

April 15, 2024
Dr. Steven Webb
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
Global Institute for Food Security
421 Downey Rd
Saskatoon, SK S7N 4L8

Re: Global Institute for Food Security's Collaborators

Dear Dr. Webb,

We would like to begin by applauding the Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) for its leadership in the critical field of global food security. We recognize GIFS's significant contributions to provincial, national, and global food security, further solidifying Saskatchewan's reputation as a global leader in agricultural advancement. We commend GIFS for its commitment to innovation and excellence in addressing one of the world's most pressing challenges, especially with the rising number of political conflicts involving civil unrest, violence, and civilian starvation.

The ongoing Israeli war on Gaza has created an unprecedented food security crisis for the 2.3 million Palestinians living in Gaza. As UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese stated, it is "the highest number of people ever recorded as facing human-made famine." We are deeply alarmed by Israel's deliberate use of starvation as a weapon of war. The withholding of food aid is part of South Africa's charges brought against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which found it plausible, in its interim ruling, that Israel's acts could amount to genocide. We fear that GIFS's collaboration with eight Israeli institutions could jeopardize its mandate, domestic and global reputation, and its vision as an institute committed to ensuring "a world where everyone has access to safe and nutritious food." Therefore, we, the undersigned, urge the GIFS Board of Directors to take the necessary actions to distance the institute from any collaboration with Israeli organizations complicit in the deliberate starvation of Gazans and the war on Gaza. Specifically, these actions include:

1. Suspending research collaboration with the following Israeli institutions:
 - Agricultural Research Organization (ARO)
 - Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
 - Israel Institute of Technology
 - Tel Aviv University
 - The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
 - The Weizmann Institute of Science
 - University of Haifa
 - NRGene Ltd
2. Suspending academic collaboration with the listed institutions, including but not limited to, academic authorship, conferences, or academic visits.

Notes on Recommendations:

- 1. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has reported that half a million people in Gaza "face starvation," and all 2.3 million experience "acute food shortages."** Jamie McGoldrick, the UN's Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, described the hunger as reaching "catastrophic levels," and the EU Foreign Policy Chief, Josep Borrell, accused Israel of using starvation as a "war arm" in Gaza. Furthermore, OCHA reported that the majority of aid sent to the civilian population in Gaza was denied by Israel, ignoring the ICJ's order to open the way to increased deliveries of humanitarian aid to prevent genocide in Gaza.
- 2. Collaborations with Israeli organizations undermine GIFS's mandate and reputation, and cast a negative light on its founding partners, Nutrien and the University of Saskatchewan.** Each of the Israeli institutions currently collaborating with GIFS has deep ties with the Israeli government and military, ranging from research and development of weapons and military doctrine used by Israeli forces to hosting an army base on campus and providing financial incentives to students who participate in military incursions. Some Israeli GIFS collaborators also have direct connections with the Israeli government through agricultural research or other mechanisms, raising concerns amid the ongoing war on Gaza. Moreover, as reported by the Geneva-based Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, Israel has systematically destroyed or damaged all 12 universities and colleges in Gaza. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) data, Israel has blocked access to farmland and the sea, razed 28% of Gaza's cropland, destroyed over 70% of Gaza's fishing fleet, and damaged 488 agricultural wells and 21% of Gaza's greenhouses. Connections with Israeli institutions risks causing significant reputational harm to GIFS domestically and globally. Indeed, a survey conducted by EKOS Research Associates found that many Canadians view Israel as an apartheid state, not a vibrant democracy. A recent survey by the Angus Reid Institute showed that 41% of Canadians believe that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians.
- 3. GIFS should exert moral leadership in an ongoing food crisis impacting 2.3 million people.** GIFS's guiding values of integrity, excellence, and innovation should not be compromised. Using starvation as a weapon of war is a war crime under International Humanitarian Law and Geneva Convention Protocols, and certainly violates GIFS's guiding values. GIFS, as a global leader in food security, can transcend politics and ensure that there are no false limitations placed on food security by state.

The undersigned, on behalf of our members, extend our gratitude to GIFS for its consideration and cooperation on this matter. We appreciate your response by April 25, 2024. For any

questions regarding this request, please contact Rachel Engler-Stringer at rachel.engler-stringer@usask.ca.

Kind regards,

Faculty for Palestine, University of Saskatchewan
Faculty for Palestine, University of Regina
Students for Justice and Peace, University of Saskatchewan
Students for Justice in Palestine, University of Regina
Canadians for Peace and Justice in the Middle East, Saskatoon
Regina Peace Council
Making Peace Vigil
Regina Public Interest Research Group
David Froh, Community leader and executive in the food security sector

cc: Members of Board of Directors
Science Leads