



Wednesday morning, FASoS-building Photo: Observant

Protesters intensify pressure and occupy university building

Protests, a tent camp, hunger strike and a 'hijacked' faculty

The pro-Palestinian demonstration at Maastricht University, ongoing since Monday 13 May, in the garden of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, entered a new phase on Wednesday 22 May. Dozens of activists 'occupied' the faculty building in the morning, leading to the cancellation of all classes and the closure of the building. At the time of writing, the university board is in discussions with some of the demonstrators on 'how to proceed'.

Following a walk-out protest by staff and students that began on Monday morning, 13 May, at the administration building on the Minderbroedersberg, a camp was set up in the garden of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) with about fourteen tents. After long negotiations, some demonstrators were allowed by the university board to camp there, even during the extended Pentecost weekend,

provided it remained peaceful. The faculty building was closed to anyone without a UM card, a measure aimed at keeping both the media and 'outsiders' who might join the demonstrators out.

Ties

The students have been stating for days that they will not leave until there is a written commitment that the university will cut ties with Israeli institutions. The Executive Board has decided to take a cautious approach, involving the university council and deans to establish criteria for cooperation with partners in all conflict areas, not just Israel. A hastily scheduled U-council meeting was held confidentially and online at the last minute on Friday because the "psychological and physical safety" of the members could not be guaranteed, according to U-council chair Teun Dekker. Protests had been announced. UM President Rianne

Letschert said afterward in an interview with *Observant* that she does not want to be rushed by the demonstrators. "Although I understand their frustration about the slow democratic processes."

Hunger strike

The protesters' tone is becoming increasingly harsh by the day, on their Instagram account during solidarity protests, and in the media, which they occasionally and selectively address outside the faculty building. They accuse UM of "genocide," question why the university severed ties with Russian institutions within a few days in 2022 but is not taking action now, and accuse university officials of lacking respect and care for the activists on hunger strike. In the night of Wednesday 15 May to Thursday 16 May, six students decided to stop eating. Since then, three of them have ended their hunger strike.

Gaza

In an interview with *Observant* on Wednesday morning during the 'occupation' of FASoS, Alex Lemberg, one of the hunger strikers, discussed the academic boycott they are demanding; he is the only one not covering his face with scarves or other coverings. Lemberg, currently a student council member for NovUM at the psychology faculty, will join the U-council after the summer. He refers to "well-documented ties" with, among others, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (UM has not yet published a list of partners). According to him, such institutions provide "ideological and technical support" to the Israeli army. When asked about the opinion that an academic boycott will not change the situation in Gaza, he considers it too cynical, citing the international boycott of South

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editorial

“Media out”

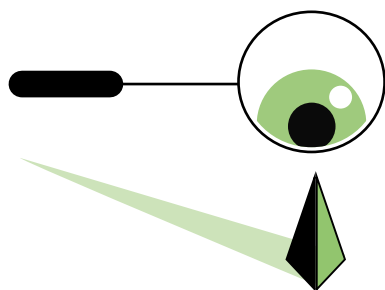
Riki Janssen

“I couldn’t help but notice that two more articles have been published in which the Palestinian side was barely taken into consideration. You keep publishing articles in which only the Israeli side (I’m not confusing Jewish with Israeli) is portrayed in a humanistic light.” *Observant* is neglecting to listen to both sides of the story, according to an email we received just before the occupation of the FASoS garden. When I asked which articles the email was referring to, there was no response. I suspect the article about four Jewish students feeling less safe on campus due to the protests displeased the sender. Most likely, so did the opinion piece by a Jewish student calling for dialogue. We explicitly asked the pro-Palestinian side to comment, but didn’t receive a response. In any case, when we ask people about their feelings or experiences, hearing both sides of the story – giving the other party the opportunity to express their views – is

neither a requirement nor a necessity. The Guidelines of the Netherlands Press Council read, “Journalists must hear those who are disqualified as a result of a publication, even if their role is marginal. Those who are accused must be given ample opportunity to respond to the accusations, preferably in the same publication. Hearing both sides does not relieve journalists from their duty to report as truthfully as possible.” *Observant* always strives for balance and fairness in reporting, aiming to present as many sides as possible. The same goes for our reporting on the Gaza war and the related unrest and protests in Maastricht. If there’s a demonstration, we report on it. If a Dialogue Table is organised, we report on it; if it’s subsequently cancelled, we report on that as well. If Studium Generale organises an evening event on Gaza, we report on it. If university buildings are defaced, we report on it. If students set up an encampment in the FASoS garden,

we report on it. Naturally, we try to give representatives of various groups the opportunity to express their views. The emphasis is on “try”. Our repeated requests for comments are not always successful. The four Jewish students only agreed to be interviewed after much persuasion, and the protesters in the encampment repeatedly made it clear they wanted nothing to do with the press. Their slogan: “Media out.” The hunger strikers were eventually willing to speak to *Observant*, but when our colleague PD went to meet them on Wednesday morning, the faculty building had been occupied. The three of them were sitting in the street, with one stating that he will continue his hunger strike until UM has severed ties with Israeli institutions.

Every week, the editor-in-chief writes about what has been happening at the Observant office



splinters

A funny incident, a striking piece of news, something interesting that happened elsewhere in the country: it is in this column. Contributions: Cleo Freriks

Golden Age for everyone

How ‘golden’ is the Dutch Golden Age, actually? In recent years, there has been more and more criticism regarding the term used to describe the 17th century – all that economic, political and cultural growth was partly due to the slave trade. Leiden historian Louis Sicking is annoyed with the classic description for another reason: it focuses too much on Holland. “As if everything before that was kind of prehistoric,” he says to the Leiden university newspaper *Mare*. Together with eleven colleagues, Sicking wrote a book in which each province was allotted its own Golden Age, “a period of flourishing, of superregional importance.” For Limburg, they chose the middle of the twelfth century. In that period, nobility felt a growing need to speak and read their own language. In Limburg’s many monasteries monks worked on texts. That makes Limburg “the birthplace of Dutch literature for the simple reason that the first literary Dutch work was put into writing there.” But there was a bit of a dilemma: this region was also important during the time of Charles the Great (768-814). “When Europe became united with much bloodshed, the triangle Aachen-Liège-Maastricht was the centre of European power. Charles had a palace school built there, resulting in education in the ninth century being of a high level.”

Why do men want to explain?

Mansplaining: the phenomenon of men giving an unsolicited explanation of something simple to women. There is a lot of grumbling about it, but can it also be explained scientifically? In Tilburg, research master’s student Astrid Fokkema of Communication Science made an attempt. It is not because men are just different to women, she says to sister newspaper *Univers*. “A literature study showed that communication differences between men and women are very slight and negligible.” Could it be that men in general feel that they know something better than others? Fokkema distributed a questionnaire and saw no difference between the answers given by men or women. She did notice that people (male/female) who consider themselves above others are more inclined to offer unsolicited advice. The third hypothesis: it comes down to the listener, women interpret unsolicited advice more negatively than men. This, indeed, appeared to be the case, but “it doesn’t matter whether the explanation is given by a man or a woman.” So, the cause of mansplaining has not been found, but Fokkema is not done with the subject yet. She will spend the next few years as a PhD student delving into it. But she will be broadening her research field. “Just like with mansplaining, giving an explanation has lost its innocence in several areas. Terms such as ‘whitesplaining’, ‘momsplaining’ and ‘cissplaining’ have already found their way into our vocabulary. Which factors determine whether someone experiences a certain explanation as insulting?”



Mop becomes robot

Anyone who finds themselves in the buildings of Delft University of Technology in the early hours of the morning, will not come across a cleaner mopping floors but a robot doing the job. Cleaning company Gom has introduced thirty robots to lighten the load for the cleaning team, writes sister newspaper *Delta*. They easily finish their work on time, says cleaner Ria to the newspaper. “I can have the robot do the corridor at seven o’clock, and in the meantime, I do the hall.” She is not afraid of losing her job. “Not at all, the robot makes our job easier. It won’t replace me.” A university wouldn’t be a university if it didn’t use the opportunity to do research. Martijn Wisse, group leader of Robot Dynamics at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, was intrigued by the cleaning robot, *Delta* writes. They are generally used in factories, where they don’t come across people. Now, together with Gom, a ‘living lab’ has been set up on campus to make the robots more flexible and to teach them to cope better with moving obstacles – such as people.

NovUM: “No board months for Tragos”



Illustration: Simone Golob

Allocation of the board months is on the University Council's agenda in June. If student association Tragos is deemed eligible, members of student party NovUM will not agree to this. They recently shared this intention on Instagram. They are very worried about social safety within Tragos and want more transparency about their improvement plan.

The Executive Board lifted the sanctions against Tragos last March. Eighteen months before that, the association received these sanctions due to misconduct during hazing. This included songs being sung “with racist, sexist and discriminating content”, UM-president Rianne Letschert said at the time. Tragos could say goodbye to its board months' worth 30 thousand euro. Eventually, the Executive Board received a ‘cultural change plan’, based on an external investigation, which convinced them of Tragos's good intentions.

But NovUM is not convinced. “We have not seen any information yet that justifies the conclusion that they deserve those board months,” says Andrew William Scrivener, student member in the University Council on behalf of NovUM. But hasn't he, in one of the previous meetings of the council, seen a plan of action or investigation report of Tragos? Scrivener does not want to say anything about it, “confidential”. He emphasises that this is not NovUM being contrary, “we have a right, as participation body, to information and the right of consent when it comes to the allocation of the board months and we are taking on that role”.

Board months

Every year, the allocation of the board months committee (a group of representatives from

student organisations) draws up a list of who gets how much compensation for study delays. The list may contain not just board members from fraternities and sororities, such as Tragos, but also organisations like theatre group Alles is Drama, Nour (Muslim student organisation), the InnBetween and sports associations. The committee's advice goes to the director of Student Services Centre and then to the Executive Board. Tragos generally receives about a hundred board months.

The ten students in the University Council (five from NovUM, four from DOPE and one from Klimaat Actie Netwerk) can study the advice in June. NovUM is planning not to agree (obviously if Tragos is indeed on the list, which is fairly likely). Scrivener: “It wasn't something minor that happened. The connection has been broken for a year-and-a-half. The Executive Board didn't just do this without reason.”

Feminists of Maastricht

NovUM emphasises in a statement on Instagram that a ‘negative vote’ is needed to “maintain the integrity and safety of the university community”. They feel that all student organisations must adhere to “the highest standards of conduct and transparency”. In doing so, the student party supports an Instagram message by Feminists of Maastricht (FOM) from 30 April. The news that Tragos could again be eligible for board months did not go down very well with FOM. “Tragos had 40 years to foster a strong culture of hazing. What enlightened plan could they have set up within two years that is so foolproof to manage to undo all of this? What are the university's standards for ‘cultural change’?” FOM is upset that university officials on the one hand say to them that no more money can be invested in survivors

support and mental health, but on the other hand an “alarming” amount of money is spent on “fraternities”. FOM has still not reacted to a request by Observant to explain their post.

Contribution

Does NovUM share this aversion to fraternities and sororities? Personally (not speaking on behalf of the student party) Scrivener says he is not against them. “The idea is that they mainly party and drink, but I know that they do more than that, such as organising various social initiatives. These types of associations also play an important role for a certain group of students, which I understand. But it depends on what happens during such a party and drinking event. If that doesn't pass muster, a university shouldn't spend money on it.” Besides, he reckons, they don't need that money to survive. “Members pay contribution.”

Regulations

According to the University Council's regulations, if there are an equal number of votes for and against, a new vote will take place at the next meeting. This would be in September, with a different student representation, in which NovUM will have four instead of five seats. Should they not want to drag this forward to after the summer – because student associations obviously want to know where they stand at the beginning of the academic year – then another round of voting will be held in the same University Council meeting. If they cannot reach a decision, it will be up to the Executive Board. The latter can make adaptations or stick to the advice given.

Wendy Degens

“Compared to Gaza, my hungerstrike is nothing”

Continuation of page 1

Africa in the 1980s due to the racist regime at the time. “That contributed to the abolition of apartheid.”

He plans to resume eating only when “a legally binding decision to sever ties is made.” He acknowledges that continuing the hunger strike could harm his health, “but compared to what is happening in Gaza, this is nothing: 35 thousand people have already been killed, thousands are starving.” In that context, he

does not understand why people think the demonstrators should also mention the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. “That would downplay the genocide currently happening in Gaza. Every death is one too many, but it is not comparable.”

Wendy Degens/ Peter Doorakkers

The outcome of the discussions between the university board and the demonstrators was not clear at the time of Observant going to press.

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Protest Under Surveillance

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The camera tower in front of the library looks like something straight out of a George Orwell book. “That thing is so creepy,” whispers my friend, glancing up at the four security camera lenses that loom over us. “Put on your mask,” he says, pulling me a bit towards shade of the trees, as we make our way across campus to our next class.

At 4 p.m. on one of the first sunny days in Burlington, Vermont, the campus is busy as usual. Everything appears normal except for the tents on the grass in front of the library. People with face masks and keffiyehs are gathering, painting signs like “Ceasefire Now” and “Free Palestine,” chatting, or working on their laptops.

The encampment was set up on Sunday, May 28, just before exam week. It is one of many across the U.S., demanding universities take action against the genocide in Gaza. The demands include the university disclosing its investments, divesting from companies involved in the occupation of Palestine, and canceling US UN ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield as the 2024 commencement speaker.

Within hours of the first tent being set up, police arrived to stop organizers from bringing in food and supplies. Now, most officers have been replaced by a security tower, and the tents remain standing despite the threat of suspension for participants. Although my host university is a public institution where students have the right to peaceful protest and the administration claims students are “encouraged to speak up and speak out,” the presence of surveillance cameras, police and the threat of potential suspension makes it feel otherwise.

“They put up floodlights at night so people can't sleep,” my friend tells me. “And this morning, they woke people up asking for IDs.” Videos and reports from other campuses showing violent police raids against student protesters and stories of suspensions have been circulating.

The encampment lasted for one and a half weeks. Students, faculty, and outside supporters gathered daily at the campsite for teach-ins, protests and prayers. It ended on May 12, right before everyone left for their summer break.

It's easy to call it giving up, but the encampment achieved many things, including the invitation withdrawal of Linda Thomas-Greenfield and the disclosure of the university's financial investments. Most importantly, it drew attention and sparked discussions, providing a space for students to “speak up and speak out.”

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Line-Marie Eichhorst,
student at UCM

series students about their future

“Even as a child, I wondered what my Happy Meal toy was made of”



Photo: Ellen Oosterhof

“Sometimes I miss it, working with my hands.” David Dixon (26), a third-year student in the Maastricht Science Programme, already has several diplomas to his name. His focus has been on chemistry and now the circular economy. How can we reduce and recycle waste?

That is the question David Dixon is currently working on. He’s doing an internship with the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (ILT) of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. The Dutch government is looking for ways to capture and recycle harmful greenhouse gases that are present in building insulation materials and released during demolition work. “The EU introduced legislation on this type of waste management in February, but it’s quite complex. There’s no consensus even on the definition of waste. Is it waste if someone no longer wants it, or is it waste if it can no longer be used?” At the moment, he’s mainly involved in the project through Teams, but Dixon plans to work full-time at the ILT office in Utrecht this summer. He’s not doing it for his studies; he won’t earn academic

credit, only an internship fee. But that’s not his priority, he says. “It’s about gaining work experience. And it looks good on your CV.”

Milkman

He was raised in a “fairly liberal family” in Meerssen, South Limburg. They mostly ate organic food, a habit he has maintained. “I want to stay as connected to nature as possible, like people used to be with their own animals and crops. And returning bottles to the milkman – very sustainable. We’ve lost touch with that through industrialisation.” He only eats organic food, but going vegetarian is a step too far for him? He laughs. “We definitely don’t eat meat every day.” By “we” he means himself and his father, whom he has lived with since he was 18 years old. Before that, following his

parents’ divorce when he was 4, he lived with his mother, who went on to have two more children with her new partner: Dixon’s half-brother and half-sister. “I have two fathers – a biological one and a non-biological one.”

Legos

Has he always been interested in chemistry and the circular economy? “Looking back, yes. I remember once being at McDonald’s with my father and asking him what my Happy Meal toy was made of. Plastic, he said. I was shocked. I thought plastic was soft, like sandwich bags. Or when I asked my stepfather what water is made of. He used Legos to explain atoms to me.” In high school, though, Dixon chose to specialise in economics. His grades weren’t good enough for him to specialise in physics and tech-

nology. “At the time, I was totally preoccupied with other things, like girls and hanging out with friends.” He was held back twice in the fourth year and wasn’t allowed to continue to the fifth and final year of HAVO (senior general secondary education). This meant that vocational training was his only option. He enrolled in a course in precision mechanics, working with metal to manufacture parts for technical equipment.

After completing the course, Dixon enrolled in a biometrics programme at a university of applied sciences. “I thought I liked biology. Biology combined with technology sounded super interesting to me.” But it wasn’t a success, and he quit after the first year. After that, he went back to working with his hands for a year. First in the chemical industry – “back to working with machines”, he says enthusiastically – and then as a technical drafter at another company. But he wasn’t as happy there: “Sitting at a desk all week isn’t for me.”

Climate change

And now he’s enrolled in the Maastricht Science Programme at the Faculty of Science and Engineering. Dixon also joined the faculty’s Green Team, part of the Green Network, which promotes sustainable initiatives within the university. “Like giving all faculty buildings green waste recycling bins. Until recently, I genuinely thought that was my idea”, he grins, “but it turns out that PreZero (a waste management company) had already been in discussions with the university about it for a while.” But will any of it make a difference? Many people would be disheartened by the news on climate change. Not Dixon, though: “I see an upward trend in awareness of the problem, and an increase in sustainability policies. If we keep it up, I think we’ll manage to turn the tide.” That said, big polluters like Shell will have to get on board. “They’re working on it – they have to. It’s paradoxical: they’re the cause of the problem, but they also hold the solution.”

He wants to “do his bit”, too. Ideally in a role bridging the gap between policy and implementation, like in his current internship position at ILT. “It’s nice that everyone is coming together to create laws, but the laws also need to be enforced.” But first he’ll pursue a master’s degree – in something related to the circular economy, that’s for certain.

Lotte van de Loo

In this bimonthly series, Observant interviews students about their plans for the future – their hopes, fears and uncertainties.

Opinion article about student protest

"Shouting 'media out' does not uphold the academic standard of transparency"



A passer-by applauds the protesting students on Wednesday Photo: Observant

She thinks it is important for people to demonstrate against injustice, but according to **Julia Schnepf**, assistant professor of Social Psychology at the Faculty of Psychology and Neurosciences, protesters must also be willing to critically question themselves. They must adhere to certain standards that protect against discrimination, misinformation, and misconduct.

Protesting holds a significant importance. It is a fundamental human right. If students want to come together to oppose violence and advocate for justice, that is commendable. However, if violence is employed to counter violence or is seen as a mean to an end, this is a different situation.

Like many protests, the groups on European University campuses advocating for an end to the conflict in Gaza are heterogenous. Some members speak their minds peacefully, highlighting the suffering of people in Gaza. They sympathise with both the Israeli hostages and their families and the local Gazan population who have become victims of Hamas and the military operation lead by the Israeli government. However, there are others who promote anti-Semitism and deny Israel's right to exist. This diversity is common in demonstrations of this kind.

Nevertheless, it is important that students and university employees uphold academic standards when demonstrating. This means engaging in transparent, unbiased, fair, practically and logically consistent, and precise evidence-based arguments. But what does this mean in practice?

1. Transparency: In Maastricht, local broad-

casters from *Wat is Loos in Mestreech* and also other journalists reported that protest speakers shouted "media out", cameras were covered by protesters on the UM campus. This behaviour does not uphold the academic standard of transparency, which requires an open exchange and the presence of independent media.

2. Unbiased: Anti-Semitic and anti-Israel sentiments have been expressed during the protests. This contradicts the principle of striving to be free of prejudice. Protesters advocating for peace and equality for all should distance themselves from such statements and have the courage to confront and condemn such remarks within the protest group, for example, when statements such as "from the river to the sea" are echoed.

3. Fairness: Fairness means, among other things, to hold ourselves to the same standards that we have for others. However, protesters often have more sensitivity to certain issues or groups than others. Fairness means practicing perspective-taking and to carefully consider whether one's words and actions could potentially

harm other people or groups. Fairness also means that compassion for the suffering on one side should not outweigh compassion for the suffering on the other side.

4. Logical and practical consistency: One demand that has recently been made by some protesters is that the universities should boycott and end their cooperation with Israeli research institutions. From a practical and logical perspective, one might ask: What is the objective of this action? What outcomes are anticipated? Centuries of experience and numerous studies have demonstrated that few endeavours are as invaluable and beneficial for mutual understanding, societal advancement, and for peace than the exchange of knowledge and academic mobility.

How many students benefit from academic exchange programs such as Erasmus? How many of them rave about their study experiences abroad and their personal growth while traveling? What purpose is served by boycotting academic exchanges, hindering the building of international networks, collaborations,

and friendships? Such a demand lacks practicality and logic. Instead of offering a problem-orientated solution, such measures would perpetuate social exclusion. However, advocating for boycotts against state weapon deliveries could be deemed a reasonable demand, especially if the aim is to prevent military escalation.

5. Precision: Precision entails striving for linguistic clarity and correctness, particularly for scientists and those aspiring to be scientists. Some protesters in Pro-Palestine demonstrations make generalising statements about Israel or Jewish people. Such generalisations are also made in the news. For instance, headlines such as "Israel is planning a major offensive in Rafah" lack linguistic precision. In Israel, the legitimacy of the Netanyahu government has declined significantly in recent months. This is evident in the large-scale demonstrations against the government that are witnessed in Israel. Polls indicate that more than two-thirds of Israelis oppose the current government that is comprised of right-wing conservative and ultra-Orthodox parties. This means that the majority of the Israeli population does not support the government's foreign, national and security policy. Therefore, to be linguistically precise, one should avoid generalising statements and, when possible, express direct criticism towards the responsible actor, e.g., the government or the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). Rather say: "The Israelian government is planning a major offensive in Rafah."

6. Evidence-based argumentation: During protests and polarized, heated situations, the propagation of misinformation and disinformation is common. However, it is intrinsic to the scientific mindset to critically scrutinize information and check sources. Under no circumstance should information be repeated without thorough fact-checking nor should one participate in the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation.

To reiterate, it is incredibly important for people to gather and demonstrate against injustice. For instance, the student anti-war protests in the US in the 1960s and 70s made a significant contribution to raising awareness of American actions and crimes in the Vietnam War and helped to bring about the end of the war.

However, protesters must also be willing to critically question themselves and adhere to certain standards that protect against discrimination, misinformation, and misconduct. If protesters adhere to these ethical and practical standards outlined above, then there is nothing wrong with engaging in peaceful protest and civil disobedience.

Julia Schnepf,
assistant professor of Social Psychology



Should UM sever all ties with Israeli institutions? Students and staff respond to the demonstrators' demand

"Complex" "One-sided" "Justified"

Sever ties with Israeli institutions: this is the demand that demonstrators want to be met and the reason they have occupied the garden – and temporarily, yesterday morning, also the building – of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) since Monday, May 13, setting up a tent camp. Three of them are on a hunger strike. What do students and staff think of this demand?

Text: Peter Doorakkers, Cleo Freriks, Lotte van de Loo, Simon Wirtz

Illustration: Simone Golob

Before the demonstrators also entered the FASoS building on Wednesday, May 22, *Observant* conducted a survey among students and staff from various faculties. Their detailed responses can be read online. Should Maastricht University sever all ties with Israeli institutions? That is a "complex question to which I have no answer," says Charles van Leeuwen, a lecturer at FASoS. "Within the community, there are people with all kinds of different relationships with Israel. Even in a complex war situation, one can still feel loyalty. All those different opinions need to be taken into account."

Lifeline

Arie van der Lugt, an associate professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience, believes that an open dialogue must be maintained. "I think of what comes up in my critical thinking course: suspend your judgment for a moment, consider that if someone thinks very differently from you, they might have very good reasons for it. I worry that we imme-

diately put someone with a slightly different opinion on the scaffold of X [formerly Twitter, ed.], after which very vile gut feelings come out. I would find it particularly unfortunate if that also happens within our community." Precisely at a university, there should be room for nuance and other opinions, he believes. For this reason, he does not want UM to sever ties with Israeli institutions. "There are people working there who protested against how Palestinians are treated, as second-class citizens, long before October. If you sever ties, you also cut the lifeline to these people. That's why I was against ruthlessly severing ties with Russian institutions as well. Exclude only those that exclude, as my old mentor used to say."

One-sided

Ruben Philipsen, a receptionist at UNS 40 in Randwyck, understands the students' demand but also finds it "one-sided": "The United States has just promised to supply Israel with one billion dollars worth of weapons, so you would also have to advocate for cutting ties

with that country. I hope people realize that an occupation is not necessary; that you can discuss what we, as a university, can do to act with integrity in this matter. If the outcome is, for example, that ties should be frozen – not severed – then that is good."

Not to Israel

The demand is "complex," says Skander Galand, an assistant professor of international law. He understands why the students are asking for a full boycott – "that can be a political pressure tool" – but is himself undecided. "I find it a difficult question; I don't have a definitive opinion on it. However, I would currently not go to Israel for a conference to show that I do not approve of what is happening."

Silence is consent

A law student who wishes to remain anonymous supports the demand, although she does not think it will help much if UM actually severs ties. "If you remain silent, you are also taking a side. Suppose I hit you (the

A BRIEF RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PRO-PALESTINIAN DEMONSTRATION UP UNTIL NOW

MONDAY 13 MAY, 11:00 HRS:

Throughout the Netherlands, students and staff leave the lecture halls in a walk-out against police violence in Amsterdam and in support of the pro-Palestinian protest. A group of a hundred people came together in Maastricht at the Minderbroedersberg to then walk to FASoS where the first tents had already been set up.

16:30 HRS:

A lot of talking is taking place between the demonstrators, who want UM to sever any ties that they have with Israeli institutes, President Rianne Letschert and chairman of the University Council, Teun Dekker. The students want to spend the night in the garden.

20:40 HRS:

The demonstrators have a party, a small group of UM students (identification with UM cards is compulsory) are allowed to stay the night. It is not an occupation, but a 'Forum for Justice and Peace', says assistant professor René Gabriëls, who has attended all negotiations in support of the activists.

TUESDAY 14 MAY, 9:30 HRS:

About twenty demonstrators spent the night in tents. The protest is an "internal activity", said President Rianne Letschert. Hence people from outside UM – including the media – will not be allowed access.

WEDNESDAY 15 MAY, 10:00 HRS:

A delegation from the University Council visits the camp. The Council will advise the Executive Board about the demonstrators' demand on Friday – severing all ties with Israeli institutes. Letschert states that she will take that advice "very serious".

THURSDAY 16 MAY, 0:00 HRS:

Six of the demonstrators go on hunger strike. UM also decides to allow the demonstrators to continue to stay in the camp "for the time being". Such decisions will no longer be taken every evening. **15:00 HRS:** One of the hunger strikers decides to quit the action, the other five continue – according to the demonstrators' Instagram page.



reporter – ed.) and no one does anything, then the bystanders are thus taking my side. The university is doing something similar now. It remains silent and does not sever ties with Israeli institutions. If you do, UM sends a signal: “This is not okay.” But will it help Gaza directly? No, I don’t think so. The Palestinians have been oppressed for so long.”

“Remaining silent is not an option,” says an

anonymous FASoS student. She believes the demand is justified. “I heard from them that Tel Aviv University financially supports military operations.” At the School of Business and Economics, opinions are divided. “Go stand in front of a government building with your tent, the university must remain neutral”, says one. Another finds that nonsense: “Silence is consent, even for a university. Just like with the

Eurovision Song Contest. By allowing Israel to participate, you are taking a side.”

National level

On the other side of the Maas in Randwyck, a third-year biomedical sciences student is skeptical. “Whether they are freezing in a tent or lying in their bed, what difference does it make? They are only hurting themselves.” He

grumbles that the demonstrators’ demand will not achieve anything. “You have to do something at the national level.”

Finally, a student from the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) thinks that the protest opens up a dialogue. “The university doesn’t have to take a side as long as they allow space for this protest. A few of my friends were there.”

FRIDAY 17 MAY, 10:00 HRS:

The tone of the Instagram page hardens. The protest is not a peace camp, but an occupation, they state. They also feel that all forms of protest against genocide are “legitimate”: “You don’t need to be kind or polite, we will always be morally superior, whatever the tactic is, to the people in the administration rooms of universities.”

12:00 HRS:

The extra meeting of the University Council is private and is held online. The “mental and physical safety” of the members could not be guaranteed, said chairman Teun Dekker.

20:30 HRS:

Not only were the demonstrators’ demands discussed during the extra meeting, but also the university’s partnerships with institutes in conflict areas in general. The Executive Board wants to have a “discussion” with

partners who may be involved in breaches of international law. This refers specifically to connections with institutes, individual scientists do not need to discontinue working with colleagues elsewhere. The University Council’s input will be processed and the board will return with a final proposal as soon as possible, says President Letschert.

MONDAY 20 MAY, 18:00 HRS:

Another hunger striker quits his action after being advised by his GP. He was having too much trouble with palpitations and vomiting, which meant that he could not keep enough fluid in his body, ANP writes. Medical help from UM was turned down by the demonstrators.

TUESDAY 21 MAY, 13:00 HRS:

There are support actions for the demonstrators at places such as the Faculty of Law and the City Centre University Library. At the law faculty, a banner was hung up and students chanted ‘Free Palestine’.

WEDNESDAY 22 MAY, 9:00 HRS:

Dozens of activists invade and the FASoS-building and occupy it as well. From the balcony, unrecognisable students dressed in black, drop banners reading, ‘Jabalya Faculty occupied for Palestine’ and ‘Dear Rianne, no complicity in genocide. That is what suits us best. No regards, your students.’ The building is closed, teaching is cancelled or moved to online

11:40 HRS:

The Executive Board - behind closed doors - is talking to a number of protesters. Margriet Schreuders, director of the Student Service Center, and FASoS-dean Christine Neuhold are also present. Another part of the activists have returned to the tent camp, which appears to have expanded considerably.

1 op de 3 vrouwen krijgt dementie



Geef nu voor meer onderzoek, zodat dementie niet jouw toekomst wordt.
stopdementie.nu

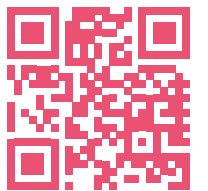
Agenda academic ceremonies Aula Minderbroedersberg 4-6

23-5, 10.00 h Philippos Koulousakis Double Doctoral Degree Maastricht University - Hasselt University/ tUL	07-6, 13.00 h Magdalena Beran 07-6, 16.00 h Prof. dr. E.A. Joosten afscheidscollege
23-5, 13.00 h Vanessa Lea Freund	10-6, 13.00 h Alina Ofenheimer
23-5, 16.00 h Rémi Scoupe	10-6, 16.00 h Karen van der Sluis
24-5, 10.00 h Rachel Maria Johanna van der Velden	11-6, 10.00 h Gaukhar Baidildinova Double Doctoral Degree Maastricht University and Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz
24-5, 13.00 h Lisa Susan Elisabeth Harms	11-6, 13.00 h Rob Wilhelmus Petrus Simons
27-5, 10.00 h Sem Markus Maria Hermans	11-6, 16.00 h Allert de Vries
27-5, 13.00 h Ruud Willem Hendrik Wetzels	14-6, 13.00 h Cloé Geboers
27-5, 16.00 h Ruud Droeghaag	14-6, 16.30 h Dr. E. Nillesen inauguratie
29-5, 10.00 h Anita Josefina Wilhelmina Maria Brouns	17-6, 10.00 h Daniëlle Josefina Maria Adriaans
29-5, 13.00 h Idah Mokhele	17-6, 16.00 h Bas Petrus Maria Van Hooren
29-5, 16.00 h Paul Kornelis Bokern	18-6, 13.00 h Bulat Khaertdinov
30-5, 10.00 h Angelina Pavlic	18-6, 16.00 h Stephanie Van Asbroeck
30-5, 13.00 h Priscila Preciado Rojas	19-6, 10.00 h Herwansay
30-5, 16.00 h Prof. dr. Jos Lemmink afscheidsrede Franz Palm Lecture Hall	19-6, 13.00 h Daphne Anne Laura Schoenmakers
31-5, 10.00 h Elizaveta Lavrova Double Doctoral Degree Maastricht University - Liège University	19-6, 16.00 h Christine Anne Gutekunst
31-5, 13.00 h Gido Metz	20-6, 13.00 h Anneloes Geertje Munneke
31-5, 16.30 h Dr. Ir. Gerco Onderwater inauguratie	20-6, 16.00 h Kim Gosewina Gerarda van Kol
03-6, 10.00 h Jan Caspar Peeken	21-6, 10.00 h Babs Marlène Francisca Hendriks
03-6, 16.00 h Lindsay Groenvynck Double Doctoral Degree Maastricht University and KU Leuven	21-6, 13.00 h Tom Schiefer
04-6, 10.00 h Ngoc Hung Nguyen	21-6, 16.00 h Prof. dr. Jos Schols afscheidscollege
04-6, 13.00 h Margo Karemaker	24-6, 10.00 h Ferdi Widiputera
04-6, 16.00 h Valentyna Anufriyeva	24-6, 13.00 h Yingyi Wu
05-6, 10.00 h Bauke Beate Stinesen	25-6, 13.00 h Natalia Y. Makhotkina
05-6, 16.00 h Yikang Zhang	25-6, 16.00 h Anaís Sánchez Castillo
06-6, 13.00 h Pengyu Zhang Double Doctoral Degree Maastricht University and Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz	26-6, 10.00 h Mathilde Catharina Tubbergen
	26-6, 13.00 h Jeremy Weerts
	26-6, 16.00 h Markus A. M. van der Pas
	27-6, 10.00 h Tsai-Ying Lu
	28-6, 13.00 h Veerle van Gils
	28-6, 16.30 h Dr. Hylke Dijkstra inauguratie

colofon

Redactie Riki Janssen (hoofdredacteur), Wendy Degens, Peter Doorakkers, Cleo Freriks, Marion Janssens (redactie-assistent), Lotte van de Loo, Maurice Timmermans, Dennis Vaendel, Simon Wirtz **Telefoon** 043 3885390 **E-mail** observant@maastrichtuniversity.nl **Website** www.observantonline.nl **Aan dit nummer werken mee** Wammes Bos, Line-Marie Eichhorst, Lies Wesseling **Ontwerp en illustraties** Simone Golob **Vertalingen** o.a. B. Wall & P. Nekeman, Maud Bovelander

Druk Janssen/Pers Gennep **Abonnementen** Observant wordt gratis verspreid op de universiteit en diverse locaties in Maastricht, belangstellenden kunnen de krant thuisgestuurd krijgen voor € 45 per academisch jaar **Paartjes /advertenties** Zie alle info onder het kopje 'service' op onze site.



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