

A Call to Social Justice Movements & Organizations: Build collective safety AND fight the carceral state and state-sanctioned violence

We are grassroots, advocacy, and movement organizations calling upon broader movements, civil rights organizations, and anti-hate groups to firmly reject the government's attempts to manipulate hate violence¹, antisemitism, and Islamophobia to further expand state criminalization. We reject the state's attempts to use this increased violence to expand hate crime laws. These initiatives do not address community safety. Instead, they simply expand state power and criminalization while ignoring the fact that the state itself has laid the groundwork for this violence.

We call upon groups to take leadership from an abolitionist call: build community safety that is not rooted in the carceral state and an understanding that increased individual violence against Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim communities is rooted in state sanctioned violence.

Framing the Moment

We are bearing witness to the ongoing genocide of Palestinians, which has resulted in the killings of over 14,000 Palestinians - half of whom are children.² Simultaneously, here in the U.S., we are responding to a massive uptick in anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim violence. CAIR reported that they have responded to over 774 bias-related incidents.³ This includes the brutal murder of 6-year-old Wadea al-Fayoume who was stabbed over 26 times in his home, his mother who survived a violent attack from their landlord, and the shootings of three Palestinian students, Hisham Awartani, Kinnan Abdalhamid and Tahseen Ahmed who were wearing a *Kuffiyeh* and speaking Arabic.⁴ There have been hundreds of reports of anti-Palestinian racism against students. All of these incidents are still an undercount of the actual violence communities are experiencing. We are also seeing a worrying increase in antisemitism, including, for example, swastikas defacing synagogues and Jewish communal spaces; violent white nationalist antisemites in the public square, for example, neo-Nazis marching in Madison, WI; and the continued bipartisan platforming of virulent antisemites like Pastor John Hagee of Christians United for Israel.

¹<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/09/15/fact-sheet-new-actions-from-the-biden-harris-administration-and-the-public-and-private-sectors-to-foster-unity-and-prevent-hate-motivated-violence/>

² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20415675>

³<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/muslim-americans-spike-hate-incidents-feels-reminiscent-post-911-islam-rcna122570>

⁴ <https://adc.org/statement-on-shooting-of-three-palestinian-students-in-vermont/>

Given the scale of violence at this moment, we feel a particular urgency to come together in solidarity within and among our communities, globally, nationally, and in our local contexts.

Government’s Hate-Motivated Violence Strategy and Expansion of the “War on Terror”

Since Biden has taken office, his administration has continued to integrate hate-motivated violence with his national strategy to counter domestic terrorism. This blurs critical lines between government responses to violence survivors and government programs to surveil, monitor, and target communities under the guise of “terrorism” and national security. For example, in September 2022, the White House launched “The White House Initiative on Hate-Motivated Violence” that further pushes Biden’s [2021 National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism](#). Connected to this broader effort, the White House announced their strategy to counter antisemitism in May of 2023.

All of these policies further exploit community desires for security and safety in order to repackage state criminalization through mass surveillance, repression, and the broader “War on Terror” policies. We know that “hate” is not reducible to a “crime” and that attempts to do so have only further expanded the reach of the carceral state.

The ADL and the Weaponization of Antisemitism against Anti-Zionist Organizing

As we see an uptick in anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian, anti-Muslim, and antisemitic violence, the government has been working hand in hand with racist and destructive organizations like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) that have continued to use the framework of anti-hate to target numerous movements and groups. The White House, working alongside the ADL, is calculatedly misusing charges of antisemitism to repress, target, and suppress speech and organizing against the genocide of Palestinians. The ADL is a significant player in the White House’s Strategy on Antisemitism, which includes ADL’s data on antisemitism. This data is fundamentally deeply flawed as it dangerously conflates criticisms of Israel and Zionism with antisemitism.

Currently the ADL’s Center on Extremism has been wrongfully labeling marches calling for Ceasefire and an end to the genocide of Palestinians, including the largest March on Washington DC and Jewish-led actions, as supporting terror and antisemitism.⁵ The ADL also recently sent a letter to numerous heads of schools unleashing mass targeting of Palestinian and Jewish student groups, including SJP’s and JVP college chapters.

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<https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/anti-israel-march-dc-explicit-expressions-support-terror-and-antisemitism>

In light of the rise in violence towards Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim communities, we are deeply concerned that the ADL is facilitating an environment that directly places student groups, academics, and movement groups at further risk of being targeted by vigilante violence, including targeting by government agencies such as the DOJ, DHS, FBI, and law enforcement.

Concerns with the Proposed White House Islamophobia Strategy

The White House also recently announced it would release their anti-Islamophobia strategy, which is positioned under the National Security Council and the Domestic Policy Council. Our major concern is that national security as a framework has been central to codifying structural and institutional forms of Islamophobia. There is a fundamental contradiction in the National Security Council releasing a strategy purporting to advance safety while in reality expanding militarism, policing, and genocide here at “home” and “abroad.” In fact, these strategies—rooted in the logics of imperialism, colonialism, and war—only further intensify violence against the communities they claim to protect.

As anti-violence and abolitionist organizers, we can point to other examples in which the state’s attempt to address harm through criminalization failed to address vulnerability and, instead, expanded structural and interpersonal violence. For example, the passage of the Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) in 1994 mobilized the criminal legal system to codify domestic violence which resulted in the financing of police, prosecutors and prisons, the expansion of mass incarceration, and the intensified criminalization and targeting of domestic violence survivors.

Thus, our concerns with the proposed White House Islamophobia strategy are that it could dangerously co-opt anti-hate and anti-violence work to further entrench the domestic violent extremism framework and expand the War on Terror. We are concerned the strategy will be influenced by the White House’s Domestic Terrorism strategy released in 2021 and the White House’s Strategy to Counter Antisemitism that was released in May of 2023. We have already witnessed the use of this criminalization infrastructure against reproductive justice organizers after the fall of *Roe*, StopCopCity organizers, and Palestinian organizers. This apparatus continues to be deployed against movement organizers and protestors, including critical infrastructures of community care and defense.

The Need for Community-Led Responses

This moment calls for collective solidarity. The repression, violence, and suppression we are witnessing against movements demanding an end to the genocide of Palestinians and for a permanent Ceasefire will set a dangerous precedent for all movement groups that seek to resist state violence, ongoing genocides, and build towards a better future.

Without community-led and driven processes that center the most marginalized communities, the state sets the agenda and defines what community safety is. This strategy packages itself as addressing harm, tokenizes a few individuals, and solely serves the interest of the state rather than centering comprehensive community-driven processes—including from those who have been directly harmed by the state’s policies.

It is from this context, and with love, rage, and solidarity, that we put following call to movements, civil rights groups, and anti-hate groups:

Our concrete collective call to broader movement groups currently include:

- Reject the expansion of criminalization- including surveillance, militarism, and the national security state**
 - End all US funding and military aid to Israel
 - Reject any expansion of the “War on Terror” and the national security infrastructure, including the domestic surveillance and terrorism architecture that is being pushed under the guise of fighting hate, antisemitism, or, in the future, Islamophobia
- Be guided by impacted communities**
 - Heed the call for a permanent #Ceasefire now as part of our commitment to Palestinian liberation
 - Demand an immediate end to the 17+ year siege and blockade of Gaza
 - Endorse the BDS movement
 - Center the leadership of abolitionist and grassroots Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim-led organizations and organizers
 - Protect speech, organizing, and movement-work to oppose genocide and settler-colonial violence, and to advocate for Palestinian liberation
 - Support the call to #DroptheADL as an authority on racism, white supremacy, or antisemitism and end sharing any platforms with the ADL
 - Support Palestinian, Muslim, Jewish, and broader movement groups being targeted through the ADL’s Center on Extremism, which deeply influences the government’s role
 - [Endorse Muslim Abolitionist Futures call for the abolition of the War on Terror and investment into communities of care](#)
- Build Clear Individual Organizational Responses**
 - Take clear organizational positions and commit to remaining in solidarity with Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, anti-Zionist Jews and other targeted groups by releasing organizational statements and pushing back on targeting from policymakers, funders, and broader coalitions that seek to repress groups supporting Palestinian liberation

- Hold discussions of this call within your organization. This includes committing to political education on Palestinian liberation, structural Islamophobia, and antisemitism from a collective liberation lens that draws connections to struggles against white supremacy, white Christian nationalism, settler-colonialism, and anti-Black racism
- Share resources to respond to the uptick in repression and targeting of Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and Jewish groups
- Build abolitionist responses to harm and for collective safety; including, building broader resilient movement coalitions that strengthen cross movement solidarity**
 - Ensure that our organizing is rooted in clarifying the structures of state violence and abolishing the broader structures of the prison industrial complex, capitalism, and settler-colonialism that are the core of fomenting anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, and other expressions of structural violence and hate
 - Build abolitionist and non-carceral responses to antisemitism and Islamophobia grounded in racial, economic, and gender justice that advance the long-term safety and well being of communities
 - Build upon long-standing practices of BIPOC and feminist organizing that centers collective storytelling and organizing, rather than the state-codification of harm.
 - Share movement wisdom and resources with one another, further deepening joint practice and struggle
 - Create a stronger infrastructure for movement defense and care work
 - Cultivate spaces for shared storytelling, joy, grief, and moving in solidarity with one another

We call upon social justice movements and organizations to join us. We must be vigilant and ensure that at this critical moment of uprisings and mobilization, our work is not co-opted or derailed in any way. Our safety and freedom are rooted in community and collective liberation, not in the logics of the settler-colonialist, carceral, racial capitalist U.S. nation state. As Assata Shakur has taught us, “We must love and protect each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains.”

Signatories:

Muslims for Just Futures | PARCEO | INCITE! Palestine Force |

Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) |

Rising Majority | Dream Defenders | US Campaign for Palestinian Rights |

18 Million Rising | Abolitionist Law Center |
Action Center on Race & the Economy (ACRE) | Adalah Justice Project |
Afghans For A Better Tomorrow | American Muslim Bar Association | API Equality-LA |
ATPAction | Arab Resource & Organizing Center (AROC) | Armenian- American Action
Network | Art.coop | Asian American Advocacy Fund | Asian American Resource
Workshop (AARW) | Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) | Asian Solidarity
Collective | Believers Bail Out | Beloved Community Incubator (BCI) |Catalyst Project |
Center for Constitutional Rights | Community Defense of East Tennessee |
Community Movement Builders (CMB) | Cooperation Milwaukee | Critical Resistance |
Dissenters | DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving |
Empowering Marginalized Asian Communities | Grassroots Asians Rising (GAR) |
Grassroots Global Justice Alliance | Grassroots Leadership |
HEAL Ohio | Healing our Homeland | HEART | Hmong Innovating Politics |
Houston Abolitionist Collective | Illinois Alliance for Reentry and Justice |
InterReligious Task Force on Central America | Interrupting Criminalization |
James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership
Jews Say No! | Just Practice | MADRE |
May First Movement Technology |
Muslim Abolitionist Futures | Movement for Black Lives |
Movement Matters | Muslim Women For | No Separate Justice |
Palestine Legal | Progressive Technology Project |
Project Hajra | Project South |Providence Youth Student Movement | Queer Crescent |
Savage Daughters | Southeast Asian Freedom Network (SEFAN) | SURJ Mendo Coast

Chapter | The #LetUsBreathe Collective | The Joy Truck Project | The New School Faculty for Justice in Palestine | Vigilant Love | W.E.B. Du Bois Movement School for Abolition & Reconstruction | WESPAC Foundation, Inc. | Xicanx Institute for Teaching & Organizing

Resources:

- [#DropTheADL](#)
- [The White House’s Strategic Plan on Antisemitism is Fatally Flawed](#)
- [Palestinian Feminist Collective All Out For Palestine: Digital Action Toolkit](#)
- [Palestine Legal Resources: Information for Palestine Activists](#)
- [Curriculum on Antisemitism from a Framework of Collective Liberation](#)
- Abolition Resources:**
 - [Scholars for Social Justice \(Video Conversation\): Abolition, Domestic Warfare and the Terror of Reform with Dylan Rodríguez's White Reconstruction with Rachel Herzog hosted by Scholars for Social Justice.](#)
 - [Haymarket House \(Video Conversation\): PIC Abolition, the War on Terror, and the Deportation Machine](#)
 - [Muslim Abolitionist Futures Policy Agenda](#)
 - [Muslim Abolitionist Futures Abolitionist v. Policies Reforms Tool](#)
 - [8 To Abolition: Abolitionist Policy Changes to Demand from Your City Officials](#)
 - [The “Asian exception” and the Scramble for Legibility: Toward an Abolitionist Approach to Anti-Asian Violence by Dylan Rodriguez](#)
 - [Incite-national.org \(@incite_paliforce IG\)](#)
 - [Interrupting Criminalization Toolkit](#)
 - [Muslims for Just Futures: Islamophobia Resources](#)
 - [Building Community Safety](#)