MEAETING MINUTES

Eliot Borenstein welcomed the meeting’s guests and thanked them for joining to discuss the resolution of non-cooperation with NYU Tel Aviv by the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis (SCA); learn more regarding the ideas behind the resolution; and address any misconceptions around it.
The guests provided a brief history of the process behind the ratification of the resolution, noting that the student-led initiative emerged from the Israeli government’s written policy of denying entry to visitors on account of their heritage, and their political opinions, and that it had been discussed in several meetings with faculty prior to ratification. SCA members reported being denied entry to Israel, and several faculty are currently at risk of being denied, although this has not been reported to the University, or otherwise made public. Professors Ross and Saranillio said the resolution does not prohibit SCA students or faculty from going to NYUTA, but rather is focused on limiting departmental resources from being used to engage with NYUTA.

Committee members noted that it can be challenging to facilitate an open discussion when anonymous mobility issues are cited and also expressed surprise that an academic unit of NYU would be singled out for non-cooperation, especially when the grievances are against the policies of the host country. Members noted that, when the U.S. government prohibited entry of individuals from several majority-Muslim countries, SCA’s response was to provide educational opportunities by sponsoring a panel to discuss native peoples and settler colonialism. NYUTA, which is not affiliated with the government, has made it a priority to develop a welcoming program and community for all identities and political leanings and encourage open discussion of the political situation in Israel -- a response that seems to be in line with how SCA responded to a similar situation. Furthermore, committee members also wondered why no one from SCA reached out to NYUTA for their perspective or participation in the discussion, emphasizing that it would be desirable for faculty to engage with colleagues around the world, especially those with direct experience, prior to making judgements on matters regarding the global network.

The guests expressed support for NYUTA’s efforts to educate its students on the political climate in Israel, and reiterated that the resolution was issued in compliance with NYU’s own policies against discrimination and is not directed at the operations of NYUTA itself. Several committee members cautioned against coupling academic freedom with visa denials and international mobility restrictions. In the future, committee members expressed that they would like to have input into the establishment of new sites. The committee agreed to issue a statement in response to the resolution, which is typical and appropriate given the committee’s role and charge.