



October 21, 2016

Via email

Dear President Wong:

We, the undersigned organizations, condemn the hateful and racist [posters](#) placed on San Francisco State's (SFSU) campus Friday October 14, defaming a faculty member, several students and a student group by name as "terrorists" and "Jew-haters" for their support for Palestinian rights. We appreciate that the administration condemned the posters, and we request that you go further to publicly defend, by name, the students and faculty who face intimidation, racial profiling, bullying and fear mongering.

The poster campaign has drawn sharp criticism and has been covered by the [LA Times](#), [The Guardian](#) and [NPR](#). Pulitzer Prize winner Junot Diaz also [expressed concern](#) over the posters. The UCLA administration has already [condemned the posters](#) as "a focused, personalized intimidation that threatens specific members" of the campus community. The UC Berkeley administration condemned them as "[disturbing rhetoric](#)". Vassar President Chenette wrote, "Those in our community who were singled out in these postings deserve our unconditional support."

The posters at SFSU were created by the David Horowitz Freedom Center, a far-right, off-campus organization whose founder, David Horowitz, is labeled an extremist by the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#), which calls him a "driving force of the anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and anti-black movements"

in America. In recent years, the Horowitz Center has become notorious for plastering campuses across California with posters that, like those found at SFSU, slander students and faculty using hateful language and images. To track the names of targeted students and faculty on campus, the Horowitz Center used [Canary Mission](#), an anonymous organization that posts the names, universities, employers, and social media accounts of students and faculty who support Palestinian rights.

The General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) seeks equality and freedom for Palestinians. Criticism of Israeli government policies, including support for the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement for Palestinian freedom, is principled human rights and anti-racist advocacy. It is also protected speech under the U.S. and California Constitutions, as well as SFSU policy. Administrators have a responsibility as educators to protect and promote campus discourse on the vital human rights and anti-racist issues of our time, including Israel/Palestine.

Moreover, SFSU prides itself on valuing education for social justice, and students who are “deeply engaged with the world’s economies, cultures and politics.” The undersigned organizations commend the brave and principled students and faculty who stay engaged in fighting for Palestinian rights despite outside intimidation and repression. We ask you to do the same.

As you know, the appearance of these posters at SFSU is not an isolated incident. The Horowitz Freedom Center has taken credit for multiple poster harassment campaigns on campuses across California in recent years. Horowitz is viewed as an extremist but his tactics are in line with tactics by mainstream Israel advocacy organizations to suppress speech critical of Israeli policy. As documented in recent reports by [Palestine Legal](#) and [Jewish Voice for Peace](#), these posters are part of a larger pattern of intimidation targeting Palestinian rights advocacy. A [network of well-funded, pro-Israel groups](#) across the country uses similar tactics of fear, intimidation, harassment, and misinformation to pressure administrators, stifle student voices, and chill First Amendment protected speech on campus. Their number one tactic is to conflate criticism of Israeli policies with anti-Jewish hatred and smear anti-racist activists as antisemitic.

These posters are only the latest episode in a sustained campaign of intimidation and defamation targeting SFSU students and faculty. This year, after students protested the Mayor of Jerusalem for the policies he promotes, they were falsely accused of targeting Jewish students – allegations which an independent investigator [determined to be false](#). Nonetheless, students were subjected to death threats, rape threats, cyber-bullying, in-person harassment, and a prolonged investigation. This year, Professor Rabab Abdulhadi

and SFSU were similarly accused of promoting terrorism because of a partnership between SFSU and Al Najah university in Palestine – a partnership that the university initiated and approved through all appropriate channels. Professor Abdulhadi was previously accused by the AMCHA Initiative and similar organizations of using state funds to promote terrorism – allegations which the university [investigated and determined to be baseless](#).

Israel advocacy organizations have signaled their intent to continue its intimidation campaign against SFSU. Recently, director of the Lawfare Project Brooke Goldstein, which uses legal threats to suppress advocacy for Palestinian rights, [indicated plans](#) to focus on SFSU, stating, "The goal is to make the enemy pay ... and to send a message, a deterrent message, that similar actions such [the protest of the Jerusalem Mayor and other campus protests] will result in massive punishments."

Given the sustained and defamatory intimidation campaign Palestinian students and faculty at SFSU, and the national climate of [rising anti-Muslim and anti-Arab racism](#) we call on the university to do more. We ask you to:

1. **Defend GUPS, AMED, the Arab and Muslim community at SFSU, and individual students and faculty by name, and dispel the racist stereotypes in the Horowitz Posters.** SFSU must use its publicity platform to state unequivocally that Arabs, Muslims supporters of Palestinian rights, Dr. Abdulhadi, AMED, GUPS, and SFSU students Linda, Lubna, Sofia, Imani, Dani, Mohammad, and Umassa are each valued members of the campus community. We ask you to emphasize that anti-racism and advocacy for justice, equality and freedom for Palestinians serves SFSU's educational mission.
2. **Express clear and unambiguous support for the AMED Studies program** by publicly and specifically affirming commitment to the MOU with An-Najah National University in Palestine.
3. **Reaffirm the important difference between criticism of Israeli policies and antisemitism**, and endeavor to educate the campus community on the distinction. The independent investigator retained by SFSU to investigate the protest of Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat emphasized this distinction in her [report](#). To protect campus members from further campaigns of intimidation and disinformation, SFSU must educate the campus community on the difference between antisemitism and criticism of Israeli policies.

4. **Join administrators and faculty members in condemning Canary**

Mission. Recently, over 1,000 faculty across the country signed onto [a statement](#) condemning Canary Mission's fearmongering, and insisting that the website 'should not be trusted as a resource to evaluate students' qualifications for admission.

Signed,

American Muslims for Palestine

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus

Arab Resource and Organizing Center Council on American-Islamic Relations

International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network

Jewish Voice for Peace

National Lawyers Guild- San Francisco Bay Area

Palestine Legal