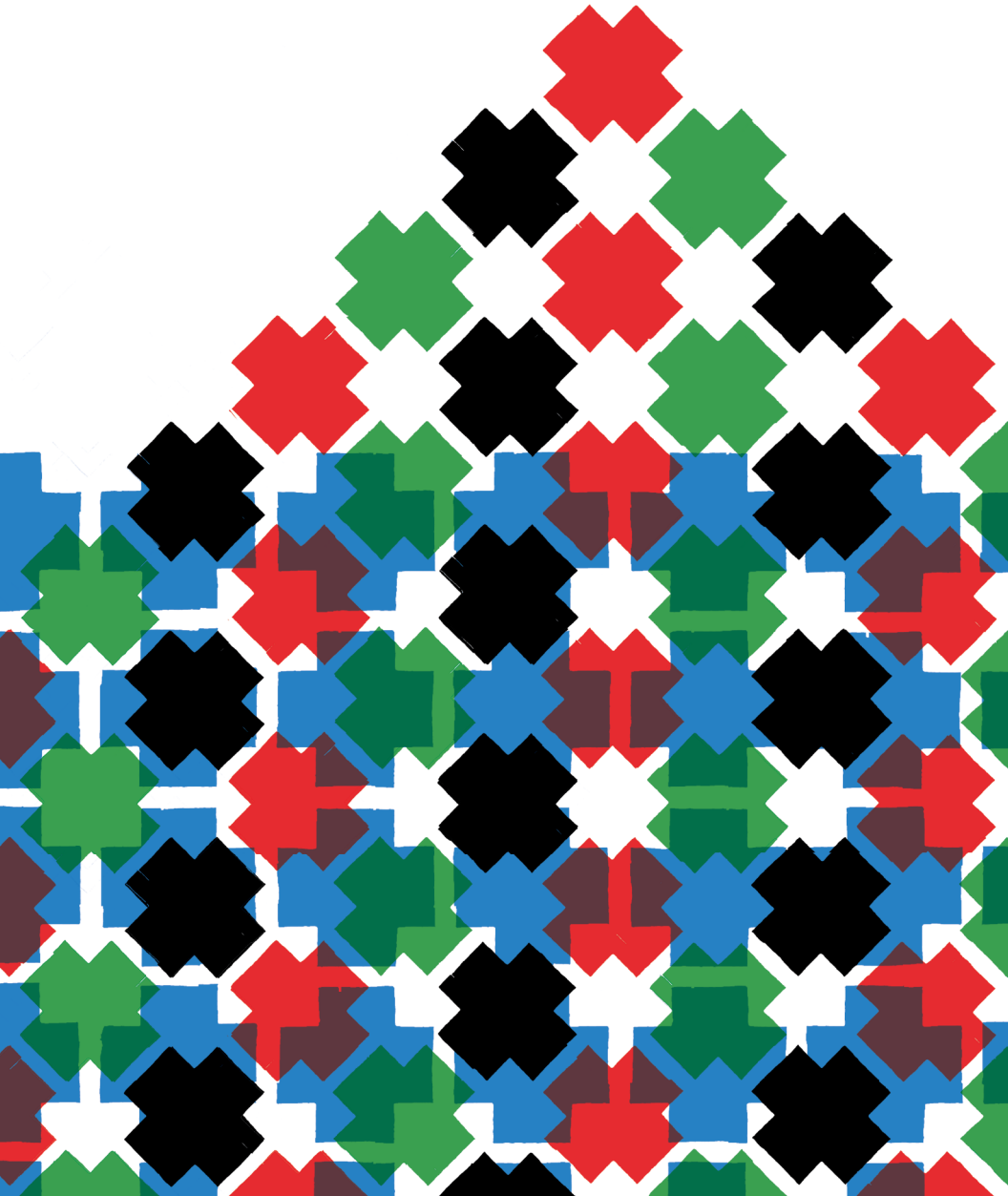




# REVERBERATIONS OF OCTOBER 7

MOBILIZATION AGAINST GENOCIDE UNDETERRED  
BY PEAK ANTI-PALESTINIAN REPRESSION





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# INTRODUCTION

Palestine activism in 2023 was defined by one date—October 7. The Al Aqsa Flood operation on that day and the US-backed Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza that followed have forever changed the landscape of Palestine, the region, and the solidarity movement in the US and globally. Because of this, Palestine Legal is focusing our annual report on trends in repression in the period of October 7 through December 2023.



THE NATIONAL MARCH ON WASHINGTON: FREE PALESTINE ON NOVEMBER 4, 2023.  
PHOTO CREDIT: OMAR SULEIMAN



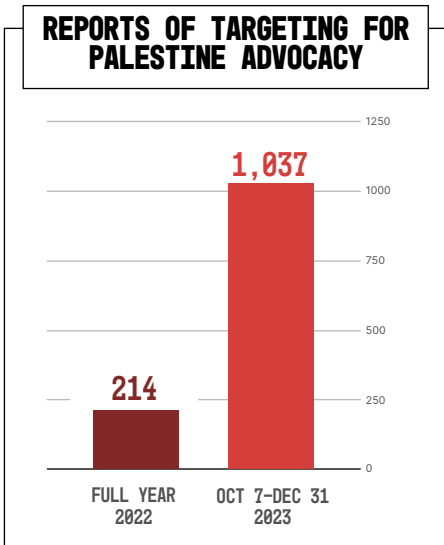
In the months after the onset of Israel’s genocidal campaign, hundreds of thousands of people mobilized in the streets, at their workplaces, and on campuses across the country in support of Palestinian liberation and to demand a permanent ceasefire and an end to US support for Israel. This came alongside a drastic shift in the popular narrative on Palestinian rights and freedom, as people increasingly affirm the right of Palestinians and their allies to oppose Zionist settler colonialism.

**IN RESPONSE TO THIS UPSURGE OF MOBILIZATION, STATE AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS LAUNCHED AN UNPRECEDENTED, MCCARTHYITE CAMPAIGN OF ANTI-PALESTINIAN REPRESSION TARGETING THE SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT IN THE US IN AN ATTEMPT TO CRIMINALIZE DISSENT AND CENSOR PRO-PALESTINE SPEECH AND ADVOCACY.**



The tools used to attack the Palestine movement in this period were not new. Over the previous decade, Palestine Legal documented and responded to the efforts of Israel and its lobby groups to meet the growing solidarity for the Palestinian cause with racist attacks. After October 7, however, as Israel escalated its assault on Gaza and attacks on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, Zionist groups’ targeting of the Palestine solidarity movement also escalated dramatically to thwart criticism of Israel’s actions and maintain US support. Palestinians seeking to narrate their

experience and protest the genocide of their people, along with their allies engaged in political dissent, were relentlessly smeared as antisemites and terrorists. Attempts to purge them from universities, schools, companies, and government institutions alike reached unfathomable proportions, as this report documents.



The data shared here reflect only what was reported to or documented by Palestine Legal, and the stories included represent only a fraction of incidents reported. Other civil rights organizations similarly reported exponential increases in intakes,<sup>1</sup> and many more incidents go unreported.

Palestine Legal received a total of 1,037 requests for legal support from October 7 through December 31,

including 908 reports from people targeted for their Palestine advocacy, and 119 other legal questions and inquiries from concerned activists. The high volume of reports has continued into 2024. This compares to around 214 reported incidents in all of 2022.

Of those reports, 478 were related to universities, where administrators engaged in a staggering crackdown on student organizing, banning pro-Palestine student groups and targeting student organizers. An additional 383 reports involved employment concerns, as employers targeted—and in 124 cases reported to Palestine Legal, terminated—employees who expressed support for Palestinian rights.

Across arenas, attempts by Zionist groups and individuals to intimidate and silence pro-Palestinian voices proliferated, from doxing trucks on campuses, to media censorship, to online smear sites, to threats and actual instances of physical violence.

The state also played a large role in the wave of suppression. There were congressional inquiries into campus antisemitism that operated as a thinly veiled attempt to stamp out Palestine solidarity and silence criticism of Israel’s genocide. Palestine Legal documented at least 33 legislative initiatives at the federal and state levels condemning pro-Palestine

**478**  
**REPORTS RELATED TO**  
**UNIVERSITIES**

**383**  
**REPORTS OF EMPLOYMENT**  
**CONCERNS**

**124**  
**EMPLOYMENT TERMINATIONS**

**268**  
**REPORTS OF DOXING**

**73**  
**REPORTS RELATED TO K-12**  
**SCHOOLS**



STUDENT LED PROTEST AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SEATTLE.  
 PHOTO CREDIT: ANAKBAYAN USA

expression and slogans as antisemitic or equating such speech with support for terrorism. Other bills attacked the right to boycott Israel or targeted Palestinian non-citizens and others vocally supportive of Palestine. While most of these draconian bills have not advanced, they portend a normalizing of severe anti-Palestinian rhetoric and activity intended to criminalize speech, advocacy, solidarity, and even scholarship around Palestine.

As Biden declared the concentration of law enforcement resources on Palestine solidarity under the guise of combatting potential terrorism and antisemitism, activists reported an increase in FBI and other law enforcement visits, often prompted by social media posts about Palestine.<sup>2</sup> Policing of protests also involved brutal tactics and mass arrests.<sup>3</sup>

Broadly, this repression was predicated on a deeply rooted anti-Palestinian racism. Palestinians in the US—and those perceived to be Palestinian—were systematically discriminated against, dehumanized, smeared as violent, excluded, and censored, a phenomenon that mirrors Israel's racist oppression of Palestinians living across Palestine, between the river and the sea.

**IT IS THIS RACISM AND DEHUMANIZATION THAT HAS MADE POSSIBLE ISRAEL'S KILLING OF AT LEAST 35,000 PALESTINIANS AND COUNTING, THE DISPLACEMENT AND STARVATION OF NEARLY THE WHOLE POPULATION OF OVER 2 MILLION PEOPLE IN GAZA, AND THE COMPLETE DEVASTATION OF ITS INFRASTRUCTURE. IT ALSO HAS ENABLED THE US'S CONTINUING COMPLICITY IN THESE CRIMES, AND THE 76 YEARS OF OPPRESSION THAT PRECEDED THEM.**

The stakes couldn't be higher in the midst of what experts agree is one of the most brutal military campaigns in modern history.<sup>4</sup> The US's complicity in the genocide has exposed in new ways the forces at work suppressing Palestinian freedom and conspiring to erase them from the public consciousness. Now more than ever, the US government has wholeheartedly adopted Israel and its lobby's agenda of criminalizing and smearing Palestine solidarity in an effort to give cover to and justify the genocide.

In the period since January 2024, this crackdown has further intensified, as universities have sent militarized police to tear down student encampments and arrest hundreds of peaceful protesters. A spate of lawsuits and legislative initiatives aim to further expand already overbroad and structurally anti-Palestinian antiterrorism laws to criminalize advocacy for Palestinian rights. It is clear that there is a full-blown assault on the movement using every repressive tactic in the books.

Yet this severe anti-Palestinian backlash and the heavy price people are paying for speaking out are not dampening resistance to Israel's agenda. On the contrary, the movement for Palestinian liberation has grown like never before and has demonstrated resilience and courage in confronting not only Israel's war crimes, but US complicity, too. As youth organizers in National Students for Justice in Palestine (NSJP) and Dissenters, who are confronting vicious campus-based crackdowns, have affirmed: "Repression is evidence of our power."<sup>5</sup>

Even as we document the repression, Palestine Legal is committed to continuing to bolster and advance this movement. We are confident history will judge our movement in the same light as the civil rights, anti-apartheid, and other justice movements before it, despite the fierce repression they, too, faced in challenging racist and apartheid systems.

# UNPRECEDENTED MOBILIZATION

**ISRAEL'S MOST VEHEMENT DEFENDERS IN THE UNITED STATES HAVE BEEN WORKING OVERTIME TO CENSOR, PUNISH, THREATEN, AND CRIMINALIZE THE MOST BASIC EXPRESSIONS FOR PALESTINIAN FREEDOM.**

Nevertheless, 2023 marked the largest and broadest pro-Palestine mobilization in US history, with no signs of dissipating. The tsunami of anti-Palestinian repression is a desperate reaction to the growing frequency of widespread, bold actions for Palestinian freedom.

By the end of 2023, the Crowd Counting Consortium, which tracks political demonstrations across the United States, logged nearly 3,300 pro-Palestine actions since October 7 across 622 different cities and towns in all 50 US states, DC, Puerto Rico, and Guam.<sup>6</sup>

On November 4, 2023, the National March on Washington for Palestine pulled in an estimated 300,000 attendees, making it the largest rally in solidarity with Palestine ever recorded in the US.<sup>7</sup> At the start of February 2024, the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights logged over 1 million calls and emails to Congress since October 7 through their action tools alone.<sup>8</sup>





JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE AND THEIR ALLIES SHUT DOWN THE MAIN TERMINAL OF GRAND CENTRAL STATION IN OCTOBER 2023.  
PHOTO CREDIT: KAROM RIVERA

In addition to historic mass mobilizations, there has been a marked rise in targeted direct actions and civil disobedience to halt business as usual: shutting down major bridges, highways, and airports; occupying the Capitol and disrupting political events; and blocking the entrances and ports of operations for weapons manufacturers.

In January 2024, over 3,000 community members across the Bay Area disrupted the entirety of Oakland Port operations.<sup>9</sup> The port lost approximately 12 million dollars in revenue as a result, roughly the same amount of money that the US sends to Israel per day in military aid.<sup>10</sup> Jimmy Salameh, a longshoreman with ILWU Local 10 said, “I’ve worked at the port for ten years, and I can say for a fact that there was no business as usual out here today. How could there be in the middle of a genocide?”<sup>11</sup>

Disruptions at the events and homes of elected officials demanding that they call for a permanent ceasefire were so prevalent that former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told CNN: “They are in front of my house all the time.”<sup>12</sup>

Mounting international criticism of Israel reached an apex with the momentous ruling in January 2024 by the International Court of Justice, which ruled it is “plausible” that Israel is committing the crime of genocide in Gaza.<sup>13</sup> On the same day of the initial ruling in South Africa’s case against Israel, the Center for Constitutional Rights argued in a US District Court that the Biden administration is complicit in Israel’s genocide.<sup>14</sup> The hearing was the first time that Palestinians testified in a US federal court on the effects of the Nakba and decades of US support for Israeli settler colonialism on their lives, as well as the toll of the genocide on their families in Gaza. The court, even while dismissing the case on legal grounds, recognized that Israel’s assault on Gaza “plausibly falls within the international prohibition against genocide” and called on the administration to reassess its “unflinching support” for Israel.

These acts of resistance and mobilization on every front have resulted in a seismic shift of public opinion in favor of Palestinian rights.

**FOR THE FIRST TIME, OVER HALF OF AMERICANS FAVOR STOPPING US MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL,<sup>15</sup> AND AN OVERWHELMING TWO-THIRDS ARE IN FAVOR OF AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE.<sup>16</sup>**



This momentum has spurred communities everywhere to push their local decision makers into action on an institutional level. As a result of tireless advocacy, at least 70 cities<sup>17</sup> and major unions<sup>18</sup>—representing more than half the labor movement in the US—have adopted resolutions calling for a ceasefire and the protection of Palestinian life in Gaza.

These shifts mark a generational change. There will be no return to the status quo of unconditional support for Israel’s crimes. “Free Palestine” has become a rallying call for collective liberation: for freedom “from every river to every sea.”<sup>19</sup>



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY ALUMNI PROTESTING THE SUSPENSION OF SJP AND JEWISH VOICES FOR PEACE. PHOTO CREDIT: HEATHER CHEN, THE COLUMBIA SPECTATOR

# HIGHER EDUCATION: A CRACKDOWN ON STUDENT ACTIVISM

AS THE SCALE OF ISRAEL'S CAMPAIGN OF COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT IN GAZA STARTED TO BECOME CLEAR, STUDENT ORGANIZERS WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO RALLY IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINIAN LIVES, NOT ONLY PLANNING LOCAL EVENTS BUT ALSO COORDINATING WITH STUDENT GROUPS ACROSS THE COUNTRY FOR A "NATIONAL DAY OF RESISTANCE."<sup>20</sup>

Israel advocacy groups—such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL)—immediately resorted to well-worn smear tactics in an attempt to discredit this advocacy, portraying any statement of support for Palestinians as support for Hamas and any reference to resistance to Israel's 75-year colonization and occupation of Palestine as support for terrorism. On October 11, the ADL and other Israel advocacy groups wrote to universities, baselessly claiming that Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapters at their universities may be engaging in “material support for terrorism,” and calling on them to investigate and withdraw recognition and funding for SJPs, an action that would violate students' constitutional rights.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the swift debunking of this threat by civil rights and liberties groups,<sup>22</sup> in the months that followed, multiple universities and the state of Florida gave in to these demands and sought to suspend or block recognition of SJP and other pro-Palestine clubs on their campuses.



HEAVY POLICE PRESENCE DURING A TEACH-IN ORGANIZED BY SJP AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA ON OCT. 12, 2023. PHOTO CREDIT: LUIS SANTANA | TIMES

## FLORIDA ATTEMPTS TO DISBAND SJP

On October 24, **Florida State University** System Chancellor Ray Rodrigues, “in consultation with Governor DeSantis,” issued a memorandum ordering public universities in Florida to deactivate SJP clubs on their campuses. The memo made unsubstantiated and inflammatory conclusions about a National Students for Justice in Palestine statement.<sup>23</sup>

On November 16, SJP at University of Florida—represented by Palestine Legal, the ACLU, and the ACLU of Florida—filed a federal lawsuit in the Northern District of Florida arguing that the order violated the group’s First Amendment rights. The state quickly backtracked in its efforts to ban SJP, arguing in court that it did not intend to disband SJP clubs at its universities. The court took this to mean that SJPs were not under threat of being derecognized and dismissed the lawsuit in January 2024.<sup>24</sup>



# SJP BANS AT OTHER UNIVERSITIES

On November 6, **Brandeis University** followed Florida’s lead and derecognized what they characterized as “the Brandeis chapter of the National Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP).”<sup>25</sup> Days after this decision, the school violently shut down a rally protesting the derecognition, arresting seven protesters, including three students. As of February 2024, SJP remains banned on campus, and the university has pursued both criminal and disciplinary charges against protestors.

Days after Brandeis SJP was derecognized, on November 10, **Columbia University** also suspended SJP and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) groups on its campus, claiming that the



GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY STUDENT PROTESTERS RALLYING TOGETHER AFTER THE SUSPENSION OF STUDENTS FOR JUSTICE IN PALESTINE. PHOTO CREDIT: GW SJP



clubs repeatedly violated the school’s newly implemented and highly restrictive events policies. Students defiantly continued to organize under a broad umbrella—the Columbia University Apartheid Divest coalition, which includes 94 student clubs.<sup>26</sup> In March 2024, Palestine Legal and the New York Civil Liberties Union sued Columbia University in New York court for unlawfully suspending SJP and JVP, in contravention of its own policies.<sup>27</sup>

On November 13, **George Washington University** also effectively suspended SJP for 90 days because the club had projected messages onto the wall of the university library. The university falsely characterized the messages—which included “GW is complicit in genocide in Gaza,” and “Free Palestine from the river to the sea”—as antisemitic. In protest of the suspension of SJP, and to continue Palestine advocacy on campus, students from various organizations formed the Student Coalition for Palestine.<sup>28</sup>



In December 2023, **Rutgers-New Brunswick** SJP members learned from a reporter that their club had been suspended by the university. They had received no communication from the institution before this decision was leaked to the media. The university falsely accused Rutgers SJP of violating multiple conduct policies without providing them any information about when or how those violations allegedly took place. As a result of public pressure, including the support of over 150 Rutgers

student organizations, Rutgers SJP was reinstated in January 2024.<sup>29</sup>

Attacks have also targeted other allied student organizations, such as the Central Ohio Revolutionary Socialists (CORS) at **The Ohio State University**. CORS was suspended on December 13 after holding a Palestine solidarity rally on campus. Two days after being reinstated on February 3, the group once again protested on campus, demanding that the university stop censoring Palestine activists and end its complicity in the Israeli government's actions by divesting university funds from Israel.<sup>30</sup>

## AGGRESSIVE STUDENT CONDUCT CHARGES

**WHILE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS WERE A FOCAL POINT FOR PUBLIC BANS, UNIVERSITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY ALSO INVESTIGATED INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS, AT TIMES SUBJECTING THEM TO HARSH PUNISHMENTS FOR VIOLATING PREVIOUSLY UNENFORCED POLICIES.**

At **New York University**, multiple students faced conduct charges for tearing down Israel propaganda flyers that had been taped up on campus or for allegedly posting pro-Palestine flyers on top of those posters. At least one student was suspended for nearly a year after administrators had made assurances that suspension and expulsion were not on the table.

At **Rockland Community College**, a student was suspended for nearly a year for protesting a pro-Israel event by shouting, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” and “Jews for Palestine.” At other universities, students faced disciplinary charges for peaceful activism including walkouts, sit-ins, and die-ins. Students were also called in for meetings with administrators because of complaints that chants and social media postings that contained messages such as “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” were offensive to Jewish students, or for even just attending pro-Palestine events. Students were also accused of violence or disruption after being attacked by campus police or law enforcement during non-violent protests.

**SUSPENSION AND THE THREAT OF SUSPENSION HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, INCLUDING PALESTINIANS, WHOSE VISAS AND ABILITY TO REMAIN IN THE US DEPEND ON MAINTAINING GOOD STANDING AT THEIR UNIVERSITIES AND AVOIDING CRIMINAL SANCTIONS.**



COLUMBIA SJP'S MOCK APARTHEID WALL ON CAMPUS. PHOTO CREDIT: COLUMBIA SJP

# DISCRIMINATION AGAINST STUDENTS

In the days and weeks following October 7, dozens of schools and universities across the country sent one-sided and ahistorical statements expressing support for Israel and condemning Hamas without acknowledging the growing civilian death toll of Israel’s indiscriminate bombing of Palestinians. At many of these schools, Palestinian students, faculty, and allies asked for administrators to address Israel’s ongoing attacks on Gaza and the impact on Palestinian and allied students, but their requests for equal treatment were rejected, ignored, or at best met with private responses rather than public statements. One administrator described the word “Palestinian” as alienating. At several other schools, neutral statements with language such as “violence in the Middle East” were amended to take a more explicit pro-Israel stance, in one case while explicitly rejecting calls from the community to similarly acknowledge what Palestinians were experiencing.



GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HOLD SIGNS CONDEMNING THE SUSPENSION OF SJP IN FRONT OF GILMAN LIBRARY ON CAMPUS. PHOTO CREDIT: GW SJP

At the **University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (UNC)**, the dean of students sent an email on October 10 to all students and recent alumni whose birthplace was listed as Israel offering resources and academic and personal support. No such email was sent to students and alumni who had Palestine listed as their birthplace.

At the **University of Southern California**, a professor was caught on film in November stepping on the names of Palestinian civilians that had been laid out by students in a memorial for the 10,000 lives that had been lost in Gaza at that time, telling the students, "Everyone should be killed, and I hope they all are." After students filed a complaint, the professor was told not to come to campus for a few weeks but was later allowed to return. The university announced that he had not been disciplined and that the interim measures were only briefly in place to "ensure a safe learning environment."

Amid surges in COVID-19 cases and aggressively racist

and sexist doxing campaigns by Zionist organizations, the president of **Pomona College** sent an email to the student body just ahead of a nationwide student day of action on November 9 stating that students who wore masks during demonstrations would be required to remove them if administrators were concerned about conduct violations. The day before this announcement, the anti-Palestinian organization StandWithUs had told the school that they were allowed to prohibit masks worn to conceal identities. **George Mason University** and UNC similarly announced that they would be enforcing anti-masking state laws against protestors on campus.

At another university, a Palestinian student asked a professor for an extension on a group assignment in light of difficulties she faced in focusing on school while family members were under attack in Gaza. She was told that she should have had her team request the extension and that they should try to complete the assignment. An Israeli student in the same

class who had made a similar request was told to take all the time they needed and that the other members of the group could complete the assignment themselves.

At several universities, students and faculty members who had planned events about Palestine that were originally scheduled to take place in person were told that they had to shift to Zoom or cancel the events because of vague security concerns, suggesting a racialized association of Palestinians with violence.

## THREATS TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM

University professors and other educators, like employees across virtually all sectors, have faced threats to their employment targeting them for their off-campus activism and social media posts. They have also had campus events canceled or altered as a result of Zionist complaints, and faced direct attacks on their academic freedom in the classroom.

**Smith College** fired Olive Demar, an adjunct lecturer in dance, because her syllabus—prepared the previous summer—included a reading on the relationship between concert dance and settler-colonial violence and displacement. The lecturer was prevented from teaching her class that day, and she was summarily fired and banned from campus the next day for “veering off course related topics in class and focusing on [her] personal life and political issues.”

**Indiana University** suspended professor Abdulkader Sinno for two semesters and blocked him from advising student groups during that period after he booked a



room on behalf of IU's Palestine Solidarity Committee for an event featuring Israeli-American author Miko Peled on November 16.<sup>31</sup> The school canceled the room booking on the grounds that the event was not sponsored by Sinno's department, Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures. The event went forward in an unoccupied room on campus. The school claimed that because of Sinno's actions, they had to divert police presence from other events to the Peled event, a claim contradicted by reporters from the *Indiana Daily Student*. The decision to suspend Sinno prompted outrage among his colleagues, who petitioned the school to reverse its decision on the grounds that it violated academic freedom and bypassed faculty governance processes.

Also in November, the **University of Arizona** suspended two professors, Rebecca Zapien and Rebecca Lopez, who had been secretly recorded in class speaking about the situation in Gaza. The professors were teaching a course on "Cultural Pluralism for Young Children," meant to equip future educators with the skills to teach students across diverse racial and ethnic groups. After outcry from students, community members, and their union, including sit-ins demanding that the professors be reinstated, the university issued a statement apologizing for the harm it had caused and reinstated the professors.<sup>32</sup>

In December, the **University of Minnesota College of Liberal Arts** canceled its search for a new associate dean of diversity, equity, and inclusion, leaving the position vacant following a smear campaign against finalist Sima Shakhsari. Shakhsari, a professor at the university, had been personally invited to apply for the position by colleagues, who had even extended the application deadline to allow them to apply. However, a colleague subsequently falsely accused Shakhsari of supporting Hamas and accosting a Jewish faculty

member. Shakhsari has since received a torrent of graphic hate mail via their work email, personal phone, and on social media, with little if any support from the institution.<sup>33</sup>

At other universities, professors and graduate students were investigated for canceling classes in support of general strikes in solidarity with Palestinians, even where their institutions permit them to cancel classes without cause. Graduate students at several universities were fired or transferred out of teaching positions after making comparisons between topics covered in class and the ongoing genocide, in one case while reviewing an assigned reading that specifically referenced Israel as a settler-colonial state. Two graduate students in social work at the **University of Texas-Austin** were removed from their teaching positions for sharing mental health resources with students in response to the “university’s silence around the suffering many of our students, staff, and faculty are experiencing on campus.”<sup>34</sup> After students, alumni, and community members demanded their reinstatement, the university offered the students unspecified work for the spring 2024 semester.

# DOXING

After October 7, there was an enormous spike in the number of students, professors, employees, and activists who were doxed—meaning their private or identifying individual information was published with malicious intent—for their support of Palestinian human rights. In addition, there was an aggressive escalation of doxing tactics by news media sources, online blacklists, and other actors. 268 of the reports received by Palestine Legal between October 7 and the end of the year involved doxing.

Activists' posts on social media were screenshotted and circulated online with the username visible, leading to the doxing and subsequent harassment of these individuals via threatening texts, phone calls, and emails. Media outlets like the *New York Post* and *Fox News* ran stories targeting individual activists for posts in support of Palestine, further amplifying the harassment.

Posters depicting Israeli hostages, seen as propaganda for Israel's genocidal war, were the center of doxing campaigns. In the three weeks after October 7, the *New York Post* ran 10 different stories about hostage posters and people removing or otherwise defacing them. Removing posters was also grounds for disciplinary actions against students and led to suspensions and employment consequences for workers, including terminations.

**268 OF REPORTS  
RECEIVED BY  
PALESTINE LEGAL  
BETWEEN OCTOBER  
7 AND THE END OF  
THE YEAR INVOLVED  
DOXING.**

# DOXING TRUCKS

In addition to online targeting, students also faced harassment via doxing trucks. These trucks targeted specific campuses, often where students or student groups had signed onto a statement in support of Palestine. Accuracy in Media, a nonprofit organization behind the doxing trucks, sent trucks to Harvard, Columbia, Yale, and other schools, displaying the names and faces of students. Despite the fact that many white and Jewish students made statements in support of Palestine, the doxing trucks almost universally targeted students of color.

Shortly after October 7, the **Harvard** Undergraduate Palestine Solidarity Committee published a statement calling on the “Harvard community to take action to stop the ongoing annihilation of Palestinians,” alongside 34 student organizations included as signatories. Following the letter’s publication, students’ personal information was placed on



PROTESTERS BLOCK "DOXING TRUCKS" CIRCULATING IMAGES AND NAMES OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON CAMPUS. PHOTO CREDIT: EVA FRASIER

various smear websites. On October 11, a truck displaying students' names and faces arrived on Harvard's campus, with a link to a website listing the names of student groups, all of which represent either Black, Arab, Palestinian, or other students of color.

On October 23, a truck displaying the names and faces of **Columbia** students began driving around Columbia's campus. Numerous students found their names and faces plastered on the side of a truck proclaiming them to be "Columbia's Leading Antisemites," with a link to a website listing the names of various students and student groups. Like at Harvard, not everyone who was doxed on the truck was a member of the groups who signed onto the letter. On November 11, a Columbia student sued Accuracy in Media, arguing that he had not been a member of the group he was alleged to have been a part of since May 2023.<sup>35</sup>

Accuracy in Media sent a truck to **Yale's** campus on November 16, mirroring the tactic used at Columbia and Harvard. The doxing truck arrived on campus after students and others had signed onto a statement in solidarity with Palestine. Many of the students doxed on the truck were students of color. In an attempt to stop the truck, a small group of students tried to block the truck from leaving its parking spot in front of students' residential colleges. The truck was reported to Yale's Police Department. In response, Yale police threatened to arrest students.

In each instance, university administrations failed to adequately protect students from doxing and instead exacerbated the attacks by issuing public condemnations of the students and student organizations.

# DOXING ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND SMEAR SITES

Israel-aligned groups such as Canary Mission, StopAntisemitism, Israel War Room, and the ADL have ramped up their targeting of students, professors, employees, and others with internet doxing. Often, activists' images and personal information were shared across different social media platforms, including X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram, and became fodder for media outlets like the *New York Post* and *Fox News* to publish stories that intensified discrimination, harassment, and doxing of Palestine activists.

Student members of Emory's Students for Justice in Palestine (ESJP) chapter faced extreme doxing online for their participation in ESJP, particularly from an **Emory** alum who tagged student names on LinkedIn and received support from Emory affiliates on his posting. The Emory alum called for students to be expelled and for ESJP to be disbanded altogether. Students reported the alum's behavior to Emory and, to date, they have received no assistance. Instead, students who informed a dean about the alum's behavior were told that they should be more understanding of the alum and his feelings post-October 7.



# WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

Across a range of industries and professions, employers engaged in widespread discrimination and retaliation against their employees for their statements supporting Palestinian rights or criticizing Israel made in the workplace and on social media.

The wave of politically motivated repression in the workplace has been the most severe in the country since at least the Vietnam War.<sup>36</sup>

The backlash was notable in media and publishing. *Artforum* editor-in-chief David Velasco was fired in October after the magazine published an open letter in support of Palestinian

liberation.<sup>37</sup> Also in October, *Harper's Bazaar* editor-in-chief Samira Nasr was forced to apologize and was reportedly at risk of termination for publicly criticizing Israel's move to cut power in Gaza.<sup>38</sup> Jackson Frank, a sports journalist covering the Philadelphia 76ers, was fired after expressing support for the Palestinian cause on social media.<sup>39</sup> In November, writers Jazmine Hughes and Jamie Lauren Keiles were forced out of *The New York Times* for signing a letter condemning Israel's siege on Gaza.<sup>40</sup> Media giant Hearst went as far as implementing a new social media policy in November mandating that employees get approval before posting any personal political opinions online.<sup>41</sup>

**383 REPORTS TO  
PALESTINE LEGAL  
FROM OCTOBER 7  
THROUGH DECEMBER  
INVOLVED EMPLOYMENT  
CONCERNS, INCLUDING  
124 INDIVIDUALS WHO  
HAD ALREADY BEEN  
TERMINATED FROM  
THEIR POSITIONS.**

The medical field also saw widespread suppression of political expression. Numerous physicians and medical residents reported being pulled off rotations or even fired outright for their personal social media posts supporting Palestine.

In Silicon Valley, an engineering manager was fired after ten years at Microchip Technology over his posts on Facebook expressing sympathy for Palestinians in Gaza that allegedly offended two of his co-workers.<sup>42</sup>

In Evanston, Illinois, Liam Bird, a government employee, was fired over his statements on social media supporting Palestinians and a ceasefire in Gaza.<sup>43</sup>



FOLEY AND LARDNER ENGAGED IN RACIST CENSORSHIP AGAINST AN ARAB MUSLIM WOMAN INCOMING ASSOCIATE NAMED JINAN CHEHADE. PHOTO COURTESY OF JINAN CHEHADE

In Maryland, Hajur El-Haggan, a middle school math teacher employed by Montgomery County Public Schools, was placed on administrative leave for including the phrase, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” in her email signature.<sup>44</sup>

**WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION ALSO EXTENDED TO FUTURE EMPLOYMENT, AS DOXING AND OTHER FORMS OF SUPPRESSION AGAINST STUDENT SPEECH TARGETED JOB OFFERS FOR GRADUATING PROFESSIONALS.**

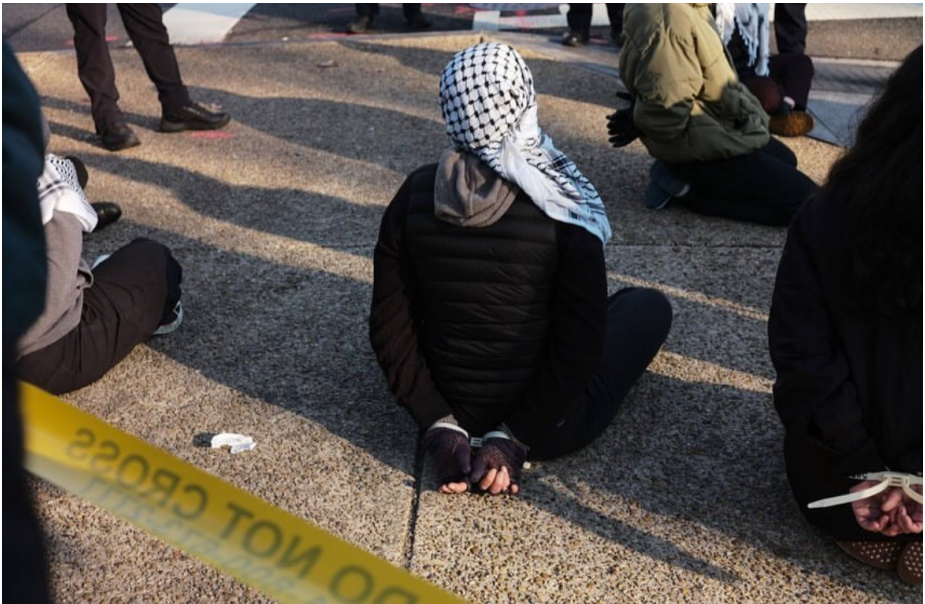
In October, a law professor at the **University of California, Berkeley**, published an article titled, “Don’t Hire My Anti-Semitic Law Students,” calling on law firms not to hire students who have expressed solidarity with Palestinians.<sup>45</sup>

**Georgetown** law graduate Jinan Chehade was fired the day before she was set to start a new job at the large Chicago law firm Foley and Lardner for her activism for Palestine.<sup>46</sup>

NYU law student Ryna Workman had a job offer revoked following a statement they made supporting Palestinians and criticizing Israel, which also led to severe harassment, doxing, and disciplinary charges by the university.<sup>47</sup>

# CRIMINALIZATION, PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, AND THREATS

PALESTINIANS AND THEIR ALLIES  
FACED INCREASED THREATS TO THEIR  
PHYSICAL SAFETY AND WELL-BEING AFTER  
OCTOBER 7 FROM THE STATE, UNIVERSITY  
ADMINISTRATIONS, AND THIRD PARTIES.



WASHINGTON, DC PROTESTER ARRESTED WITH ZIP TIES AFTER AN ACTION BLOCKING MAJOR ROADWAYS INTO THE CITY. PHOTO CREDIT: SHEDRICK PELT

# MILITARIZED RESPONSE TO PEACEFUL PROTESTS ON CAMPUS

Mirroring a militarized response to demonstrations in many cities where hundreds have been arrested and faced police brutality during peaceful demonstrations and civil disobedience actions,<sup>48</sup> many universities went beyond student conduct proceedings and bias reports to subject their own students to law enforcement abuse and criminal charges.

On October 25, hundreds of students at the **University of Massachusetts-Amherst** took part in a sit-in in an administration building, demanding that the university cut ties with weapons manufacturer RTX (formerly known as Raytheon). The university closed the building at 6 p.m. and had 56 students and one faculty member arrested. As a result of the arrests,

three students who had been registered for study abroad for the spring semester were barred from the program, costing them thousands in fees and travel expenses and forcing them to make last-minute plans to arrange for housing and to register for classes on campus. As of February 2024, most of the students had accepted a plea deal reducing the charges to an infraction and a \$100 fine, while 21 students were still fighting the charges in court.<sup>49</sup>

On October 28, **Dartmouth College** called police to end a peaceful demonstration on campus by arresting two students affiliated with the environmental justice club Sunrise. The students had participated in a days-long sit-in on campus calling on the university to take action on a list of demands, ranging from institutional support for queer students and students and faculty of color to divestment from apartheid and reparations for Indigenous communities, called the “Dartmouth New Deal.” The college sought to justify its criminalization of

its students by arguing that they were threatening violence when they wrote that if the college refuses to meet their demands, “those who believe in freedom will be forced into physical action.”<sup>50</sup> As of January 2024, the students were still fighting charges of criminal trespass.



GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS PROTESTING FOR A FREE PALESTINE.  
PHOTO CREDIT: GW SJP

On November 8, **Queens College** President Frank H. Wu sent an email to the student body condemning social media posts by the Queens College Muslim Student Association that questioned the Israeli narrative about what took place on October 7. He announced that the posts would not only be investigated by the college but that they had contacted the New York City Police Department to investigate their students over the postings.<sup>51</sup> Later that month **American University** in Washington, DC, similarly contacted the FBI to investigate the tearing down of pro-Israel posters on campus.

Also on November 8, 20 members of Jews for Ceasefire Now were arrested at **Brown University** and charged with

trespass after holding a sit-in, calling on university president Christina Paxson to support divestment from companies that enable war crimes in Gaza. Charges were dropped later that month after Palestinian Brown student Hisham Awartani was shot along with two other Palestinian students in Vermont. The university arrested another 41 students during a second sit-in calling for divestment and ceasefire on December 11.<sup>52</sup> As of February 2024, the students were still fighting criminal charges.

On November 9, 26 **University of Chicago** students and faculty were arrested by university police after conducting a peaceful sit-in inside the admissions building, asking that university administrators meet with them to discuss demands that the university divest from military contractors directly benefiting from the genocide in Gaza. Criminal charges were later dropped.<sup>53</sup>

On November 14, a Palestinian student at the

**University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC)** was followed by a university employee and arrested inside her classroom for allegedly writing "Free Palestine" messages with a permanent marker on multiple surfaces across the UIC campus. She was held in a cell on campus for hours, then transported to a police station while the university pursued felony charges, which the county attorney rejected before ultimately dismissing criminal charges.<sup>54</sup>

On November 17, 40 students at the **University of Michigan** were given citations by university police after the administration mounted an aggressive response to a sit-in sponsored by 55 student organizations. The sit-in aimed to secure a meeting with university president Santa Ono to discuss the students' demand that the university divest from companies profiting from Israel's assault on Gaza. Having called in officers from ten local law enforcement agencies, the university tried to preempt the demonstration by forcibly preventing students from entering an



administrative building that was ordinarily open to the public. Police acted aggressively toward protestors, pulling off one student's hijab and body slamming her to prevent her from entering the building.<sup>55</sup> As of February 2024, trespass charges were still pending against the students.

In November, two Black students at **Northwestern University** were criminally charged for alleged involvement in a parody of a school newspaper.<sup>56</sup> This parody newspaper accused Northwestern of being complicit in Israel's war crimes and included satirical articles criticizing Northwestern's response to the siege of Gaza. After a public campaign was launched in defense of the students to pressure the office of Northwestern's President, the charges were dropped in February 2024.<sup>57</sup>



PALESTINIAN ORGANIZER FROM THE GROUP WITHIN OUR LIFETIME, NERDEEN KISWANI, ARRESTED DURING A PROTEST IN NEW YORK CITY. PHOTO CREDIT: ASHRAF HAMIDEH



# PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AND THREATS

Meanwhile, Palestinians and allies across the country faced a torrent of threats to their physical safety, ranging from anonymous online calls for violence to physical attacks, including several that resulted in hospitalization and one that resulted in death.

In October, a 6-year-old Palestinian boy, Wadea al-Fayoume, and his mother were brutally attacked in their home in Illinois by their landlord, who targeted them because of their identity, blaming them for the war on Palestine.<sup>58</sup> Wadea was stabbed to death, while his mother recovered from her wounds.

Also in October, a 13-year-old Palestinian girl was assaulted when she, her sister, and another relative were writing “FREE GAZA” on a sand dune in Monterey, California. The assailant, former congressional candidate Max Steiner, initiated an argument, vandalized their sand message, and allegedly choked the girl as he attempted to grab or swat away her phone.<sup>59</sup> He was later charged with battery and vandalism.<sup>60</sup>

In late November, three Palestinian students who attend **Brown University, Trinity College, and Haverford College** were shot near the University of Vermont while wearing kuffiyehs and speaking Arabic, leaving one of the students paralyzed from the neck down.<sup>61</sup> Weeks earlier at **Stanford**, an Arab Muslim student was hit by a car. The driver, a student who had previously expressed hostility toward Muslims on campus, yelled, “Fuck you and your people.”<sup>62</sup>

At the **University of California, Los Angeles**, a student reported having a knife pulled on him by a Zionist protestor near campus in October.

At **UC Berkeley**, a graduate student received handwritten hate mail in an envelope containing a suspicious white powder that was eventually found to be harmless. Activists in other parts of the country also reported receiving white powder in the mail.

Instead of addressing the concerns of students who felt threatened by a “Death to Palestine” message outside a dorm at **Yale**, administrators sent a message to all students at the college affirming “academic freedom and the expression of views and dissent.”

## CENSORSHIP

In addition to employment-based repression, doxing, and other forms of intimidation, institutions directly censored expression in support of Palestinian rights and liberation. This has been most pronounced on social media and in the news media, but also extends to higher education and other institutional spaces.

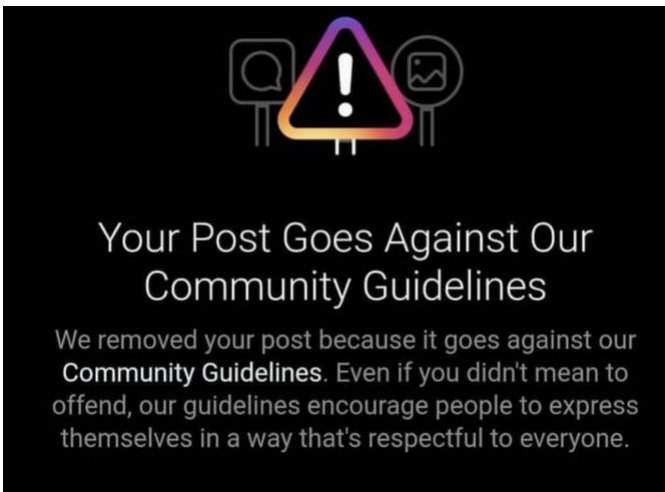
## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media posts by individuals expressing solidarity with Palestine have been silenced across the world since October 7, according to 7amleh, the Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media.<sup>63</sup> Platforms have also subjected major human rights figures and social media influencers supporting justice in Palestine to these censorship tactics.

The UN’s Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Palestine was shadow banned on X<sup>64</sup>—a method that reduces the reach of individual accounts and posts. When Toufic Braidi, a Lebanese social media influencer with over 1 million followers on Instagram, began posting stories about Gaza, his reach was slashed.<sup>65</sup>

Users experienced widespread censorship of Palestine content on Meta platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp), in what Human Rights Watch called “a systemic and global” issue in November.<sup>66</sup> Meta created automatic filters that “lowered the threshold” on the confidence level required to remove Arabic/Palestinian content from 80% to 25% before removing content being shared from Palestine.<sup>67</sup>

**WHILE PALESTINIAN CONTENT HAS BEEN SUBJECT TO EXTREME CENSORSHIP, ISLAMOPHOBIC AND HATEFUL ANTI-PALESTINIAN CONTENT HAS GONE LARGELY UNCENSORED BY META.**



According to Human Rights Watch, genocidal comments such as, “Make Gaza a parking lot,” and, “I wish Israel success in this war in which it is right, I hope it will wipe Palestine off the face of the earth and the map,” were permitted to remain on the platforms.<sup>68</sup>

Meta’s censorship of Palestine content has had explicitly racist results as well. According to the same Human Rights Watch report, “Instagram’s auto translation feature translated bios that had the word ‘Palestinian’ in Arabic, the Palestinian flag emoji, and the word ‘alhamdulillah’ (meaning praise be to God) alongside one another as ‘Palestinian terrorists.’”<sup>69</sup>

The Palestinian flag emoji was deemed by Meta as a “negative/harmful symbol” that could be automatically hidden on posts. On Meta’s WhatsApp AI, *The Guardian* reported that a feature that creates images by users’ searches will generate a “picture of a gun or a boy with a gun when prompted with the terms ‘Palestinian’, ‘Palestine’ or ‘Muslim boy Palestinian.’”<sup>70</sup>

According to 7amleh, Meta has conducted takedowns and account restrictions of Palestinian and international news outlets and journalists such as Ajjal Radio Network, 24FM, *Mondoweiss*, Palestinian Refugees Portal, and Faten Elwan and Motaz Azaiza.<sup>71</sup>

## NEWS MEDIA

Journalists employed by news outlets were subjected to censorship. MSNBC suspended three Muslim news hosts the week after October 7, and allowed them only to continue as analysts on segments. MSNBC insisted that it was for logistical reasons only, and that the journalists’ religion did not motivate the decision.<sup>72</sup>

A quantitative analysis released by *The Intercept* in January 2024 demonstrated severe censorship and asymmetrical reporting on Israel’s violence against Palestinians.<sup>73</sup> The study showed that Israelis were mentioned at “a rate 16 times more per death [than] that of Palestinians.” The report concluded that “highly emotive terms for the killing of civilians like ‘slaughter,’ ‘massacre,’ and ‘horrific’ were reserved almost exclusively for Israelis who were killed by Palestinians,” while Israel had killed over 15 times as many Palestinians in the same timeframe. The report noted that when emotive words were used to describe Palestinians, they appeared in quotations.

## EVENT CANCELATIONS

In addition to censorship online and in the media, institutions such as universities, libraries, and bookstores shut down events featuring Palestinian and anti-Zionist scholars and advocates.

In October, the President of **San Antonio Community College** attempted to shut down a teach-in for Palestine.<sup>74</sup> She ultimately postponed the teach-in and changed the name of the event, causing backlash that ultimately led to her reassignment to an administrative position.<sup>75</sup>



NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY SUSPENDED ITS SJP CHAPTER AFTER THE GROUP DISTRIBUTED MOCK EVICTION FLYERS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT ISRAELI HOME DEMOLITIONS. PHOTO CREDIT: NORTHEASTERN SJP

In November, the **University of Arkansas** canceled an event on Palestine/Israel it had asked its own history professor, Joel Gordon, to organize.

In November, only 24 hours before the event was scheduled to take place, **Barnard College** canceled a dialogue hosted by Columbia SJP between Palestinian writer and activist Mohammed El-Kurd and Professor Mahmood Mamdani. **Columbia Law School** also twice canceled events featuring Human Rights Watch's Israel and Palestine director, Omar Shakir, on Israel's system of apartheid.<sup>76</sup>

Also in November, the **University of Pennsylvania** canceled a Jewish student group's planned screening of *Israelism*, a documentary that follows the anti-Zionist evolution of a Jewish college student. New York's **Hunter College** also canceled a screening of the film.<sup>77</sup>

Journalists, artists, and activists also experienced abrupt event cancellations

because of their ties to Palestine.

Journalist Nathan Thrall and Abed Salama, the Palestinian protagonist in Thrall's new book, had five book tour events canceled, and advertisements of the book that had been approved before October 7 were pulled from NPR and the US broadcast of the BBC.<sup>78</sup>

The Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art at **Indiana University** had planned for three years to exhibit the work of Samia Halaby, a Palestinian-American abstract painter, but canceled the exhibit in December.<sup>79</sup>

The US Campaign for Palestinian Rights had its annual conference canceled by a Hilton hotel in late October after it received pressure and threats.<sup>80</sup> A Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) event in Virginia was similarly canceled by the hotel where it was set to take place "due to multiple terror threats targeting the hotel, its staff, CAIR and American Muslims."<sup>81</sup>

# PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

While they did not draw the same level of media attention as higher education campuses, K-12 schools were also sites of increased student and teacher mobilization. In Santa Ana, California, US-based educators organized workshops across the country after October 7 to support teachers in crafting lessons on Palestine and understanding the genocide in Gaza.

High school students across the country engaged in walkouts protesting US support for the genocide and to demand a ceasefire. Student-organized walkouts in California, Virginia, Massachusetts, and New York in the fall had thousands of participants collectively. In late January 2024, students from over 18 Chicago public schools held a walkout and marched to City Hall to pressure their alderpersons to vote in favor of a ceasefire resolution the following day, which passed with a tie-breaking vote from Mayor Brandon Johnson.

**THIS UNPRECEDENTED MOBILIZATION AROUND PALESTINE ALSO DREW REPRESSION: 73 OF THE REQUESTS FOR LEGAL SUPPORT PALESTINE LEGAL RECEIVED FROM OCTOBER 7 THROUGH DECEMBER WERE RELATED TO K-12 CAMPUSES.**

In October, **Lincoln Way East High School** students in Frankfurt, Illinois, were instructed to remove social media calls for humanitarian aid to Palestinians and told that Palestinian cultural and national symbols, such as the kuffiyeh, were banned. Students continued to wear kuffiyehs and immediately sought legal support. They were ultimately assured by the principal that kuffiyehs would not be banned.

In November, a student at **Corona Del Mar Middle and High School** in Newport Beach, California, was suspended for saying “Free Palestine,” which the school interpreted as a threatening remark.

In December the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) wrote to the Chancellor of **New York City Public Schools**, the largest school system in the nation, expressing concern about the bullying, harassment, and disciplinary sanctions against students who attended or organized protests in support

of Palestine.<sup>82</sup> This letter followed numerous reports of both students and educators being reprimanded for voicing support for Palestine.

The Coalition for Liberated Ethnic Studies, a network that reclaims, defends, and builds ethnic studies across the country<sup>83</sup> and has fought to include Arab Studies and Palestine in its curriculum, faced mounting attacks from Israel advocacy groups. Coalition members saw increased pressure on their partner school districts to drop their contracts.<sup>84</sup>



NEW YORK CITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SPEAKS PASSIONATELY AT A STUDENT-LED PRO-PALESTINE PROTEST. PHOTO CREDIT: IAN BARTLETT



Elsewhere, Bay Area ethnic studies teachers received threats and were placed on leave after giving lessons to high school students about the historical context of the genocide in Palestine.<sup>85</sup> Administrators then pressured teachers to submit all their ethnic studies materials for review, as well as personal electronic communications that mentioned Palestine, Israel, or ethnic studies.

## LEGISLATION

Since October 7, Palestine Legal has tracked a flurry of new federal and state level bills and resolutions targeting advocacy for Palestine. In the first ten months of 2023, prior to October 7, there were 49 such new bills and resolutions. In the last three months of the year alone, between October 7 and the end of the year, there were 33 new bills and resolutions.

Much of the legislation introduced since October 7 mimics past defunding bills, antisemitism redefinition bills, or anti-BDS bills, with some developing trends.<sup>86</sup> Anti-Palestinian racism is evident in such legislation, much of which unabashedly calls for the criminalization of and harsh measures against Palestinians and their allies.

## TARGETING PRO-PALESTINE SPEECH OR ORGANIZING

After October 7, a rush of federal legislation was introduced, attacking specific instances of pro-Palestine speech or organizing, mainly in the form of non-binding resolutions.

H.R. 775 was introduced to denounce the New York City Democratic Socialists of America for hosting a pro-Palestine rally.<sup>87</sup> H.R. 849 was introduced to condemn the common pro-Palestine phrase, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” as “an expression of support for genocide, murder, and ethnic cleansing.”<sup>88</sup>

Another resolution, H.R. 418, was introduced to condemn specific quotes from student organizations at various universities, and to condemn a law student who was fired from their job after a doxing campaign targeted them for their support for Palestine.<sup>89</sup> Such attacks also targeted elected officials: H.R. 772 was introduced to censure Rep. Rashida Tlaib, the only Palestinian member of congress, for her statements in support of Palestine.<sup>90</sup>

## EQUATING PALESTINE ORGANIZING TO TERRORISM

In a February 2024 report, *Anti-Palestinian at the Core*, Palestine Legal and the Center for Constitutional Rights exposed how Israel and its allies have exploited anti-Palestinian racism, peaking during periods of upheaval in Palestine, to shape US federal anti-terrorism law from its origins.<sup>91</sup> Many of the federal bills and resolutions introduced after October 7 affirmed this trend, equating popular forms of pro-Palestine organizing with terrorism, including referring to Students for Justice in Palestine chapters as “pro-Hamas student groups.” This reflects a dangerous escalation in efforts to criminalize Palestine advocacy, broadly sweeping up what should be First Amendment protected speech, and is likely to have far-reaching implications.

Evoking the McCarthy-era purging of purported communists, H.R. 6250 was introduced in November.<sup>92</sup> It would require



the heads of certain federal agencies to report to Congress any employee with “ties to Hamas” or who “display[s] support for Hamas.” According to the bill, “any posts by a covered agency employee on social media in support of Hamas or in support of actions taken by Hamas” are considered “reportable ties to Hamas.”

H.R. 6419 was also introduced in November.<sup>93</sup> The draconian bill aims to suppress pro-Palestine activism on campuses, equating it to antisemitism and to terrorism. If passed, the bill would require institutions of higher education to report “actual or perceived incidents of anti-Semitism” and “the institution’s subsequent actions taken in response to each such incident.” The bill relies on the distorted International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism that targets advocacy for Palestinian rights.<sup>94</sup>

The bill requires institutions that receive federal funds to “identify applicants for faculty and staff positions, and student



PALESTINE SOLIDARITY RALLY BLOCKING THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE. PHOTO CREDIT: AL JAZEERA

applicants” who have engaged in “terrorist activity,” which is defined broadly. It also prohibits institutions of higher education from using funds for any “institution activity that urges support for, endorses, espouses, encourages, organizes for, or promotes a foreign terrorist organization or its terrorist activities.”

Introduced in December, H.R. 6408 would terminate the tax-exempt status of “terrorist supporting organizations,” even though US law already prohibits charitable organizations from providing material support for terrorism.<sup>95</sup> As noted by the Foundation for Middle East Peace, this bill is likely intended to strip the nonprofit status of pro-Palestine organizations.<sup>96</sup>

## **BILLS THAT TARGET PALESTINIAN AND OTHER IMMIGRANTS**

A number of federal bills were also introduced after October 7 that target Palestinian immigrants or immigrants who advocate for Palestine, though none of them have advanced through the legislative process as of May 2024.

H.R. 6211 would prohibit the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Secretary of State from approving any application for or issuing a nonimmigrant or immigrant visa to nationals of Palestine.<sup>97</sup>

H.R. 796 calls on the President of the United States to revoke visas and initiate deportation proceedings for any foreign national who participated in pro-Palestine protests, described as, “violent, anti-Semitic, pro-Hamas riots in the streets of South Florida, Washington, DC, New York City, Pittsburgh, Portland, Los Angeles, and other cities.”<sup>98</sup>

H.R. 6200 states that individuals endorsing or espousing “terrorist activities” conducted by “ Hamas, Hezbollah, Al-Qaeda, Palestine Islamic Jihad, and ISIS” are considered, under immigration laws, to be “engaged in terrorist activity.”<sup>99</sup>

## AFFIRMATIVE LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Despite these worrisome trends, there have also been legislative initiatives to defend Palestinians and their allies. In addition to about 70 ceasefire resolutions (as of January 2024) in cities and towns across the country,<sup>100</sup> there have been efforts to push positive legislation in the US Congress and state legislatures as well.

In December, H.R. 942 was introduced to honor Wadea al-Fayoume, the 6-year-old Palestinian boy stabbed to death in Illinois, and to condemn anti-Palestinian hate crimes and discrimination.<sup>101</sup>

Another resolution in Florida, FL HR 31-C, called for an immediate de-escalation and ceasefire and demanded the Biden administration promptly send and facilitate the entry of humanitarian assistance into Gaza, though it was ultimately voted down.<sup>102</sup>

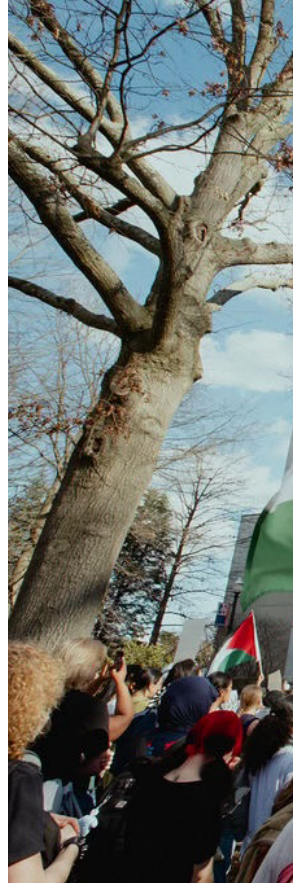
In Minnesota, a bill, MN SF3365, was introduced that would repeal Minnesota’s anti-boycott law (MN Statutes 3.226 and 16C.053), which prohibits the state legislature and state agencies from contracting with vendors that discriminate against Israel or persons or entities doing business in Israel.<sup>103</sup>

# CONCLUSION

The last three months of 2023 witnessed a harrowing level of attacks on Palestine advocacy at a time when it was most needed to stop an unfolding genocide. Palestine Legal documented an exponential increase in reports of anti-Palestinian discrimination and repression of speech and advocacy for Palestinian rights, and a high volume of reports have continued well into 2024.

This period has placed in stark relief the way that such attacks serve, first and foremost, Israel and its allies' interests in shutting down exposure and criticism of its actions and preserving US military and diplomatic support. It also made crystal clear that no amount of repression, censorship, McCarthyite purging, and even violent assaults can stop a movement intent on making visible a situation of extreme oppression that the US government and media purposefully keep from full view, and on shifting the status quo that enables it.

The courage, resilience, and determination of people standing up for Palestinian rights appears contagious, as more and more people join an unflagging movement driven by hope for a just, free, and peaceful future in Palestine. As we have learned from previous freedom movements, it is our role to ensure that such hope is sustained, even in the face of the most draconian and repressive of strategies.





AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HOLD A PROTEST IN RESPONSE TO THE UNIVERSITY PLACING SJP ON PROBATION. PHOTO CREDIT: AU SJP



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