

## San Diego State University Senate Resolution Condemning anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim Racism

**Whereas**, there has been a sharp [increase in anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim racism](#)<sup>1</sup> globally in recent months, reaching unprecedented levels;

**Whereas**, this increase has manifested in violent and even deadly assaults, including, but not limited to: the murder of 6 year old Palestinian American [Wadea Al Fayoume](#)<sup>2</sup>, who was stabbed along with his mother by their landlord; the [shooting of Palestinian American university students](#)<sup>3</sup> Hisham Awartani, Kinnan Abdalhamid, and Tahseen Ahmed when they were on fall break; the stabbing of [Palestinian American Zacharia Doar](#)<sup>4</sup>, who was targeted when returning from a pro-Palestinian protest; and the hit-and-run targeted assault of an [Arab Muslim student at Stanford who was hospitalized](#)<sup>5</sup> after being struck by a car;

**Whereas**, a [recent report](#) by a research institute at UC Berkeley found that more than two-thirds of US Muslims report having experienced Islamophobia in their lifetime,<sup>6</sup> that women are disproportionately impacted, and that 93.7 percent of respondents reported that Islamophobia affects their emotional and mental well-being, creating active barriers to belonging;

**Whereas**, [anti-Muslim racism \(also known as “Islamophobia”\) is a form of racism](#)<sup>7</sup> resulting from structural inequality and violence that systematically disadvantages and/or targets Muslims, and anyone perceived to be Muslim; which, during the Global War on Terror, has included anyone perceived to be Muslim and has therefore also impacted non-Muslim Arab, Iranian, Sikh, and many people with ancestry in Southwest Asia and North African (SWANA) and South Asia more generally;

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<sup>1</sup> Indlieb Farazi Saber, “‘Seen as Less Human’: Why Has Islamophobia Surged During Israel’s Gaza War?” *Al Jazeera*, Dec 21, 2023.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/21/seen-as-less-human-why-has-islamophobia-surged-amid-israels-gaza-war>

<sup>2</sup> Yan, Holly, et al. “A 6-year Old Palestinian-American Was Stabbed 26 Times for Being Muslim, Police Say.” *CNN*, October 16, 2023.

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/16/us/chicago-muslim-boy-stabbing-investigation/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> Gabbatt, Adam, “Young, Bright, Palestinian: The Three Friends Shot in Vermont.” *The Guardian*. December 2, 2023.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/dec/02/vermont-palestinians-students-three-friends-shot>

<sup>4</sup> Oladipo, Gloria. “Stabbing of Palestinian American in Texas a Hate Crime, Police Say” *The Guardian*. February 8, 2024.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/feb/08/texas-palestinian-american-stabbing-hate-crime>

<sup>5</sup> Truong, Debbie, “Authorities Investigating Hit and Run at Stanford as Hate Crime.” *Los Angeles Times*, November 5, 2023..

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2023-11-05/authorities-investigating-hit-and-run-at-stanford-as-hate-crime>

<sup>6</sup> *Islamophobia through the Eyes of Muslims, The Othering & Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley*, September 29, 2021, <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/survey-women-bear-brunt-islamophobia>

<sup>7</sup> #IslamophobiaIsRacism Syllabus: Resource for Teaching & Learning about anti-Muslim Racism in the United States. Prepared by: Su’ad Abdul Khabeer, Arshad Ali, Evelyn Alsultany, Sohail Daulatzai, Lara Deeb, Carol Fadda, Zareena Grewal, Juliane Hammer, Nadine Naber, and Junaid Rana.

<https://islamophobia.isracism.wordpress.com/>

**Whereas**, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has [proposed a new MENA \(Middle Eastern and North African\) category](#)<sup>8</sup> for the US census in explicit recognition of the structural impact of racism on SWANA communities in the US;

**Whereas**, anti-SWANA and anti-Muslim racism manifests itself in various forms including hate crimes, hate incidents, anti-Sharia legislation, [anti-Muslim federal policies](#)<sup>9</sup>, [surveillance programs](#)<sup>10</sup>, negative media representation, and even an [unrealized governmental plan to intern “Middle Eastern Americans”](#)<sup>11</sup>, all of which often translate to exclusion and increased violence, including for Palestinian, SWANA, and Muslim college students;

**Whereas**, false and demonizing [stereotypes that characterize all Arabs and Muslims as terrorists](#)<sup>12</sup> cause harm and have material impacts, and they have a long and troubling history, which is currently resurging in the US;

**Whereas**, a recent report by the Council on American Islamic Relations found that nearly 40% of Muslim college students surveyed in California experienced harassment or discrimination based on their religious identity by peers, campus administrators, and/or campus personnel and nearly 30% of Muslim students surveyed reported harassment or discrimination due to their advocacy on issues related to their Muslim identity,<sup>13</sup>

**Whereas**, college campuses are currently experiencing high levels of anti-Palestinian racism, which specifically seek to [silence, erase, dehumanize, and defame Palestinians and their allies who publicly advocate for Palestinian human rights](#)<sup>14</sup>; and which specifically slanders Palestinians and their allies [as being inherently antisemitic, a terrorist threat/sympathizer or opposed to democratic values](#)<sup>15</sup>;

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<sup>8</sup> Kai-Hwa Wang, Frances. “Why Arab Americans Are Pushing for a ‘Middle East or North African’ Category on the Census.” *PBS NewsHour*. April 28, 2023.  
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/why-arab-americans-are-pushing-for-a-middle-east-or-north-african-category-on-the-census>

<sup>9</sup> Cainkar, Louise. “For Yemenis Fleeing War, the US Muslim Ban Means a High Price and a Dangerous Wait.” *Religion and Politics*, October 15, 2019.  
<https://religionandpolitics.org/2019/10/15/for-refugees-from-yemen-the-u-s-muslim-ban-means-a-high-price-and-dangerous-wait/>

<sup>10</sup> National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), *ACLU*.  
<https://www.aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights/immigrants-rights-and-detention/national-security-entry-exit-registration>

<sup>11</sup> Wofford, Ben. “The Forgotten Government Plan to Round Up Muslims.” *Politico Magazine*, August 19, 2016.  
<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/08/secret-plans-detention-internment-camps-1980s-deportation-arab-muslim-immigrants-214177/>

<sup>12</sup> “Struggling Against Stereotypes.” The Pluralism Project. Harvard University.  
<https://pluralism.org/struggling-against-stereotypes>

<sup>13</sup> *Campus Climate Report 2019-2020*, **Council on American Islamic Relations-California**,  
[https://static.ca.cair.com/reports/?\\_ga=2.82283038.90445947.1643143222-1146974195.1635878021](https://static.ca.cair.com/reports/?_ga=2.82283038.90445947.1643143222-1146974195.1635878021)

<sup>14</sup> “Understanding Anti-Palestinian Racism” <https://www.antipalestinianracism.com/>

<sup>15</sup> “Anti-Palestinian Racism.” *Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East*.  
[https://www.cjpme.org/fs\\_227](https://www.cjpme.org/fs_227)

**Whereas**, San Diego State University has experienced a rise in anti-Palestinian, anti-SWANA, and anti-Muslim hate incidents, harassment, and discrimination including: an assault of a student who was targeted for wearing a hijab; harassment of students for wearing a kuffiyeh; doxing, including death threats, of student organization members on their social media account for posting content in support of Palestine; harassment from staff and faculty members targeting Muslim and Palestinian students; and targeting students for holding the Palestinian flag;

**Whereas**, San Diego State University is aware of the past events of attacks on students, including the posting of information such as addresses and images of students belonging to student organizations;

**Whereas**, many of SDSU's Muslim and SWANA faculty, staff, and students have expressed that they do not feel protected, included, and valued on this campus due to the rise in anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, anti-SWANA, and anti-Muslim racism locally, nationally, and globally;

**Whereas**, it was made public in January 2024 that SDSU is under investigation by the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights based on a received complaint of Islamophobia<sup>16</sup>;

**Whereas** students, staff, and faculty nationwide and globally are experiencing dangerous levels of [harassment](#)<sup>17</sup> and [suppression](#)<sup>18</sup> of their right to free speech as shown by the fact that a coalition of more than 500 organizations and law offices have issued an [Open Letter](#)<sup>19</sup> calling for support of SWANA and Muslim people, given the overwhelming amount of requests they are receiving from people facing racist attacks due to their advocacy for Palestine and/or their perceived relationship to Palestine;

**Be it resolved**, that the SDSU University Senate explicitly condemns Islamophobia both in itself and as contradictory to the University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion mission, which rejects all forms of discrimination and exclusion based on identity;

**Be it resolved**, that, consistent with SDSU's resolve to "embed diversity and inclusion in everything that we do,"<sup>20</sup> the SDSU University Senate endeavors to recognize discrimination

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<sup>16</sup> Knott, Katherine. "UVA, San Diego State Under U.S. Investigation for Alleged Bias." *Inside Higher Ed*. January 2, 2024. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2024/01/02/uva-san-diego-state-under-us-investigation-alleged-bias>

<sup>17</sup> Hill, J. Sellers and Nia L. Orakwue, "As Students Face Retaliation for Israel Statement, a 'Doxxing Truck' Displaying Students' Faces Comes to Harvard's Campus." *The Harvard Crimson*. October 12, 2023. <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2023/10/12/doxing-truck-students-israel-statement/>

<sup>18</sup> Kane, Alex. "A 'McCarthyite Backlash' Against Pro-Palestine Speech." *Jewish Currents*. October 20, 2023. <https://jewishcurrents.org/a-mccarthyite-backlash-against-pro-palestine-speech>

<sup>19</sup> "Legal Community Call to Protect Palestine Advocates." *Palestine Legal*. October 19, 2023. <https://palestinelegal.org/legal-community-letter#sign-ons>

<sup>20</sup> San Diego State University's Strategic Plan. (2020). San Diego State University: <https://www.sdsu.edu/strategicplan/pdfs/sdsu-strategic-plan-2020-2025-report-082620.pdf>

against Arab, SWANA, Palestinian, and Muslim students and work toward achieving equity for these students;

**Be it resolved**, that the SDSU University Senate condemns all forms of anti-Palestinian, anti-SWANA, and anti-Muslim racism that have occurred at SDSU, including incidents of discrimination and harassment committed by SDSU students, faculty, staff and community members;

**Be it resolved**, that the SDSU University Senate condemns anti-SWANA and anti-Muslim incidents and threat of violence perpetrated by people unaffiliated with SDSU against all SDSU faculty, students, and staff;

**Be it resolved**, that the SDSU University Senate endorses the protection of academic freedom and therefore rejects the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, which has been [widely condemned](#)<sup>21</sup> for conflating anti-Zionism with antisemitism, including by one of the original drafters [Kenneth Stern](#),<sup>22</sup> who has [gone on record](#)<sup>23</sup> about the potential of such a conflation to [threaten academic freedom](#).<sup>24</sup>

**Be it resolved**, that the SDSU University Senate endorses training for SDSU faculty, students, and staff about the prevalence and history of anti-Palestinian, anti-SWANA, and anti-Muslim racism, to help foster a better understanding of Islam, of US-Muslim identities, and of the forms of discrimination and harassment that confront Arab, Palestinian, SWANA, and Muslim students;

**Be it resolved**, that the SDSU University Senate endorses the establishment of a Muslim Life Coordinator position to improve outcomes related to Muslim students' success and belonging from orientation to graduation. This position will also develop partnerships with local Muslim organizations to positively impact Muslim student life on campus.

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<sup>21</sup> "Quick Facts: The IHRA Working Definition of Anti-Semitism." *Institute for Middle East Understanding*, February 3, 2021. <https://imeu.org/article/4903>

<sup>22</sup> Stern, Kenneth. "I drafted the definition of antisemitism. Rightwing Jews are weaponizing it." *The Guardian*, December 13, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/13/antisemitism-executive-order-trump-chilling-effect>

<sup>23</sup> Stern, Kenneth S. "Will Campus Criticism of Israel Violate Federal Law?" *The New York Times*, December 12, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/12/opinion/will-campus-criticism-of-israel-violate-federal-law.html>

<sup>24</sup> "Coalition Letter to Dept. of Education: Reject IHRA Definition That is Causing Severe Anti-Palestinian Racism." *Palestine Legal*, January 17, 2024. <https://palestinelegal.org/news/reject-ihra-2024>

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