tel-Aviv University

Prof. Ron Robin, President of the University of Haifa

Prof. Uri Sivan, President of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology