

University statement on PalSoc event of 8 November 2017

The University of Cambridge has recently reviewed its handling of an external speaker event that took place on its premises on 8 November 2017. *BDS and the Globalised Struggle for Human Rights*, organised by the Cambridge University Palestine Society, was due to be chaired by SOAS academic Dr Ruba Salih. However, following a meeting of the University's Prevent Referral Group – called 24 hours before the event was due to take place, and after a similar event at a London university had been disrupted – it was decided that her role as chair should be taken on by another person.

The University would like to acknowledge that its decision to impose an alternative chair was the wrong response on this occasion, that it evoked strong and understandable concerns within our own community and beyond relating to academic freedom, and portrayed Dr Salih in a manner that does not befit a respected academic with more than 15 years' experience of chairing meetings in a balanced and scholarly way. We therefore would like to apologise to Dr Salih for removing her as a chair, and we recognise that there was no evidence to support the view that she would not ensure a democratic debate, allowing all views to be expressed.

The University is committed to responding to the various legislation governing external speaker events in an appropriate and balanced way. Reviewing how we do this, listening to views and feedback, and refining our procedures accordingly, is an important part of our ongoing response to this challenge.