

May 3, 2024

Islamic Association of North Texas

840 Abrams Road
Richardson, Texas 75081
pr@iant.com

North Texas Islamic Council

P.O. Box 261724
Plano Texas 75026

And the Following Signatories:

MAS Islamic Center of Dallas
North Texas Islamic Council
Islamic Association of Collin County
Islamic Association of Allen
Islamic Center of Frisco
Islamic Center of Prosper and Celina
Dar Elsalam Islamic Center
Dar El-Eman Islamic Center
Guardians Foundation
World Food Warehouse
Jimmy's Burgers & Grill
Bilad Restaurant and Bakery
Makkah Masjid
Islamic Center of Quad Cities

DFW Muslim Bar Association
Islamic Society of Denton
ICNA Council for Social Justice
Council on American-Islamic Relations-DFW
McKinney Islamic Association
Al-Ansar Society
Islamic Association of Murphy
Makka Auto Sales
US Tours & Travel
Jasmine Market & Cafe
Yummy Burgers & BBQ
BBQ King Express & Pizzeria
DFW Muslim Chamber of Commerce

To:

<p>The Honorable Bob Dubey Mayor City of Richardson P.O. Box 830309 Richardson, TX 75083 Bob.Dubey@cor.gov</p>	<p>Chief Gary Tittle Chief of Police City of Richardson 200 N. Greenville, Ave. Richardson, TX 75081 gary.tittle@cor.gov</p>	<p>Dr. Richard C. Benson President The University of Texas at Dallas 800 W. Campbell Road Richardson, Texas 75080 president@utdallas.edu</p>
<p>The Honorable Baine Brooks Mayor City of Allen 305 Century Parkway Allen, Texas 75013 bbrooks@cityofallen.org</p>	<p>Chief Steve Dye Chief of Police City of Allen 205 W. McDermott Drive Allen, TX 75013 steve.dye@cityofallen.org</p>	<p>The Honorable Greg Willis District Attorney Collin County 2100 Bloomdale Road, Suite 100 McKinney, TX 75071 % bholley@collincountytexas.gov</p>
<p>The Honorable John Creuzot District Attorney Dallas County 133 N. Riverfront Boulevard, LB 19 Dallas, TX 75207 % DallasDAPress@dallascounty.org</p>	<p>Sheriff Jim Skinner Sheriff Collin County 4300 Community Ave. McKinney, TX 75071 % sheriffskinner@collincountytexas.gov</p>	

CC:

Kim Goodfriend, Executive Associate to the Office of President at UT Dallas
Arefin Shamsul, Richardson Mayor Pro Tem

Curtis Dorian, Richardson City Council Member, Place 1
Jennifer Justice, Richardson City Council Member, Place 2
Dan Barrios, Richardson City Council Member, Place 3
Joe Corcoran, Richardson City Council Member, Place 4
Ken Hutchenrider, Richardson City Council Member, Place 5
Don Magner, City of Richardson City Manager
The Honorable Nathan Johnson, Texas Senate
The Honorable Ana-Mario Ramos, Texas House of Representatives
The Honorable Colin Allred, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Clay Jenkins, Dallas County Judge

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Dear **Mayor Dubey, Police Chief Tittle, President Benson, Mayor Brooks, Police Chief Dye, Sheriff Skinner, Mr. Willis, Mr. Creuzot**, and those Parties CCed,

We, the undersigned, take tremendous pride in our long-standing relationship with the City of Richardson, its elected officials, and our neighboring communities. We are proud of the open line of communication we have established with each of you individually, and the city council, and we always look forward to hosting the City's leadership at our respective houses of worship, schools, businesses, and community organizations.

Based on this sense of comity, we request your immediate responses to the contents of this letter. Collectively, we serve and reach tens of thousands of individuals across the DFW Metroplex from all faiths, and our communities—your constituents—expect your responses.

On May 1, 2024, our community and faith leadership were horrified as we witnessed police officers from several law enforcement agencies, including the Richardson Police Department ("RPD") and the Allen Police Department, descend on the University of Texas at Dallas' (the "University") campus to arrest students. These law enforcement agencies intentionally interrupted and intervened in a peaceful, student-led demonstration raising awareness for the ongoing genocide in Palestine, which has claimed the lives of more than 30,000 civilians in Gaza, the majority of whom are women and children.

This was *not* strictly a "time, place, and manner" issue. The students were peacefully exercising their First Amendment Rights to Speech and Assembly in one of the most protected of forums—a public campus.

It shocked our collective conscience to witness students—*children who have been raised in our communities*—be arrested and forcefully dragged away in zip ties for sitting in Chess Plaza, chanting and requesting the University acknowledge their requests, including the exigent humanitarian concerns underlying them.

We also received word from parents in our communities that their children (who were not in the encampment) were met with extreme force, including being shoved by law enforcement (including RPD officers) and were also on the receiving end of police batons. Members of the media documenting the student-led demonstration were also indiscriminately met with police violence (photo enclosed).

Harrowing images documented in photos and videos show police officers treating students as though they are enemies and not citizens engaging in civil discourse. Images of officers (some of which we have enclosed herein), dressed in full tactical gear, armed with heavy weaponry, present on rooftops, marching through our beautiful university—right in *our* backyard—raise grave concerns about the safety of our youth on the campus of the University they attend. Students with flags and drums very obviously pose no threat to experienced law enforcement personnel armed with tactical vehicles, heavy weaponry, and riot gear. Yet many were forcibly dragged away, arrested, and had their hands zip-tied so tightly that bruising was evident thereafter.

A deluge of photographic and video evidence illustrates that the protest was peaceful prior to police intervention. Several news agencies reported students could be seen making signs, praying, and studying for finals.

In fact, a lead UT Dallas professor, whose name we have omitted for their security, noted:

“Three of my colleagues, all of them history professors, are in jail tonight as are several students. **I have never before seen a more disciplined protest.** The riot police kept baiting them and they kept calm. Not a twig, nor a paper ball thrown at the police or a small group of Jewish students who were counter-protesting right there. I am proud of our students across the political spectrum for showing the maturity that those in power lack.” (*emphasis added*).

Request for Answers

As houses of worship and businesses that collectively serve thousands across the Cities of Richardson and Allen, among others, and in neighboring communities, we have a duty to demand answers and accountability regarding what transpired yesterday with *more than simple yes-or-no responses*:

1. Why did the Richardson Police Department respond, despite there being no imminent threat of violence on campus, and considering state law enforcement would already be responding?
2. Why did the Allen Police Department respond, despite there being no imminent threat of violence on campus, to a student protest *miles* away from their city limits?
3. Why did Richardson Police officers participate in the active advancement on students, including making physical contact with student protestors and media who were *not* in the actual encampment?
4. Why did Collin County Magistrate Judge Lisa Bronchetti disallow attorneys for the arrested to file attorney appearance bonds based on a mere “oral” order, despite such bonds being available in Collin County for the charges at hand? There is also no written copy of this order, and the order served to unnecessarily extend the arraignment process, and unnecessarily keep our community members in jail overnight.

5. Why did Allen Police officers participate in the active advancement on students, including making physical contact with student protestors and media who were *not* in the actual encampment?
6. Did City of Richardson officials attempt to coordinate with law enforcement outside of Richardson, and within the Richardson Police Department, to ensure the humane treatment of student protestors?
7. Did City of Allen officials attempt to coordinate with law enforcement outside of Allen, and within the Allen Police Department, to ensure the humane treatment of student protestors?
8. Did leadership within the Richardson Police Department attempt to coordinate with law enforcement outside of Richardson to ensure the humane treatment of student protestors?
9. Did leadership within the Allen Police Department attempt to coordinate with law enforcement outside of Allen to ensure the humane treatment of student protestors?
10. Did City of Richardson officials attempt to ask University officials to speak with the students and hear their concerns? In other words, before law enforcement's response, did city officials make any efforts to advocate for their young constituents?
11. Why were our community's families forced to wait hours after their children's arrests to learn which jail their loved ones were being transported to?
12. Why were our students and community members transported to Collin County, over 20 miles away?
13. What actions are city officials taking to ensure that law enforcement receives proper training regarding religiously mandated head coverings? Have city officials expressed these concerns and demanded answers from their counterparts in Collin County?
14. Why did the University resort to a militarized response to peaceful student protest? On what basis did the University determine that a clear and present danger existed to justify such a disproportionate and violent response?
15. What is being done at the State level to ensure students can assemble and protest without fear of a militarized police response?

Please note that, while as a collective, we will continue to strive to strengthen our relationship with the City of Richardson, our other home cities, and our elected officials, as a community, our trust in the City of Richardson, and especially its police department, has been significantly undermined.

Our trust in Dr. Benson's leadership and his ability to safeguard our students has eroded.

For the Islamic Association of North Texas in particular, this incident brought forth painful memories of when radical right-wing groups were protesting IANT, and when our community's children were forced to walk to school between rows of right-wing protestors armed with AR-15s.

The state and the city’s response to that event differed from their response at the University, and no such “time, place, and manner” argument was raised then. Armed protestors threatening children outside of IANT were afforded more protection than students protesting peacefully on their own campus.

Moreover, Dr. Benson’s written response to the incident was woefully inadequate and failed to account for the severe trauma inflicted upon his own students.

Our Community’s Expectations

During this time of global crisis, where youth are collectively engaging in civil discourse across universities and platforms, it is natural to anticipate continued student engagement at the University. It is not only our hope and expectation, but our unequivocal demand that the City of Richardson, RPD, and the University not repeat its militarized response and instead safeguard the constitutional rights of our community’s students and their wellbeing.

It is also our community’s hope and expectation that those arrested in these peaceful protests—professors and students alike—are allowed back on campus without jeopardizing their academic records and that their criminal charges are dismissed.

Our communities—your constituents—await your responses. For the sake of transparency to our communities, we will maintain a live tracker of responses at iant.com/letter-responses.

[Signature Page Follows]

Sincerely,

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Islamic Association of Collin County
Islamic Association of Allen
Islamic Center of Frisco
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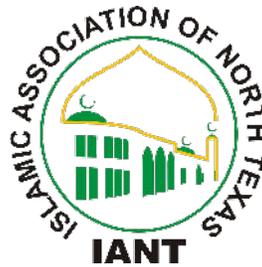
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DFW Muslim Chamber of
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Enclosures

Photos from the Protest



North Texas Islamic Council



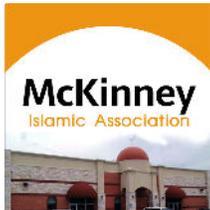
CAIR
TEXAS
DALLAS/FORT WORTH CHAPTER



MAS Muslim American Society



ICNA COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
ADVOCATING JUSTICE FOR ALL



Makka Auto SALES



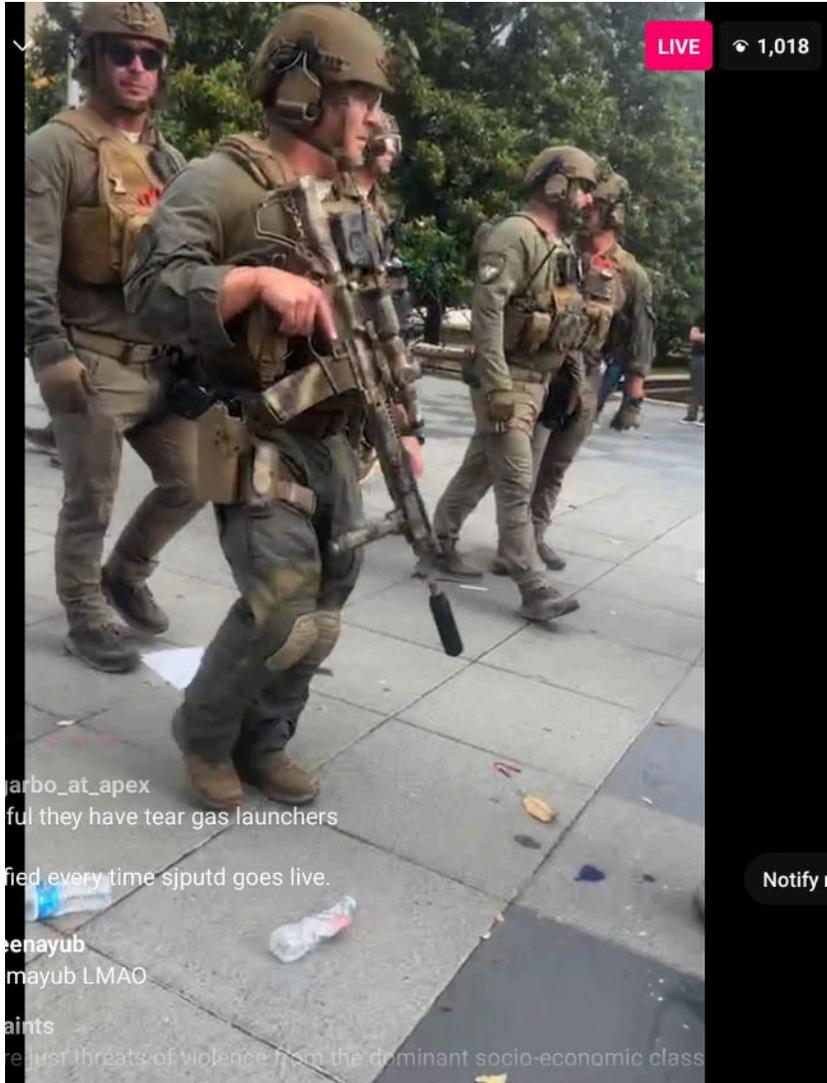
GUARDIANS



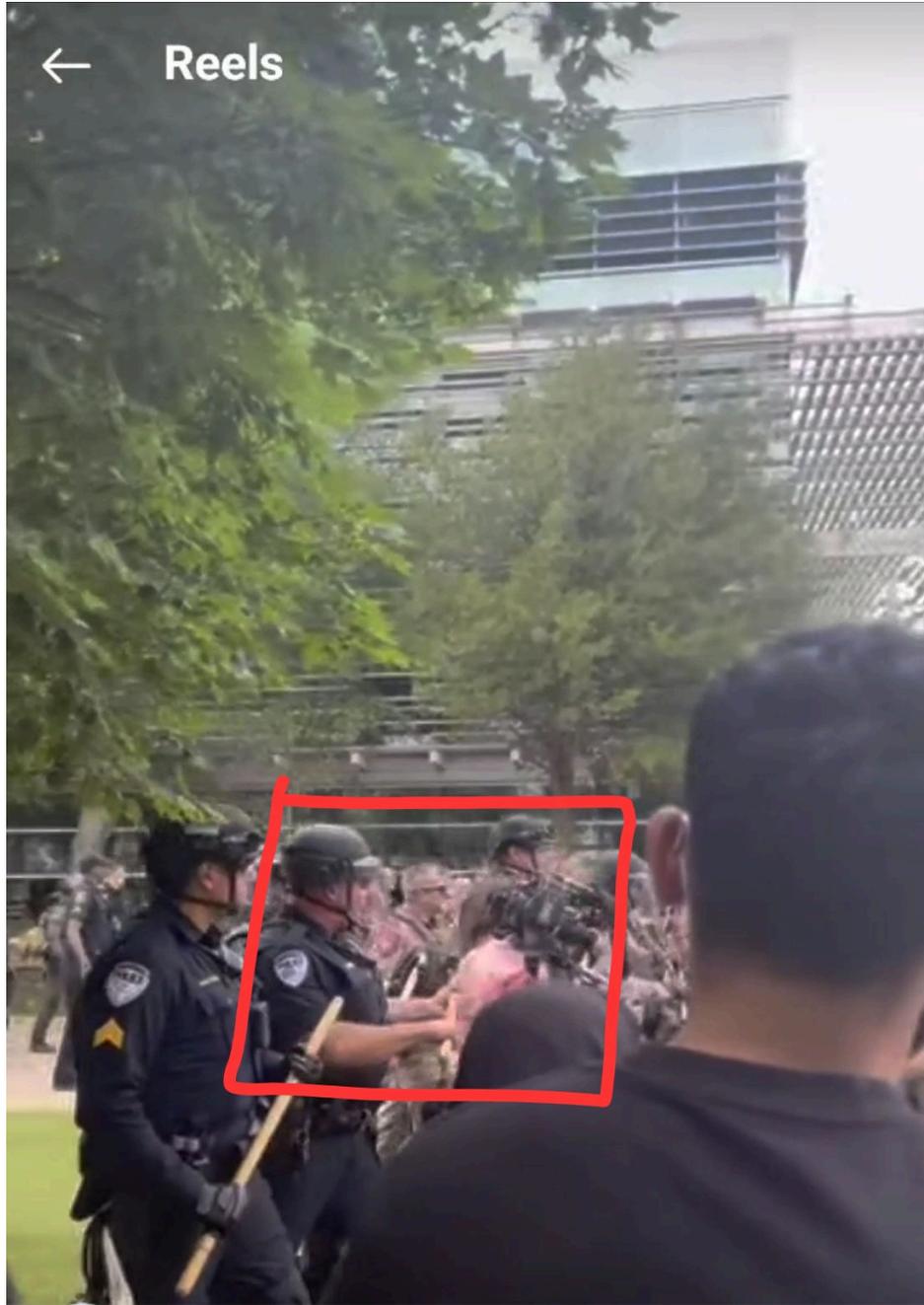
US TOURS & TRAVEL
You dream it, we plant it!



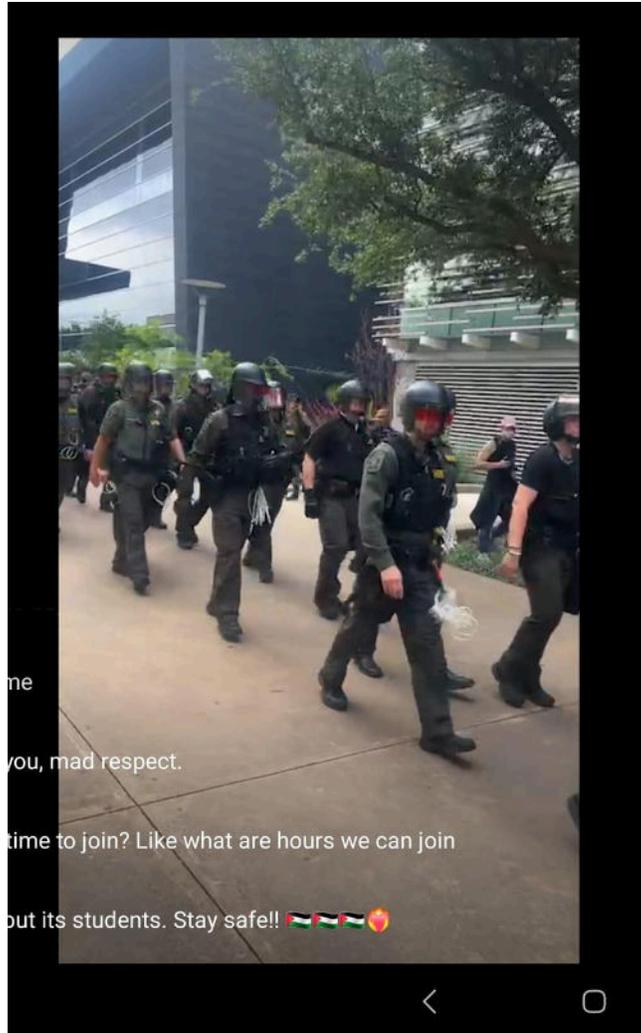
Dallas/Fort Worth
Muslim Chamber of
Commerce



Still of law enforcement marching on campus with heavy weaponry.



Still of RPD officers shoving a member of the media with a baton.







Still of Allen Police Department officers, along with a tactical vehicle, advancing on student protestors.



Still of law enforcement moving in to arrest students who were simply sitting.