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To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Efforts to terminate the relationship between
Georgia State University (GSU) and Georgia
International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE)

I am writing to comment on efforts by students affiliated with the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement to terminate relations between GSU and GILEE.

I have been involved in criminal justice academics for more than half a century, as a law lecturer at Ahmadu Bello University in northern Nigeria from 1967 to 1969, as a Ph.D. student at the State University of New York at Albany's School of Criminal Justice (residence 1969-1971, MA. 1971, Ph.D. 1977) and as an assistant and associate professor of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University from 1971 to 1980 and as associate professor and professor of Criminal Justice at Wayne State University since 1980 (with a year's sabbatical at the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University). I maintain an active research and writing agenda and have written on the issue of law enforcement and wrongful convictions and several articles on wrongful conviction and police brutality in China.

My major areas of scholarship include criminal justice policy/civil liberties, constitutional criminal procedure, and wrongful convictions. Given the breadth of these issues I follow many criminal justice issues and trends including the professionalization of American law enforcement.

When I began studying and teaching criminal justice a half-century ago American police administration was mired in a rigid administrative model based on anti-corruption reforms that were important in the early and mid-twentieth century. Police managers and executives for the most part were poorly educated, were advanced by seniority, lacked high level organizational and administrative skills, were not innovative, and had few external sources of information and support. Fearing any "political" involvement they were highly unresponsive to democratic community input.

No criminal justice academician would ever say that the criminal justice system is flawless, for our main responsibility as research scholars is to critically but fairly evaluate justice processes, with a policy orientation of system improvement. Thus, while I explore the system failures that generate wrongful convictions, in my lectures and writing I maintain that while wrongful convictions occur because of weaknesses in policing and other justice system areas, the prospect

for system reform is high. A major reason for this paradoxical conclusion is that a major success in criminal justice since the 1960s has been the growing sophistication, effectiveness, and community responsiveness of policing managers and executives in America.

To many who are attuned to the police shootings that have gained popular attention since the tragic killings of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO., and the rise of “Black Lives Matter,” it may seem as if there has been no progress. In fact, while these events point to stubborn problems both in policing and in the wider culture (e.g., the way in which municipalities task local police to “tax” poor people with excessive driving violations and fines), a closer look at police and especially police administration shows a large and positive change since the 1960s.

In summary, almost all police managers and executives are now college educated, understand that they need to be responsive to the communities they serve, invest in training and education, are connected to a wider world of police research. For the most part they have the intellectual skills, management experience, and moral orientation to lead their law enforcement organizations in ways that enhance public safety and justice.

This transformation has occurred for several reasons. One is the rise of criminal justice education, which was catalyzed by the investment of federal funds in the late 1960s as a response to the society-wide rioting and demonstrations in Black communities in the “long hot summers” from 1964 to the early 1970s. Since that time criminal justice education has expanded and academic criminal justice and criminology has become a robust and effective place for critical scholarship with the creation of about 25 criminal justice Ph.D. programs, including one at Georgia State University. These research-based programs have been important in the education of police leaders. Another reason for the professionalization of law enforcement has been the creation and expansion of a research arm of the United States Justice Department, the National Institute of Justice and various other branches under the office of Justice Programs including the Bureau of Justice Statistics, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office for Victims of Crime, and other units.

Civil society has also played a critical role in advancing the professionalism of law enforcement. This where GILEE comes in. Before the 1960s, aside from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) there were very few, if any, non-profit organizations designed to provide research, training, and standards for law enforcement professionals. The landscape today is different. An enlightened police leader can turn to the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) (<https://www.policeforum.org/>), the National Police Foundation (<https://www.policefoundation.org/>) and university-based programs like George Mason University’s Center for Justice Leadership and Management (<https://cjlm.gmu.edu/>) in its Department of Criminology, Law and Society.

In this context, the development of GILEE by Dr. Robert Friedmann is a part of a larger trend in which civil society organizations, organized either as non-profit corporations or as university based programs, provide training and exchange with others to continuously improve the quality and the varied responsibilities of law enforcement executives. This movement is progressive,

information-based, and needs to be supported by all who value an effective, decent, and continually improving society.

I understand that because GILEE involves exchanges with Israeli police professionals, it has come under fire from extreme ideologues who would denigrate any association with that country. On any objective ground, such claims are fanciful and are driven by agendas that have nothing to do with the good work that GILEE performs.

I have been following the work of GILEE as an interested outsider for many years. Throughout its history, GILEE has provided the kind of information- and people-exchange that is a critical part of professionalism. If there was any suggestion that GILEE did not play a sound and honorable role, I would have terminated my connection with it many years ago. I note with interest that Louis Dekmar, Chief of the LaGrange Police Department, is a member of the GILEE board. I had the pleasure of meeting Chief Dekmar at a by-invitation “All-Stakeholders” workshop hosted by the National Institute of Justice to support the development of the NIJ’s Sentinel Events Initiative in June 2017 in Washington, D.C. Chief Dekmar is an exemplar of the educated and informed law enforcement executives who are common today thanks to the broad movement in law enforcement I’ve described in this letter and of which GILEE is a part. I note with interest that Chief Dekmar was president last year of the IACP, the premier law enforcement membership organization in the country.

I hope that these comments are helpful.

Yours truly,

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