

Motion to call for the resignation of Vice-Chancellor Irene Tracey following the events of May 23rd 2024

This GCR notes:

- That on March 15, 2024, St. Antony's Graduate Common Room (GCR) held a referendum in which a 'Motion in solidarity with Palestinians and those affected by the war in Gaza' overwhelmingly passed with 85% of voters in favour.¹
- That the right to peaceful protest is fundamental to academic freedom and democracy, as emphasized by the recent statement issued by the Oxford Student Union.²
- That on May 23rd, 2024, after exhausting all other avenues of protest, 17 Oxford Action for Palestine (OA4P) protesters conducted a peaceful sit-in at the Vice-Chancellor's office.
- That the University's response was to call the police, resulting in the mass arrest of 17 protesters and further violence towards students, staff, and community members peacefully assembled outside the building.
- That video evidence shows dozens of police officers pushing and throwing students, as well as dragging them across the ground and driving a van toward seated protesters.
- That the University's subsequent statement, signed by the Vice-Chancellor, falsely accused protesters of violence without providing evidence. This statement also ignored the police brutality that took place last Thursday.
- That Jewish faculty members from across the University have released an open letter, condemning the University's use of rhetoric that the encampments were allegedly antisemitic to 'justify government interference in higher education and the repression of student protest'.³
- That the University has not acknowledged the multiple violent attacks on the Encampments by external agitators, as well as aggression from University staff towards protesters.
- That communications from the University regarding the Encampments have consistently misrepresented their actions as 'largely peaceful', implying that the Encampments have engaged in non-peaceful actions.
- That the University has shown that they are committed to ignoring OA4P and their demands, while continually refusing to address their role in facilitating Israel's genocide, occupation and Apartheid.
- That on May 27th, the Somerville Junior Common Room (JCR) called for the resignation of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Irene Tracey and urged other Common Rooms and student societies to follow suit.⁴

¹https://www.stantonysgcr.com/_files/ugd/1902a3_90a7e6ca7e9447b1b40015b2f7b98ef3.docx?dn=Motion%20in%20Solidarity%20with%20Palestinians%20and%20those%20Affected%20by%20the%20War%20on%20Gaza.docx

² <https://www.oxfordsu.org/news/article/6013/A-statement-from-Oxford-SU-regarding-recent-events/>

³ <https://www.oxfordstudent.com/2024/05/28/jewish-students-faculty-letter/>

⁴ <https://cherwell.org/2024/05/27/somerville-college-jcr-passes-motion-calling-for-vice-chancellors-resignation/>

This GCR further notes:

- That St Antony's prides itself in being an "open-minded and courageous",⁵ international, diverse and inclusive community of students from across the world;⁶
- That the killing of Israelis on October 7th, the ongoing genocide against, and historical persecution of, Palestinians have been traumatising for those directly and indirectly affected, including those Palestinians, Israelis, Muslims, Jews, Arabs, and others within our college community.

This GCR therefore believes:

- That the University's silence and refusal to engage with OA4P's demands actively endangers students, as demonstrated by the events of May 23rd.
- That the University of Oxford appears more concerned with protecting its complicity in genocide, rather than ensuring the safety and well-being of its students.

This GCR resolves:

- To emphasise that there is no place for Islamophobia, antisemitism, racism, or any form of discrimination, in our college or in our University.
- To support the OA4P's right to protest peacefully with the aim of having their demands met.
- To condemn in the strongest possible terms the University's decision to call the police on peaceful protestors, their refusal to engage in negotiations with OA4P, and their deliberate, harmful misrepresentations of the protests which have occurred.
- To ask for the resignation of Vice-Chancellor Professor Irene Tracey. Her refusal to engage with OA4P despite claiming to be committed to "constructive dialogues" and her office's decision to call the police on peaceful protestors directly led to students, staff and community members facing violence and brutality at the hands of the police. The statement she released by email was also woefully inadequate and refused to recognise the University's role in jeopardising student and staff wellbeing and safety. She has demonstrated that she is unfit to lead this University. As such, St Antony's College GCR join Somerville College JCR in calling for her immediate resignation.
- That the University issue a formal apology for neglecting their duty of care to students and calling the police on them, resulting in violence being inflicted on them. We also demand that they apologise for their treatment of protestors while claiming to support students' right to protest, for stating that the Encampment has only been "mostly" peaceful, and for insistently refusing to listen to their students and staff who have demanded that they engaged in dialogue with OA4P.
- To urge the University of Oxford, all colleges, and all other GCRs, MCRs, and JCRs to join these calls.

⁵ [Our purpose and values - St Antony's \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/graduate-studies/)

⁶ <https://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/graduate-studies/>