



Bureau du président du conseil de l'AEUM

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

SSMU Office of the Speaker

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MOTION REGARDING STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINIAN LIBERATION 2025-02-28

Submitted for: 2025-03-27

Submitted to: SSMU General Assembly

Document no.: GA-PUB-MOT-2025-03-27-001

Moved by: Rama Al Malah
Member

**Current
Status:**

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

Seconded by: Kynda Nashif
Member

Issue

The current motion addresses the solidarity strike at McGill University in support of Palestinian liberation. Prompted by ongoing actions that reportedly violate human rights and international laws, McGill students demand university divestment from corporations supporting military activity in Gaza, an end to institutional relationships with complicit entities, and a cessation of suppression of student activism on campus.

Background and Rationale

The proposed motion follows substantial student mobilization against McGill's investments in companies linked to military actions in Gaza, including but not limited to Lockheed Martin, Airbus, Textron, BAE Systems, Safran, and Thales. Recent student protests, referendums, and policy support demonstrate a widespread desire for McGill to divest from these companies and sever ties with entities accused of supporting human rights violations. Prior initiatives, such as the Divest for Human Rights Policy and Harmful Military Technology Policy, passed with overwhelming support, reflecting sustained momentum and student consensus on these issues. Additionally, the motion responds to increased security measures and



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police presence on campus, which students argue contravene their rights to protest and organize, and aligns with McGill's

precedent for ethical divestment, as demonstrated in the fossil fuel divestment in 2023.

*From SSMU **Policy on Harmful Military Technology** (2024-2029)*

The existing Policy on Harmful Military Technology, which requires that SSMU “advocate for the cessation of harmful military research, the interests of harmful military technology organizations at McGill University, or any other connection to the military-industrial complex” (7), explicitly identifies McGill's investments in Airbus, Safran, Lockheed Martin, Thales, and BAE Systems as arms-producing and military service companies from which McGill must divest (11). This motion fulfills this call by demanding that McGill divest from these same companies, as well as others whose revenues are derived in part from Israel's war on Gaza.

*From SSMU **Divest for Human Rights Policy** (2021-2026)*

Motion is consistent with the responsibility of the Offices of the President, Vice-President (External Affairs), and Vice-President (University Affairs) to advocate for McGill University to divest from, refrain from investing in, or terminate any other relationships with companies or other institutions engaged in ongoing human rights violations. Incl ReMax, OshKosh Corporation, etc.

Alignment with Mission

This motion aligns with the SSMU's mission to uphold human rights, social justice, and equity on campus as stipulated in the Divest for Human Rights Policy and Harmful Military Technology Policy. It seeks to leverage student democracy as facilitated through a strike vote in advocating for divestment and student activism, promoting a safe and inclusive environment that honors freedom of expression and ethical commitments.

Consultations Completed

Consultation occurred with the Offices of Vice President (External Affairs) and Vice President (University Affairs), both of which have been tasked under the Divest for Human Rights Policy with supporting and advancing the aim of divestment from human rights violations. Consultations also included a rigorous review in line with limitations regarding the injunction issued against the PAGIP.



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Consultation also consisted of working with the SSMU's Campaigns Coordinators, who have been in contact with student strike campaigners.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

Risk factors include not promoting urgently needed popular mobilization against companies complicit in war crimes and or ethnic cleansing per the ICC, IJC, and the majority of human rights organizations.

In the event of a strike, coordination and support from SSMU will be imperative to protect students' from retaliation by professors and administration. As elaborated in Appendix A, SSMU should inform students' of their rights to demonstration, and should take measures to de-escalate violence from police and security.

Sustainability Considerations

The proposed divestment aligns with sustainability goals, as many of the targeted corporations contribute to environmental degradation through arms manufacturing. Social sustainability on campus is also a concern, ensuring that student activism and advocacy can proceed without repression.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If a simple majority is won, the motion will then go through the final stages of online ratification. The quorum for all General Assembly ratifications shall be ten percent (10%) of the Members.

If approved at the Special General Assembly, the resolved motion shall proceed to an online ratification process. The voting form should be sent out no later than 9am the following day in an email communication to members. The online voting period shall be open for 72 hours. Ratification shall be deemed successful if the motion receives a simple majority vote, with participation from no less than 10% of the SSMU's constituent body.

If ratified through online vote, the motion to strike shall be implemented between April 2nd and April 4th.



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Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the SSMU student body adopt the strike policy in Appendix A, to be ratified in an online referendum voted on by no less than 10% of SSMU constituents starting the following morning and lasting no longer than *84 hours*.

After the General Assembly, be it resolved that the Board of Directors convene at the earliest possible date for an emergency meeting to ratify the implementation of the motion, pending the results of the online ratification by the student body.

Results of the Vote

In favour	(679)
Opposed	(10)
Abstain	(3)

APPROVED



Appendix A: Strike in Support of Palestinian Liberation

(April 2-4)

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Preamble

The students of McGill University are calling for a 3 day-long strike between April 2-4, 2025. This call to action comes after a year of indiscriminate bombing, forced displacement, and ethnic cleansing against Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as aggressions against the Lebanese people. Since October 7th, 2023, McGill students have protested in unprecedented numbers against McGill's financial investments in companies which profit from Israel's ongoing war on Gaza. **These companies include, but are not limited to, Lockheed Martin, Airbus, Textron, BAE Systems, Safran, and Thales.**

In addition to the recently renewed Harmful Military Technology Policy (HMT) and Divest for Human Rights Policy (DHR), students have mobilized and voted in historic margins for policies in [2022](#) and [2023](#), affirming an unwavering stance against McGill's investments that gain from war crimes and crimes against humanity. Despite the resounding voice of the student body, our administration has, in



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the words of the recently passed SSMU Legislative Council Statement, continued “*muzzling popular discourse and erasing entrenched norms of freedom of speech*” through crisis manufacturing, arrests, and discipline rather than transparently meeting the students’ demands.

On February 6, 2025, the McGill University Board of Governors, convened behind closed doors following the release of the Committee on Sustainability and Social Responsibility (CSSR) report, and affirmed its decision to retain investments in weapons manufacturing companies. This decision directly contradicted the democratically articulated demands of the student body, which included the passing, but subsequent blocking, of the Palestine Solidarity referendum in 2021 and the Policy Against Genocide in Palestine referendum in 2023, as well as numerous student-led protests. The Board of Governors, however, concluded that these companies did not meet “the criteria for social injury” as defined within the CSSR report, justifying the continued investment and prioritizing the university’s “fiduciary responsibilities” over student democracy and ethical principles.

In light of these circumstances, we call on all students of conscience to strike between April 2-4 to reiterate our demands and commitment to divestment, and in recognition of the steadfastness and resilience of the Palestinian people. Echoing the [Harmful Military Technology Policy](#) and the [Divest for Human Rights Policy](#), we demand that our university divest its equity holdings in all companies involved in the production and sale of weapons and military technology linked to genocide and occupation.

Background

McGill invests almost 15 million dollars of its [endowment fund](#) in companies that are linked to upholding Israel’s war on Gaza. [Notable targets](#) include weapons and military technology manufacturers Lockheed Martin (\$677,913), Airbus Aerospace (\$797, 554), Thales Group (\$1,250,682), Bae Systems PLC (\$1,499,152), Safran Group (\$1,351,613), and Textron Inc (\$935,067). As an example of the heinous impact of these companies, Lockheed Martin manufactures the Hellfire 9X missile which is sold to the IDF and used in Gaza, notably at the [Al Shifa Hospital Massacre](#). Over 45,000 Palestinians and over 16,000 children have been killed by Israel’s devastating assault on the Gaza Strip since October 7th 2023. These are conservative [estimates](#) by the Gaza Ministry of Health. Including factors like [imposed famine and lack of medical resources](#), journals like The Lancet [estimate](#) the current number of murdered Palestinians to be closer to 186,000.



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On October 9th, 2023, Israeli Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant [stated](#), “I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no fuel, everything is closed... we are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly.”; one of many examples highlighting the destructive [intentions](#) of Israeli forces towards the Gazan population. Consequently, since October 28th, all universities, hospitals, and religious sites have been [destroyed](#) by Israel’s aggression. Critical infrastructure is no longer available to displaced Gazans, and as of June 2024, the UN estimates that the [costs](#) of destruction total over 50 billion.

Since the implementation of the preliminary ceasefire agreement, Israel has subjected Palestinians to numerous [violations](#). These include delaying and restricting the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza, resulting in substantial difficulties in reconstruction efforts and exacerbating the already catastrophic living conditions in Gaza.

Student Support of Palestinian Liberation

In the Fall 2023 semester, 78.7% of SSMU voters (and the largest referendum voter turnout) approved the [Policy](#) Against Genocide in Palestine (PAGIP). Previously, during the SSMU’s Winter 2022 Referendum, 71% of student voters voted on a similar [Palestine Solidarity Policy](#) (PSP).

Since October 7th, 2023, students have protested regularly and in large numbers for the demands of divestment and academic boycott. Over the summer of 2024, a protest [encampment](#) was established on the Lower Field, self-referenced as the “Palestine Solidarity Encampment¹” a clear response to the worldwide encampment movement. The encampment lasted 75 days and succeeded in placing massive narrative pressure on the McGill administration. So far this semester, students have picketed classes, led educational workshops, and organized large walkouts.

Precedent at McGill

Within the McGill Administration:

McGill University [divested](#) from Apartheid South Africa in the 1980s. After similar activism, McGill also committed to [divestment](#) from fossil fuels in 2023. It is evident that divestment is achievable with protracted student action.

¹<https://www.thetribune.ca/news/mcgill-administration-dismantles-palestine-solidarity-encampment-after-75-days-29072024/>



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Within the Student Society of McGill University (SSMU):

In May 2024, the SSMU ratified the Policy on [Harmful](#) Military Technology, which affirms in articles 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, respectively, an institutional mandate to support student campaigns advocating against military technology as well as to advocate against any policy of police on campus. There is precedent for these demands in SSMU's existing Moratorium on considering Referendum questions for Ancillary Fees until McGill divests from its investments in companies whose business includes harmful military technology. SSMU is upholding its [constitution](#) by “[committing] to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights [and] social justice.”

Repression Against Students

McGill has contracted SIRCO, a private “[counterterrorism](#)” security firm that [dismantled](#) the encampment and forcibly removed student protestors. Sirco's “[About Us](#)” page lists expertise in “tailing,” “infiltration,” and “investigation.” Private security contractors have been present daily on campus throughout the Fall 2024 semester and repeatedly refused to identify themselves to students and faculty. On October 7th, 2024, Sirco agents were [seen](#) in posts on social media grabbing and assaulting student protestors on campus.

On [June 6th, 2024](#), and [October 7th, 2024](#), McGill allowed SPVM, Sûreté du Québec, and SIS unit riot police to enter campus and violently disperse student protests. In both instances, the police used pepper spray, tear gas, and batons to injure student protestors. Several arrests have also been made against protestors. In public emails, McGill has frequently stated the close collaboration between the university and the SPVM. In a mass [communication](#) following police violence on June 6th, 2024, President Deep Saini stated, “McGill thanks the SPVM for their expertise in handling the situation.”

On October 8th, 2024, McGill [forwarded](#) an injunction decision to all members of the McGill community restricting their right to protest within 5 meters of “any McGill building, entrance, or pathway.” This injunction arguably limited the ability to protest on campus in any capacity. The injunction lasted for 10 days before parties intervened to support the student and faculty right to protest. McGill has also initiated other legal action aiming to restrict student activism, namely an injunction related to the PAGIP and an [injunction](#) related to the encampment.

McGill has repeatedly threatened internal disciplinary procedures against student protestors. In a mass [communication](#) on June 18th, President Deep Saini wrote, “The University will pursue disciplinary processes against individuals participating in the encampment to the full extent outlined in our policies.” Several students have since been punished under the ‘Student Code of Conduct’ for being present at non-violent protests, including the encampment.



Why a strike?

- The SSMU Constitution² and the SSMU's Internal Regulations of Governance³ uphold the right of students to call a mass strike and the democratic importance of student strikes as a political tool. The right to strike is also enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.
- There is a long and powerful history of student strikes in Montreal. Notably, the 2012 student strikes over tuition fee raises led to the participation of over 310,000 students throughout Quebec. Recent short-term [student strikes](#) took place within McGill faculties in 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2023.
- A student strike is a powerful political tool that is often used to bring awareness and support for a broader movement when normal institutional avenues are not available or effective. However, a student strike does not create material pressure for the university in the same way as the employer-employee relationship of a labor strike. For this reason, student strikes (unlike labor strikes) are often limited in duration, symbolic in intention, and serve as narrative interventions within a larger political campaign.
- If adopted, this strike will require SSMU to encourage the mass participation of all SSMU members in a strike from April 2-4, through email and its social media accounts. A student strike is powerful in its mass democratic character by disrupting course and exam schedules, pressuring the McGill institution and the general public to confront the democratic demands of the students.
- As stated on the SSMU website, the university should respect a call to strike. Typically this means that [classes](#) and coursework should be made up by the university, and the burden should not be placed on the striking student body.

² 13.7. Strike General Assembly: A Special General Assembly may be called to consider business related to a Society strike. Quorum for a resolution to put the Society on strike shall be five hundred (500) Members of the Society.

³ 9. Strike General Assembly: 9.1. Definition: A Strike General Assembly shall be any General Assembly considering a motion to strike.

9.2. Quorum: The quorum of Strike General Assemblies shall be 500 members. The quorum for a Strike General Assembly applies only to the motion to strike and not to any other agenda items.



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SSMU's Role

- SSMU shall communicate, through email and through its social media accounts, the strike information, its intent, and its demands to all members, reinforcing the democratic importance of adherence and providing resources outlining the right to strike.
- SSMU shall communicate, through email, the strike information, its intent, and its demands to all faculty and departmental student associations requesting that they endorse and uphold the strike.
- SSMU shall communicate the strike information, its intent, and its demands to the McGill administration.
- SSMU shall communicate a daily schedule of programming related to the subject of this strike to all SSMU members as alternative education in place of class time. This communication shall be conducted through daily emails and posts on all official SSMU social media accounts. These events will be planned in coordination with the strike planning committee as well as interested SSMU student groups.
- SSMU shall provide spaces within the University Centre to groups and individuals engaging in strike-related programming and organization.
- SSMU shall support students facing retaliation from the University in connection to strike activities.
- SSMU shall make the strike an official campaign for the duration of the strike.



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Call to Strike

For the reasons outlined above, we call on a mass student strike for the period of one school week between April 2-4 with the following demands:

1. Demand that our university divest its equity holdings in all companies involved in the production and sale of weapons and military technology linked to genocide and occupation, as defined by the standards of international law, the ICJ, and established human rights organizations such as Amnesty International. These companies include, but are not limited to, Lockheed Martin, Airbus, Textron, BAE Systems, Safran, and Thales.
2. Demand the immediate end of any research partnership or financial relationship involving corporations, institutions, or individual donors perpetuating or benefitting from the sale of weapons or military technology.
3. Demand that our university immediately cease any disciplinary cases and political tribunals against students involved in popular organizing, political advocacy, and demonstrations, and provide amnesty to all students who engage in similar protests going forward.

APPROVED