

115 Organizations Urge Rejection of UC Ethnic Studies Council Proposal Following Condoning of Terrorism

SENT VIA EMAIL

October 25, 2023

Dear University of California Board of Regents, President Drake, and UC Chancellors,

We are 115 education, civil rights and religious organizations. Many of our groups [alerted](#) you last month to serious concerns about a UC ethnic studies admissions requirement proposal being vigorously promoted by the UC Ethnic Studies Faculty Council, which, if approved, would lead to virtually every high school in the state being forced to offer ethnic studies courses based on criteria developed by the Faculty Council's "experts." We pointed out how deeply alarming this prospect is, given the Faculty Council's role in helping to organize, sponsor and support an institute and [conference](#) expressly [dedicated](#) to delegitimizing Zionism and working towards the elimination of the Jewish state, as well as the Faculty Council's [contention](#) that anti-Zionism should be one of the "animating commitments" of high school ethnic studies courses.

We are writing to you now to underscore the urgency of our concerns in light of Hamas' recent terrorist attack on Israeli civilians and the appalling [letter](#) that was sent to you last week by the UC Ethnic Studies Faculty Council. In their letter, the Faculty Council vilifies you for condemning Hamas' slaughter of Israeli civilians and demands that UC's administrative leadership "retract its charges of terrorism."

Let us be clear: it is possible to condemn the massacre of Jews by Hamas and express empathy for Palestinians in Gaza, as over 300 UC Berkeley faculty members recently [demonstrated](#). However, in the wake of the largest mass murder, mutilation, rape, and kidnapping of Jews since the Holocaust - atrocities characterized by [President Biden](#) and [Governor Newsom](#) as "terrorism," "pure evil," and "crimes against humanity" - the UC Ethnic Studies Faculty Council refuses to even acknowledge, let alone condemn, the genocidal actions of Hamas. Instead, in a grotesque display of moral inversion, the Faculty Council insists that the heinous crimes of Hamas, whose founding [charter](#) explicitly calls for the obliteration of Israel and the ethnic cleansing and murder of Jews, must not be called terrorism. At the same time, the Faculty Council outrageously and falsely accuses Israel of "genocide," "ethnic cleansing," and "terrorism."

The Faculty Council also condemns UC leaders for their public [opposition](#) to the antisemitic Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement and argues that BDS "should be

celebrated," not opposed. It's crucial to understand that the BDS founders have openly [articulated](#) their Hamas-aligned goal of destroying the Jewish state, and, according to the [New York Times](#), "terrorist organizations, including Hamas," are part of the BDS National Committee, which coordinates the movement globally, including on U.S. campuses. In addition, in response to the Hamas massacre of over 1,400 Israelis on October 7th, the BDS movement posted a [statement](#) urging "meaningful support to the Palestinian Armed Resistance" and referring to the terrorists responsible as "heroic." The Faculty Council's celebration of BDS is hardly surprising. Many of the 300 ethnic studies faculty represented by the Faculty Council, including the group's co-chairs, support and have committed to bringing onto their campuses an academic boycott of Israel -- the academic arm of BDS -- whose mission is to provide intellectual justification for the Jewish state's elimination.

The Faculty Council's letter provides a dramatic demonstration of our urgent concerns. The fact that the Faculty Council defends the inhumane atrocities of a terrorist organization committed to the annihilation of the Jewish state, and has publicly aligned UC ethnic studies departments and faculty with Hamas' genocidal goals, is not simply morally depraved. It presents a clear and present danger for Jewish students in UC classrooms and beyond. One only need note the inflamed university and high school campus climate to realize how a toxic curriculum that vilifies the Jewish state and its supporters and condones their murder will further incite antisemitism. For example, last Thursday students at Balboa High School in San Francisco walked out of their classes and [stormed](#) through the hallway chanting, "From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free," a slogan which the ADL [recognizes](#) as a call for dismantling the Jewish state.

UC faculty who cannot acknowledge that the Hamas massacre is terrorism and a crime against humanity, and who state that anti-Zionism and the elimination of the Jewish state is a core value of their discipline, must not be trusted to establish state-wide ethnic studies standards for California students.

The UC Ethnic Studies Faculty Council's disastrous admissions requirement proposal must be immediately rejected.

Sincerely,

A Time to Stand
Academic Council for Israel
Academic Engagement Network
Alliance for Constructive Ethnic Studies
Alliance of Blacks and Jews
Alums for Campus Fairness - National
Alums for Campus Fairness - Tufts
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Davis
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Riverside

AMCHA Initiative
America Israel Cooperative Enterprise
American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists
American Council of Trustees and Alumni
American Jewish Congress
American Russian-Speaking Jews Alliance
American Values
Americans Against Antisemitism
Americans Fighting Antisemitism
Americans for a Safe Israel
Americans for Peace and Tolerance
Association of Jewish Psychologists
Atlanta Israel Coalition
B'nai B'rith International
Bears for Israel (UC Berkeley)
Beverly Hills Synagogue
Bipartisan Action Against Antisemitism (BIPAC)
Boston Israel Action Committee
California Association of Scholars
Californians for Equal Rights
CAMERA Education Institute
CAMERA on Campus
CAMERA's Partnership of Christians and Jews
Campus Anti-Semitism Task Force of the North Shore
Christians and Jews United for Israel
Club Z
Coalition for Jewish Values
Coalition of Hindus of North America
Combat Anti-Semitism Movement
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA)
Community Shul of Montecito and Santa Barbara
Creative Community for Peace
CUFI on Campus
Davis Faculty for Israel
Eagles Wings
Education Without Indoctrination
Educators Caucus for Israel (UTLA)
EndJewHatred
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)
FAIR Education Santa Barbara
Fight Back Now
Fuel for Truth
Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors

Hillel at Davis and Sacramento
Hillel of San Diego
Hillel of Silicon Valley
Inland and Desert Hillel
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel
Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism
Iranian American Jewish Federation
Iranian Jewish Women's Organization
Israel Committee of Santa Barbara
Israel in NYC
Israel Matters
Israel Peace Initiative (IPI)
Israeli-American Civic Action Network
Israeli-American Civic Education Institute
Ithaca Area United Jewish Community
JAM
Jerusalem Education Fund
Jewish American Affairs Committee of Indiana
Jewish Institute for Liberal Values
Jewish TV Channel
Jewish War Veterans of the USA
Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA)
LatinX for Quality Education
Legal Insurrection Foundation
Lopez Liberty LLC
Middle East Forum
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)
National Association of Scholars
National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel
National Jewish Advocacy Center
NH4Israel
North Carolina Coalition for Israel
Parents Defending Education
PeerK12
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations
Rabbinical Alliance of America
Rhode Island Coalition for Israel
Russian Jewish Community Foundation
S.A.F.E Campus
Santa Barbara Hillel
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East
Simon Wiesenthal Center
StandWithUs
StandWithUs Center for Combating Antisemitism

StandWithUs Saidoff Legal Department
Stop Anti-Semitism Now
Stop BDS on Campus
StopAntisemitism
Students Supporting Israel at UC Santa Barbara
Students Supporting Israel National
Students Supporting Israel of Santa Monica College
Swarthmore Alumni Against Antisemitism on Campus
The Daniel Pearl Foundation
The Deborah Project
The Israel Christian Nexus
The Lawfare Project
World Jewish Congress North America
Young Israel of Century City
Young Israel of Orange County
Zachor Legal Institute
Zion Academy of Music and Arts
Zionist Organization of America

CC: Chair of UC Academic Senate James Steintrager
Vice Chair of UC Academic Senate Steven Cheung
Chair of UC Board of Admissions & Relations with Schools (BOARS) Barbara Knowlton
Governor of California Gavin Newsom
California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond