

Columbia University affiliate college fully divests from Israel

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Demonstrators prepare to face-off with Metropolitan Police of the District of Columbia on May 9, 2024 in Washington, DC. (Photo by AFP)

New York, May 10 (RHC)-- An affiliate college of Columbia University in New York City has fully divested from all companies profiting off the Israeli war on Gaza.

The School Union Theological Seminary (UTS) announced the decision after the Union's Board of Trustees voted Thursday to divest from "companies profiting from" the regime's genocidal war against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

"We do it with humility and we do it with a sense of moral conviction," said Union's president, Serene Jones. She said that the seminary has "a very good investment committee who are completely, at a moral level, committed to seeing this through."

According to the announcement, Union's Investment Committee had been engaged in "research and monitoring" related to the decision since November 2023.

"With respect to companies that are profiting from the present war in Palestine, we continue to hold these standards high and have taken steps to identify all investments, both domestic and global, that support and profit from the present killing of innocent civilians in Palestine," the trustees said in a statement.

UTS, characterized as an "independent, progressive, ecumenical seminary" is an affiliate college of Columbia University, with representatives in the Columbia University Senate and a joint graduate program with the University. Despite this, it operates independently from the University and manages its own endowment worth \$127 million.

Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), a student group organizing around human rights for Palestinians, praised the move, saying it is just the beginning of the domino effect. "This is a major win for the divestment campaign not only at Columbia, but nationwide," it said.

"This is only the beginning of the domino effect that will inevitably follow. We will settle for nothing less than complete divestment by every single college within Columbia University."

Since mid-April, students have been demonstrating against Israel's war on Gaza at about 140 colleges in the United States. The demonstrators are demanding their universities cut direct or indirect financial ties with US weapons manufacturers and Israeli institutions.

The pro-Palestinian student group called on students to "remain steadfast and refuse to capitulate in our demand for divestment."

Similar demonstrations have also spread to campuses in Britain, France, Australia, Canada and elsewhere.

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