

Students' Statement on 'Fire & Safety Concerns' — 27/05/2024

As per our previous statement, students from the encampment expanded into, and are now occupying, the majority of the Bloom Building's ground floor space. This decision was a direct response to the LSE's Senior Management Committee (SMC) failing to meet with us, or to even consider our [demands](#), for now over one week; another week of genocidal complicity, silence and inaction. The expansion took place in the early hours of 27 May, as the Israeli military ramped up its horrendous massacre in Rafah.

Rather than condemning the massacre, the SMC saw fit to order security to remove posters from windows which are drawing attention to the ongoing genocide. The students responded by securing a perimeter and replacing the posters, which have been a point of contention for the SMC since the beginning of the occupation. LSE is refusing to fairly or properly engage with us, nor to set an honest and transparent precedent regarding meeting minutes and agendas, and embarrassing their professional integrity in doing so. They are the obstacle to negotiations, and we are the ones with a clear line of approach.

The SMC has one clear imperative: they wish to contain and ignore the student revolt; if they are unable to ignore us, they will find any excuse to shut our occupation down.

In line with that directive, the SMC sent their bank-holiday henchman and Head Facilities Officer, Allan Baites—who lacks any clear authority in relation to the occupation—to come and threaten students with 'consequences'. These threats were made on the superficial premise that the camp's expansion poses fire and safety concerns, and that the entire Bloom Building might be shut down. The accusations included blocked fire escapes, electricity plugs, and flammable items, none of which are entirely new issues, but all of which are clearly being raised under disingenuous pretences.

Firstly, the encampment has always taken decisive measures to clear and properly signpost all fire exits. Until this morning, we had only one fire exit within the occupied zone, and we were becoming overly cramped with the number of tents and new participants joining us. As such, we now have greater room, more unobstructed space, and access to two fire exits, both of which are identifiable and unblocked. The absolute irony is that security came under orders from SMC this morning and were filmed removing signs which identified our newly accessed fire exit; it is they who have hindered our fire security precautions. We have also since taken measures to clear a second security path through the encampment.

Regarding over-use of electrical sockets, we have heard this concern and have agreed collectively to take measures to unplug electrical devices when they are not in use. However, we are presently occupying and living in this space, and we are all students with essays to write, exams to prepare for, and lives to live. We are of course taking these concerns seriously, and will accommodate them within our occupation. Yet, despite our evident willingness to accommodate such health and safety concerns, no further information regarding the limits to socket use has been clearly communicated to the Liberated Zone.

Lastly, concerning flammable items, we have measures in place to ensure that they are minimized, for example accepting exclusively non-flammable tents from our supporters. We have organized our camp to create clear and indicated paths to fire exits and fire extinguishers. Thus, despite our willingness to address and offer timely responses to genuine health and safety concerns, the SMC is evidently misusing claims of safety as a guise to undermine and threaten our collective efforts.

However, it seems obvious to us that if these concerns were genuine, the SMC would be engaging with us in good faith and rather than leaving students in "hazardous" conditions for two weeks. Of course, if they truly wished to see an end to these 'hazards,' they would meet us to negotiate our demands, and see them met immediately. It seems far more likely that they are now attempting, once again, to leverage disingenuous concerns over students' wellbeing against the strength of our political project against academic complicity in genocide and for Palestinian liberation.

The Liberated Zone emphasises support for this project is widespread amongst the LSE community, evidenced by multiple petitions—representing now over 2,000 explicit supportive voices—including students (in a [new petition](#)), [staff and faculty](#), [Jewish staff and students](#), and LSE [alumni](#). The SMC can continue to ignore us, and to exclude even the mention of [divestment](#) or our other [demands](#) from our previous meetings; but as they do so, our unity, commitment, and resolve only strengthen.

As ever, we urgently call on the SMC to meet with us tomorrow, Tuesday 28 May, to take seriously our demands, and to begin negotiations properly and in good faith.

Meet us ASAP, and meet our demands.

The LSE Liberated Zone