

**Statement from the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union  
to address Minister Jill Dunlop's remarks**

***Content Warning: mentions of r\*pe, t\*rture, and m\*rder.***

October 25, 2023

First and foremost, the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union (UTMSU) would like to state that our top priority is undergraduate, full-time and part-time students at UTM. The UTMSU would also like to reaffirm that it is an independent, democratically established non-profit organization.

One too many students have been impacted personally by the conflict in the Middle East. If you are one of those students, we stand alongside you in praying for the safety of your families and loved ones. We would like to add that any student, regardless of their religion, race, sexual orientation, gender, or ability are welcome and encouraged to seek a home at the students' union. We are here for you and will always strive to support you!

In the past week there have been inflamed conversations and it is important for everyone to remember that campus must always be a safe space for all students. Hate speech has no place at UTM.

It is our job as a students' union to welcome safe and truthful dialogue, and to stand with oppressed peoples everywhere. Those in Gaza currently do not have safety or opportunity. Their prospects for the future and overall life expectancy has been severely diminished as a result of Israeli government policies. That is why the UTMSU has long lobbied against investment in weapons and arms-manufacturing through the campaign, "Divest Now!".

On October 17, the Conservative government's Minister of Colleges and Universities, Jill Dunlop, made statements at Queen's Park that mischaracterized and villainized the [UTMSU's statement](#), while protected by parliamentary privilege. Her remarks were defamatory and unjust to the UTMSU and its membership. Minister Dunlop's remarks egregiously claimed that the UTMSU defended rape, torture and mass murder. These alarming claims are incorrect and they were perceived by students as an attempt by the Minister to dox and incite hateful, dangerous harassment targeted at the UTMSU and students who advocate against anti-Palestinian racism.

Yes, the UTMSU condemns the killing of innocent civilians, from both Israel and Palestine. Yes, the UTMSU wants a ceasefire and the end of the military occupation of Palestine. Yes, the UTMSU wants peace. But no, the UTMSU will not be bullied, doxxed or threatened into silence. Not from Minister Dunlop or anybody else.

Today, the UTMSU calls on Minister Dunlop to recommit to the Ontario government's 2018 requirement for post-secondary institutions to ensure freedom of speech on campus' is upheld.

The UTMSU also reminds Minister Dunlop that when the Provincial government attempted to pass the so-called Student Choice Initiative (SCI), the Ontario Superior Court quickly struck it down. That piece of legislation was designed to strip students of free choice and to undermine student unions. In striking the SCI, the Court confirmed student unions' autonomy, solidifying students' rights to organize and engage in acts of resistance against injustices.

Post-secondary institutions should be a safer space for freedom of expression and speech that brings about positive changes on campus, in our communities, and around the globe. We must be able to speak and organize freely and safely around issues impacting our members without censorship.

- UTM Students' Union (UTMSU)