

# **The Persecution of Palestinian Students in Israeli Universities and Colleges during the War on Gaza**

**Data on disciplinary proceedings against Palestinian students – citizens of Israel and residents of East Jerusalem - for their social media activity since 7 October 2023**

**Updated through 25 March 2024**

# Preface

Since the beginning of the War on 7 October 2023, dozens of Israeli universities and colleges initiated disciplinary actions mainly and overwhelmingly against Palestinian students, both citizens of Israel and residents of East Jerusalem, based on their social media posts.

These academic institutions exceeded the authority granted to them by the Student Rights Law – 2000, which allows them to open disciplinary proceedings against students only in specific cases, as defined in their regulations, and only if the conduct relates to their studies at the institution. Further, these proceedings have created a hostile, inciting, and unsafe academic environment for many Palestinian students and faculty members, which does not allow for diverse opinions and hinders critical thinking in the context of the war on Gaza.

In recent months, we witnessed protests by Jewish students demanding the removal of Palestinian students that faced disciplinary procedures from the schools and dormitories, although in some cases these students had been acquitted. Surveys conducted among Palestinian students indicate that they feel unsafe on campus, and a high percentage consider dropping out.

The data presented here updates a data presentation published by Adalah on 25 November 2023. ([See here](#)) It reflects the situation as of 25 March 2024.

## Types of social media posts that led to disciplinary actions (1/2)

In all the cases handled by Adalah Center, no violations of freedom of expression boundaries were found on the part of the Palestinian students. A significant portion of the posts which received complaints were unrelated to the war but were construed by their institutions as expressing support for terrorism, such as content posted before October 7th, personal event photos, or even clips taken from soap operas. Sometimes, students were held accountable for content they did not share themselves but for content that had been created by a user they had shared content from in the past. Additionally, even the posting of basic national symbols, such as the Palestinian flag, at times served as basis for disciplinary action.

This strictness was also evident in cases opened against students solely for their expression of views that might challenge the Israeli consensus. Any publication that did not align with the Israeli narrative of the Hamas attack on October 7th and the events leading up to it posed a risk to its publishers in disciplinary proceedings. For instance, articles criticizing the actions of the Israeli military or casting doubt on the accuracy of some descriptions of the events in the Gaza envelope were often the basis for some complaints, even if the source was Israeli media in Hebrew. Effectively, the use of terms like "ethnic cleansing," "massacre," or "genocide" to describe the events in Gaza was banned.

## The type of posts that lead to disciplinary proceedings (2/2)

Even publications expressing solidarity with Gaza residents, including prayers for their well-being or photos of destruction in the strip, sometimes served as the basis for complaints. Similarly, Quranic verses, prayers, and other religious texts were labelled as support for terrorism regardless of their religious and social context. The institutions cited religious texts that had been previously used by Hamas members as proof of a student's intention to identify with the organization and its actions on October 7th. Likewise, any posting of photos from the events of that day, even if unaccompanied by any text, could serve as a basis for indictment.

According to Adalah Center's review of these posts and the proceedings, there is a clear pattern of racist viewpoints which attribute charges of “support for terrorism” solely based on the identity of the publishers. Effectively, they have assumed that every Arab student is a terrorist unless they prove themselves otherwise.

124

students from 36  
institutions turned  
to Adalah for legal  
assistance.

- The The Association of the Arab Students estimates that about 160 Palestinian students faced disciplinary actions from their Israeli universities and colleges.
- Of the 160 students, 124 turned to Adalah, and Adalah represents 95, providing them with legal counsel and representation at various stages of the disciplinary proceedings against them.

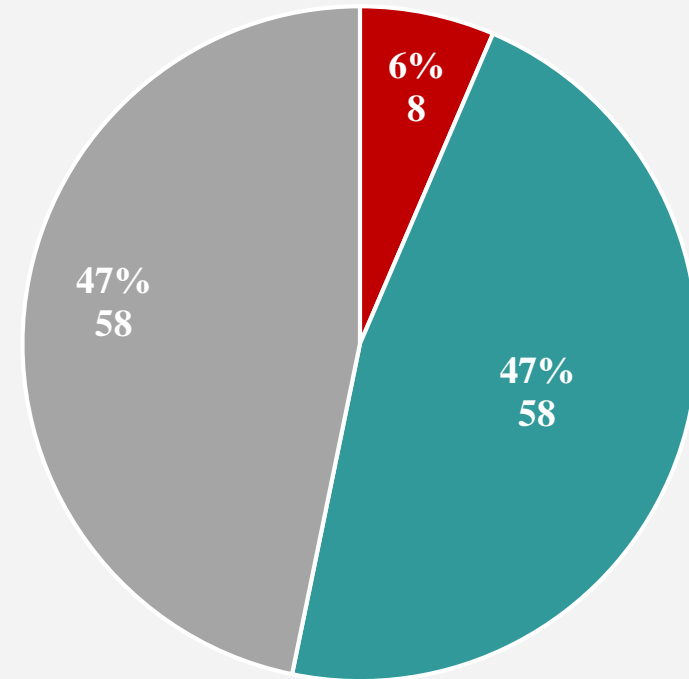
# Number of cases brought against Palestinian students in each academic institution

Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem	14	Nursing studies at "Meir Medical Center"	2
University of Haifa	9	Ruppin Academic Center	2
College of Management	8	Nof Hagalil College of Technology	2
WIZO Academic Center, Haifa	8	Sami Shamoon College of Engineering	2
Hadassah Academic College	7	Ramat Gan Academic College	2
Western Galilee College	6	Hebrew University of Jerusalem	2
Tel Aviv University	5	College of Management- Academic Track	1
Technion - Israel Institute of Technology	5	Ono Academic College	1
Shenkar College of Engineering, Design, and Art	5	Netanya Academic College	1
Kinneret Academic College	5	Levinsky College of Education	1
Peres Academic Center	5	Kay College	1
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev	5	Zefat Academic College	1
ORT Colleges Network	4	Afeka College	1
Emek Yezreel Academic Co	3	Tiltan School of Design and Visual Communications	1
Azrieli College	3	Kibbutzim College of Education, Technology and the Arts	1
Tel Hai College	3	Achva Academic College	1
Ramat Gan Academic College of Law and Business	3	Sapir Academic College	1
Beit Berl Academic College	2	Tel Aviv - Jaffa Academic College	1

# Expulsion of students without due process

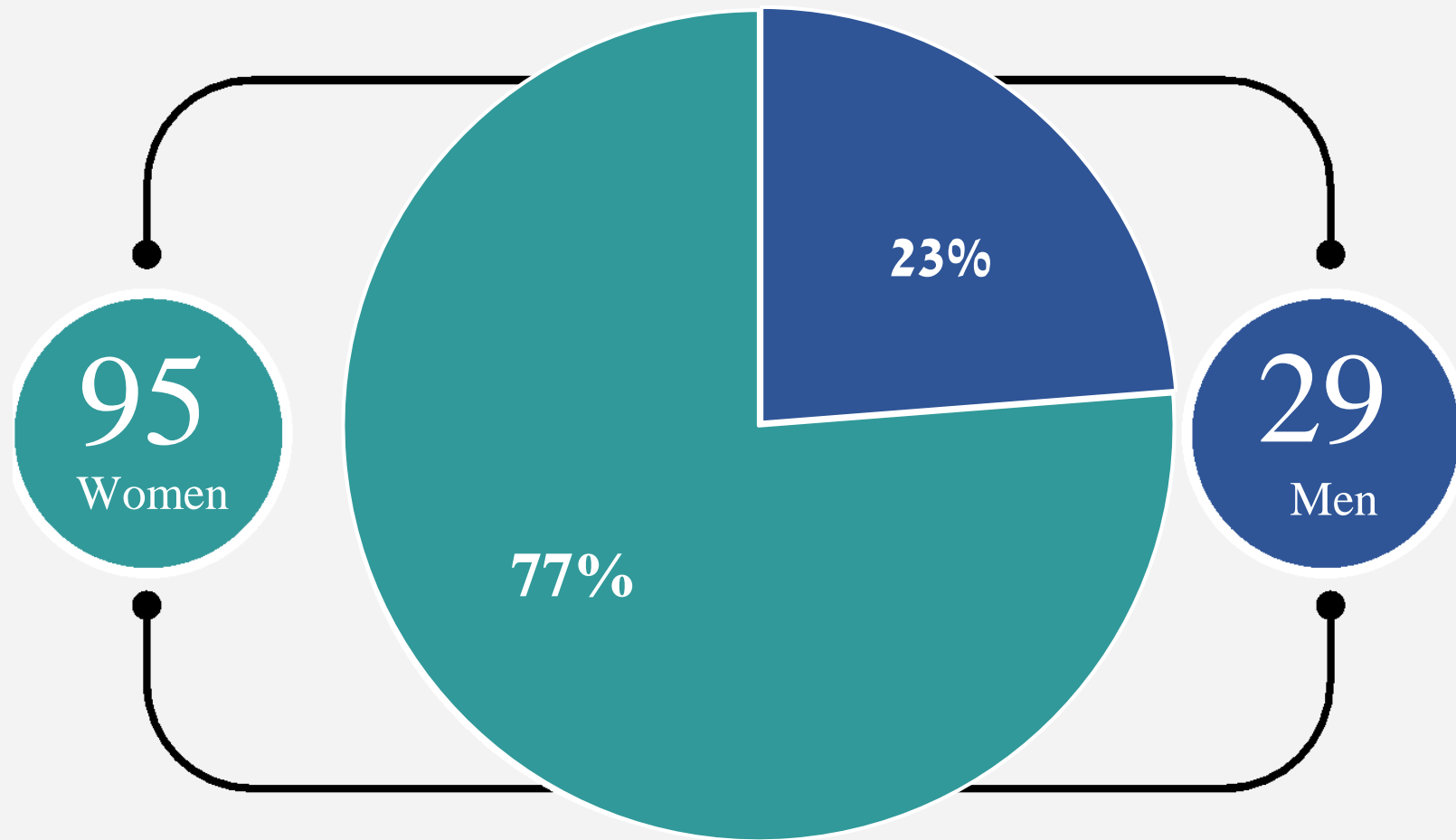
Out of the 124 students who turned to Adalah:

- 8 students received permanent expulsion letters from their universities and colleges immediately, without any disciplinary process. Only after Adalah's intervention, the institutions initiated a formal disciplinary process, and their expulsions were changed to temporary suspensions.
- In 47% of the cases,, the academic institutions temporarily suspended the students before any disciplinary proceedings began.



- Expulsion without a hearing
- Temporary suspension prior to disciplinary proceedings
- No suspension occurred prior to disciplinary proceedings

# Breakdown of cases by Gender





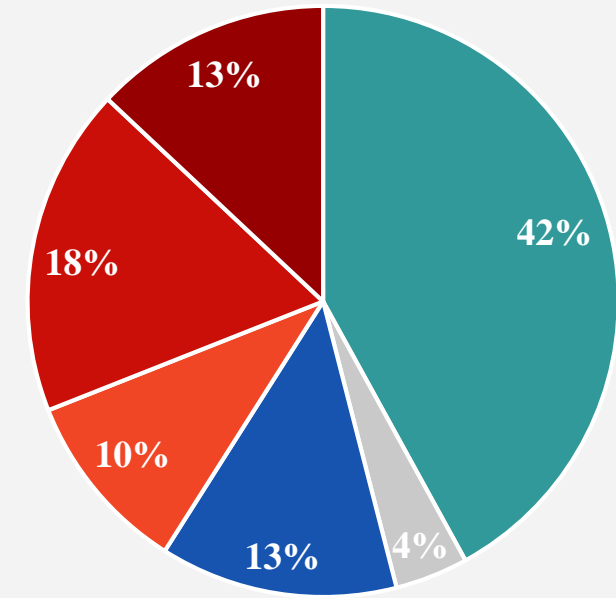
# Status of the cases in the first instance



# Outcomes of 83 cases concluded to date

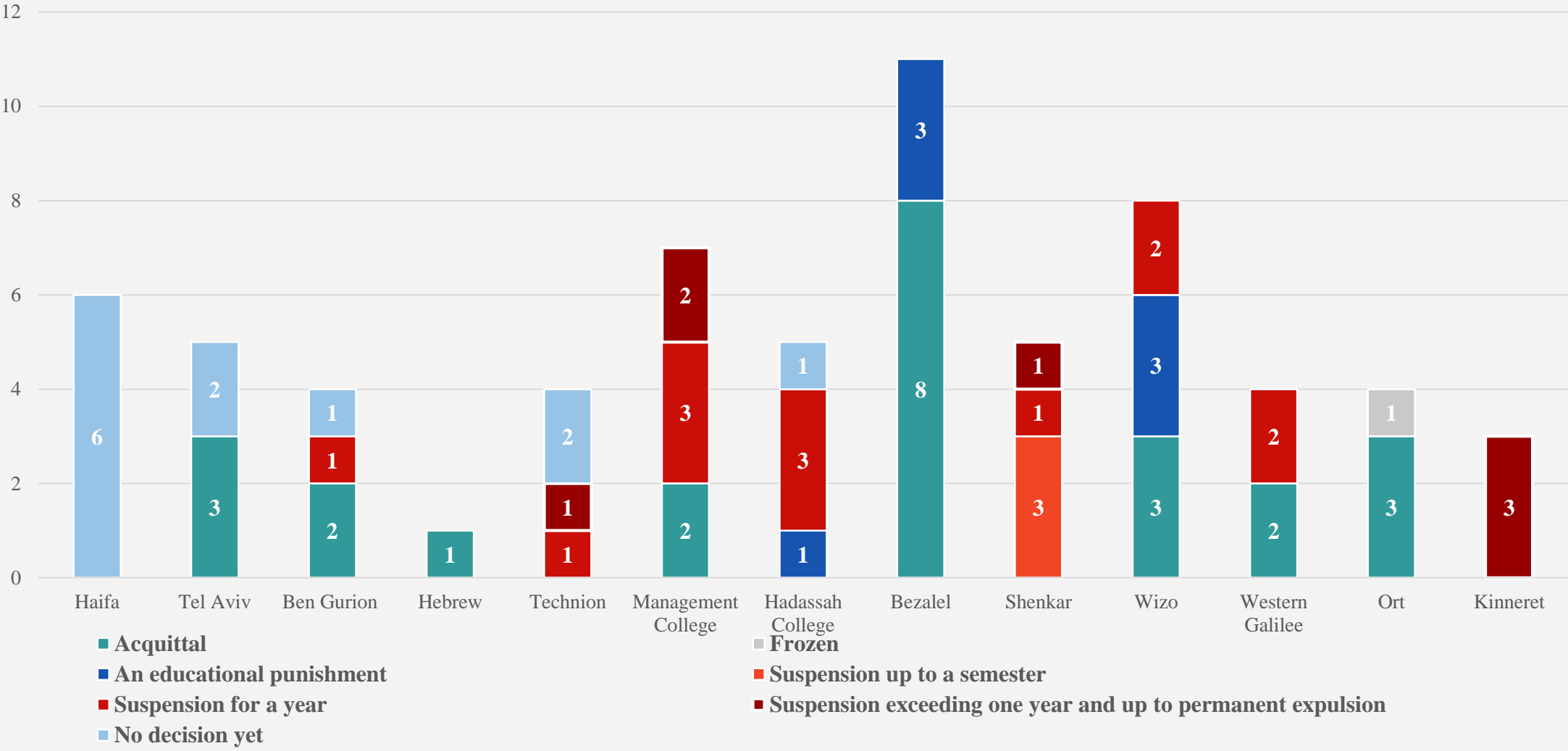
<b>35</b>	<b>Acquittal</b> (absolute, due to doubt, or reversal of the charge)
<b>3</b>	<b>Freezing</b> (Freezing the procedure due to the student's decision to suspend his /her studies in the institution)
<b>11</b>	<b>Educational Punishment</b> (apology letter, community service, social course/project)
<b>8</b>	<b>Suspension for a semester or less</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Suspension for a year</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Suspension exceeding one year and up to permanent expulsion</b>

**i** Decisions that include more than one punishment are listed according to the most severe punishment among them



- Acquittal
- Frozen
- educational punishment
- Suspension up until one semester
- Suspension for a year
- Suspension exceeding one year and up to permanent expulsion

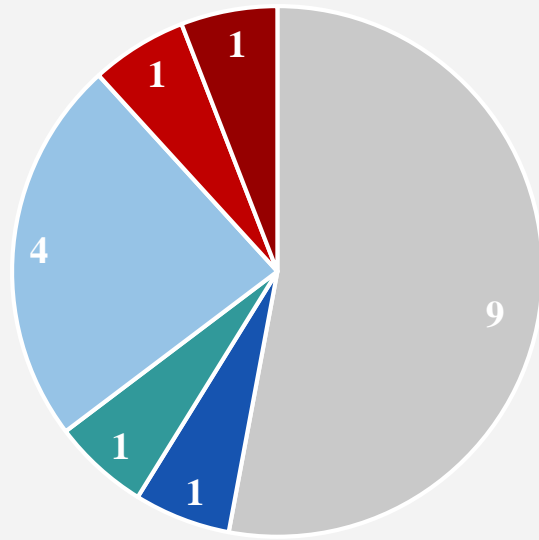
# Outcomes of the cases in selected institutions



# Appeals

- To date, Adalah has filed 20 appeals.
- Simultaneously, three academic institutions have filed appeals against the decisions of their disciplinary committees due to acquittals or “leniency” of the punishment following protests by Jewish students and political associations:
  - At Ben-Gurion University, the appeal was accepted, and the punishment was increased after an exceptional opportunity was given for a rehearing of a witness.
  - At the College of Management - Academic Track, the appeal was accepted, which changed the outcome from acquittal to conviction. The decision included a laconic explanation that disregarded most of the factual findings of the original decision.
  - At Emek Yezreel Academic College, the process has not yet been decided.

Decisions rendered on appeals to date



- Decision unchanged
- Retrail
- Acquittal
- Mitigation of the punishment
- Conviction
- Aggrevation of the punishment

# Transferring information to the Police

- Minister of Education, Yoav Kisch, instructed academic institutions to take action against students who seemingly expressed support or affiliation with terrorist organizations, identified with terrorist acts, or incited to carry them out, and also to file complaints with the Israel Police.
- Several institutions responded to the minister's request, and some even filed complaints with the police against their students. The transfer of the cases to the police led to the investigation and arrest of some students, while other students were even indicted.
- In several cases, disciplinary committees within the academic institutions accused the students of incitement and support for terrorist activities, even after the police did not find sufficient evidence to prosecute them or even to summon them for questioning.

Institutions that referred student cases to the police:

**The College of Management**

**The University of Haifa**

**Tel Hai College**

**Tel Aviv University**

**The Ruppin Academic Center**

**Bar Ilan University**

**Safed College**

**Ben-Gurion University**

**Ramat Gan Academic Center for Law and Business**

**The Technion**