



**Association étudiante de l'Université McGill**

*Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.*

**Students' Society of McGill University**

*Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.*

[ssmu.ca](http://ssmu.ca) | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

# Motion in Defense of Palestinian Solidarity in The Face of Administrative Repression

2024-09-30

Submitted for: 2024-09-30

**Submitted to:** SSMU General Assembly

**Document no.:** GA-PUB-MOT-2024-09-30-001

**Moved by:** SOPHIA EL BAKIR  
*Member*

**Current  
Status:**

- FOR APPROVAL
- APPROVED
- POSTPONED
- COMMITTED
- NOT APPROVED

**Seconded by:** XAVIER DUCHESNE  
*Member*

## Issue

The issue at hand is that McGill University has been repressing the students' voices who are in solidarity with Palestine. Meanwhile, SSMU, whose purpose is to represent students' interests and positions, has not been defending the student body against the Administration's intimidation tactics.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://ssmu.ca/blog/2024/09/board-of-directors-statement-regarding-the-club-solidarity-for-palestinian-human-rights-sphr/> See footnote 1. The MoA also allows, "the administration to threaten SSMU's direct access to student fees for perceived violations of either McGill's policies or the SSMU's"



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## Background and Rationale

For the past year, we have seen Israel indiscriminately bomb Gaza<sup>2</sup> and launch incursions into the West Bank, violating International Law by using white phosphorus,<sup>3</sup> destroying hospitals, places of worship, invading a sovereign State, and much more. While Israel's numerous atrocities cannot be properly incapsulated in a motion, it is clear and must be mentioned that it is a genocide.

Meanwhile, for the past year, we have seen McGill University provide one-sided narratives, invest in the Israeli war-machine and settler campaign, and continuously ignore students' demands. This has created an environment of repression, where our own Student Union cannot adequately represent the students' overwhelming position,<sup>4</sup> because it conflicts with the Administration's financial and political interests.

SSMU should adopt this motion because

- 1) McGill students have been *relentlessly* demanding through different means (encampments, referendums, direct actions, statements, etc.) that those in power support Palestine.<sup>5</sup>

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## Alignment with Mission

This is SSMU's mission and values as written in their website: "We are here to speak out for you and advocate for your interests. On the local university levels, this means being your representation to the McGill administration."<sup>6</sup> This motion aligns with SSMU's values and mission.

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## Consultations Completed

We have consulted with the Policy & Advocacy Coordinator. She gave us advice on how to format the motion and what it should include.

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<sup>2</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20231107035810/https://www.commondreams.org/news/israel-gaza-bombing>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/10/12/questions-and-answers-israels-use-white-phosphorus-gaza-and-lebanon>

<sup>4</sup> As illustrated by the Fall 2023 referendum, where 78,7% of the students voted in favor of the Policy Against Genocide. <https://elections.ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Fall-2023-Referendum-Results.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> We acknowledge that while all those actions were in support of Palestine, not every action had the exact same goal in mind.

<sup>6</sup> <https://ssmu.ca/who-we-are/>



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In the process of writing this motion, we have consulted with various students from different faculties and we have flyered and talked to students across campus to gauge their feelings toward the administrations and McGill's role in Israel's ongoing genocide of Palestinians.

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### Risk Factors and Resource Implications

By adopting this motion, SSMU could risk increasing tension between them and the administration, which could lead to McGill dissolving the MoA between the University and the student union. However, this very issue is the core of current negotiations with the McGill administration. We submit this motion with the express intent to open a discussion amongst the student body as to how mass mobilization outside of the negotiation room can 1) help us to mitigate this risk; 2) shift the power dynamics between the SSMU and administration 3) gain greater political autonomy as a student union

Representing students is the very reason this union was created for, and they must stay true to this mandate even with external pressures.

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### Sustainability Considerations

There are no environmental considerations. However, this policy could positively impact SSMU's sustainability as a student association, because taking this stance could foster trust within students, thereby improving general relations and overall engagement.

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### Impact of Decision and Next Steps

This motion mandates the Board of Directors to publicly explore avenues for gaining greater political, administrative and financial autonomy from McGill, in dialogue with the greater student body. From this dialogue, the Board of Directors must create a strategy plan, explaining how they will **concretely** implement the students' suggestion and address their concerns. This strategy plan must be publicized within two weeks of the GA.

The Vice-President External Affairs on behalf of the SSMU will call and mobilize for a walk-out on Oct 11th to coincide with protests marking one

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year since the start of the genocide. This action will serve as a concrete illustration that SSMU is opposed to the repression of students who stand in solidarity with Palestine and takes their position seriously.

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### Motion or Resolution for Approval

*Be it resolved that the SSMU General Assembly mandates the Board of Directors to explore avenues for gaining greater administrative, financial and political independence from McGill;<sup>7</sup>*

*Be it further resolved that SSMU publicly opposes the repression of pro-Palestinian student voices, specifically by supporting a campaign for a student strike and communicating this position to the student body;*

*Be it further resolved that the Vice-President (External) on behalf of SSMU will call and mobilize for a walk-out on Oct 11th to coincide with protests marking one year since the start of the genocide.*

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### Results of the Vote

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| In favour | (37) |
| Opposed   | (4)  |
| Abstain   | (16) |

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<sup>7</sup> While we acknowledge that this resolution is open-ended, it was intentionally left as such, as we want to use this GA as a rare opportunity for students to talk directly with the Board of Directors so that they can tell them directly how they want to be better represented, what kind of change they want to see in the MoA, the Board of Directors and any other body. We would like the Board of Directors to take note of the students' inputs.