

To Houston's New Faces of Pride,

This letter was written by LGBTQ+ members of the Houston community with support of the undersigned organizations and allies and leaders in the struggle for Palestinian liberation. We write to you to express our concerns regarding the relationship between Chevron and Houston's New Faces of Pride. Chevron has participated in the destruction of countless environments and communities across the planet through its extraction and exploitation of natural resources. As a continuation of this unchecked destruction, Chevron is presently profiting off of and providing cover for Israel's ongoing genocide¹ and apartheid² of and against the Palestinian people. We stand unified in our call: There is no pride in genocide. For the reasons stated below, we call upon you to immediately remove Chevron as a sponsor of the 2024 Pride Festival and Parade.

Chevron does not stand with our community. Chevron claims that they “put people at the center.” This is far from the truth. What *is* true is that they are a multi-billion dollar corporate machine using destruction for the purposes of resource extraction and profit. They engage in greenwashing³, pinkwashing⁴, and PR sponsorships (such as the 2024 Pride Festival and Parade) to improve their public image and obscure the truth⁵ of their continued violence outside of the public eye. In the infamous catastrophe known as the “Amazon Chernobyl”, Chevron devastated countless lives in Ecuador when Chevron subsidiary Texaco knowingly and intentionally dumped 17 million gallons of crude oil and 18 billion gallons of polluted wastewater into the rainforest from 1964 to 1990.⁶ Despite losing the case brought forth by Ecuadorian Indigenous communities, Chevron has evaded all financial responsibility for the damage.⁷ In our own locale—Pasadena, TX—Chevron was held accountable for two major explosions that killed three workers and injured 100.⁸ Chevron was ordered to pay a \$1.8 million civil penalty, but that amount does not make up for the long-term, human costs of cancer and other debilitating illnesses that our communities, especially historically marginalized or low-income communities, bear as a result of these sorts of incidents.

¹ The International Court of Justice has identified a [plausible genocide](#); the International Criminal Court has issued [arrest warrants](#) for Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, and Yoav Gallant, Minister of Defence of Israel.

² Several international human rights organizations (e.g. [Human Rights Watch](#) and [Amnesty International](#)) and Israeli Human Rights groups (e.g. [Yesh Din](#) and [B'Tselem](#)) determined Israel's treatment of Palestinians constituted apartheid even prior to the events of October 7, 2023.

³ [United Nations' definition](#): “By misleading the public to believe that a company or other entity is doing more to protect the environment than it is, greenwashing promotes false solutions to the climate crisis that distract from and delay concrete and credible action.”

⁴ [DecolonizePalestine's definition](#): “Pinkwashing refers to when a state or organization appeals to LGBTQ+ rights in order to deflect attention from its harmful practices.”

⁵ Chevron even admitted in their own 2011 SEC filings that they have been held at least partially responsible for 180 [Superfund sites](#) in the United States – sites which consist of hazardous waste usually left unmanaged by the responsible party i.e Chevron.

⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-12521702>

⁷ <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/18122022/steven-donziger-chevron-ecuador-oil-pollution/>

⁸ https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2004/September/04_enrd_668.htm

Chevron fuels genocide and ecocide. Chevron enables the harm and destruction of marginalized communities by being an active partner in genocide. Since 2022, Chevron has been the main international actor extracting gas in Palestinian coastal waters, making Chevron complicit in a war crime.⁹ This violent project was made possible by Israel's illegal and unethical blockade¹⁰ on Gaza which prevents Palestinians from accessing and controlling their own natural resources. Chevron's extraction of fossil fuels exacerbates the crisis of climate change, which is an existential threat for all of humanity. Now, Chevron continues to extract and profit from pollutant fossil fuels while millions of Palestinians have no electricity, clean water, medical supplies, or food. Chevron funds Israel as it kills over 40,000 Palestinians and fuels the ongoing destruction of their Indigenous land. Genocide is the final stage in the total destruction of Palestinian land and in lining the pockets of Chevron's top executives. Corporate profits should not take precedence over the lives of people and our planet.

Solidarity with Palestine is an LGBTQ+ issue. The New Faces of Pride's "mission is to foster unity, inclusivity, and empowerment within the diverse LGBTQ+ community of Houston." Our need for unity, inclusivity, and empowerment is connected to the same violent structures that oppress all marginalized communities – colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. Those who question our support for the Palestinian struggle on the basis of "gay rights" must understand that the criminalization of homosexuality in much of the world stems from colonialism.¹¹ We too understand the power of propaganda and a media that serves the interests of those in power, rather than those who struggle for liberation on the margins of society. Despite the propaganda, Houston's diverse LGBTQ+ community includes queer Palestinians, their family members, their friends, and their allies. Queer Palestinians have been displaced from their homes, are dying under the Israeli occupation, and face horrific violence at the hands of the Zionist regime. Bombs do not discriminate.

We reject the weaponization of our struggles to justify systemic occupation and genocide of a people. Queer and trans Palestinians have long highlighted¹² that pinkwashing plays a significant role in Zionist propaganda. This pinkwashing is a smokescreen that justifies the death and displacement of queer people in Palestine. We are watching a genocide take place in real time: The carnage overflows from our phone screens and into our hearts and souls. As a queer community, we cannot sit idly by while Israel continues to wipe out entire lineages of Palestinian families.

⁹ <https://bdsmovement.net/Call-to-Boycott-Chevron-Siemens>

¹⁰ <https://www.somo.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Beneath-troubled-waters.pdf>

¹¹ Example: [The impact of colonial legacies in the lives of LGBTI+ and other ancestral sexual and gender diverse persons](#)

¹² Example: alQaws Analysis Paper – [Beyond Propaganda: Pinkwashing as Colonial Violence](#) – documenting the paradigm shift that alQaws has been exploring over the past decade of its grassroots community organizing, which centers the experiences of queer Palestinians.

There is no Pride in Genocide. True queer liberation is intertwined with all liberation struggles including the fight against antisemitism¹³ and islamophobia, the fight against racism, and the fight for a free Palestine. With Chevron's role in the climate change crisis and the ongoing genocide of Palestinians made clear, it is no longer acceptable to turn a blind eye. We watch as Chevron vastly expands operations in Houston, and we call on the Houston New Faces of Pride to remove the company as a sponsor and immediately pursue other sponsorships to ensure that Pride is truly an event for the queer community, not for the pinkwashing of genocide.

None of us are free until all of us are free.

Signed,

Extinction Rebellion Houston
Healthcare Workers for Palestine – Houston
Houston Climate Justice Museum
Houston Democratic Socialists of America
Houston for Palestinian Liberation
Houston Party for Socialism and Liberation
Houston Young
Jewish Voice for Peace Houston
Palestinian Youth Movement Houston
Queers for Palestine – Houston
Students for Justice in Palestine – Rice University
Students for Justice in Palestine – South Texas College of Law
Sunrise Movement – Houston
University of Houston Young Democratic Socialists of America

¹³ Jewish Voice for Peace has clarified how [anti-zionism does not equal antisemitism](#).