



In the streets and social networks: the organizations that support Hamas and lead the anti-Israel demonstrations in the United States
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Overview¹

- ▶ Since the beginning of Operation Iron Swords on October 7, 2023, pro-Palestinian demonstrations and rallies have been held throughout the United States on the streets of major cities, on the campuses of academic institutions and in public venues. The demonstrations are organized by groups which for years have been identified as pro-Palestinian, anti-Semitic, opposed to Zionism and participants in the participate in campaigns of The BDS² Movement against the State of Israel.
- ▶ The groups behind the protests expressed unashamed support for Hamas' October 7 invasion and terrorist rampage and defined it as "legitimate resistance." That was regardless of the fact that Hamas has been designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the American government and prison sentences can be imposed for providing material assistance or resources, and economic sanctions can be imposed on those who maintain financial relations with Hamas.³
- ▶ This report focuses on the most important, prominent organizations which have been leading the pro-Palestinian protest events in the United States since the beginning of the war: Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), Within Our Lifetime (WOL), Decolonize This Place, the Arab-American Committee Against Discrimination, the Palestinian Youth Movement and Jewish Voice for Peace. However, dozens of other organizations and movements also participate in the demonstrations, both in initiating and organizing them as well as providing sponsorship and support (ANSWER coalition website, before a demonstration held in Washington, DC, on November 4, 2023).
- ▶ The support for the Palestinians many of the organizations mentioned in this report as well other participating organizations is based on a progressive, anti-establishment perception

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

² Boycott, Divestment and Sanction

³ For further information, see the November 23 ITIC report, "[International activity against Hamas since the outbreak of Operation Iron Swords.](#)"

of the American extreme left promoting the "liberation of oppressed peoples," both within the United States (such as Blacks and Native Americans) and around the world (Time, October 14, 2023).

►Several universities closed chapters of groups expressing support for Hamas and anti-Semitic positions, and harassing students who support the State of Israel. However, pro-Hamas propaganda, including the use of visual features from the terrorist attack in the Gaza Strip, is still published without interruption on the organizations' social network channels under First Amendment protection.

The Organizations

Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP)

►Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) is a network of pro-Palestinian student associations operating in academic institutions across the United States and Canada (SJP website, undated).

►SJP maintains organizational ambiguity to allow its members freedom of action. While a national steering committee does exist, the details of its members are not made public. The organization claims it does not have an orderly, hierarchical structure and its chapters operate autonomously, while the steering committee only provides advice. In addition, the group was not registered as a non-profit organization and did not fill out tax reports that would require it to disclose its funding sources (The New York Times, November 17, 2023).

►The organization's mission statement is "to develop a connected, disciplined movement that is equipped with the tools necessary to contribute to the fight for Palestinian liberation" (SJP website, undated).

►SJP activists issued a statement calling for the elimination of the State of Israel and violent resistance against Israel with unequivocal support for terrorism. At an event held at Wayne State University in Detroit in April 2018, spokeswoman Julia Qassem stated that resistance to the occupation by any necessary means was not violence and all necessary means also included armed resistance [i.e., terrorism] (WSU Students for Justice in Palestine Facebook page, April 17, 2018). On August 28, 2023, the organization commemorated the life and legacy of Abu Ali Mustafa, the leader and visionary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) on the 22nd anniversary of his assassination by Israel (SJP Instagram page, August 28, 2023).

►The activity of the Students for Justice in Palestine's chapter focused mainly on demonstrations of support for the Palestinians during the IDF operations against terrorism in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, campaigns for an academic and financial boycott against Israel as part of the BDS Movement, disruption of events on campuses which included the participation of Israeli speakers or supporters of Israel, and harassment of Jewish associations and Zionism on campuses (Haaretz, November 19, 2023).



Notice issued Students for Justice in Palestine chapter at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York (the chapter Instagram account, October 8, 2023)

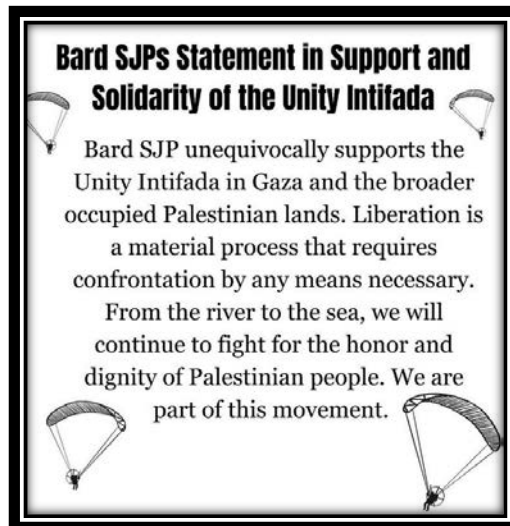
►SJP's umbrella organization called Hamas' October 7 barbaric massacre a historic victory for the Palestinian resistance and stated that it should be the meaning of a freeing Palestine, not just slogans and rallies, but armed confrontation with the oppressors (The Seattle Times, October 18, 2023).

►The SJP chapters themselves also expressed support and did not hide their support for the Hamas massacre:

- ◆ The chapter at Swarthmore College in Delaware praised Hamas, calling it a "resistance movement," declaring that the students sanctified the right of the Palestinian people to "resist" the "Zionist regime" by all necessary means and honor the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for freedom (Delaware Valley Journal, October 11, 2023).

- ◆ The SJP chapter at the City University of New York School of Law stated that if a person supported "Palestine" he had to understand the need to support it right to "defend itself" and liberate the "homeland" by any means necessary" (The Hill, October 14, 2023).

- ◆ The day after the terrorist attack, the SJP chapter at the University of Virginia announced that in an act of "heroism" unprecedented for the 21st century, the "resistance fighters [terrorist operatives] in Gaza breached the illegitimate border fence, took occupation soldiers hostage and took control of several Jewish 'settlements,' [Israeli cities, towns and kibbutzim in Israeli territory near the Israel-Gaza border] illegal under international law," adding that the events that took place the previous day were a step towards a free "Palestine" (Instagram page of the SJP chapter at the University of Virginia, October 8, 2023).
- ▶ SJP activists used illustrations of paragliders in their ads about the war, inspired by those used by Hamas terrorists during the raid on the Nova Music Festival and the Israeli cities, towns and kibbutzim surrounding Gaza on the morning of October 7 (Anti-Defamation League, October 19, 2023).



**A statement from SJP's chapter at Bard College in Dutchess County, New York
(Anti-Defamation League, October 19, 2023)**

- ▶ Since the beginning of the war, SJP chapters have been disrupting studies on campuses and holding protest demonstrations and days of "action and resistance" in colleges, in cities across the US and in front of Israeli diplomatic missions and companies that deal with security assistance to Israel, demanding an immediate cease fire, an end to all American aid to the "Zionist entity" and lifting the "siege" on Gaza, while accusing Israel of "genocide" in the Gaza Strip (SJP's Instagram account, November 2, 2023).



**SJP demonstration at Kent State University, Ohio
(from the chapter's Facebook account, October 18, 2023)**

- ▶The SJP steering committee published a toolkit for activists which explained how to organize a demonstration and offered alternative ways to protest, such as distributing flyers on campuses, writing messages of support and solidarity, or holding teach-ins to "make sure that people on campus know what is happening in Palestine and will be armed with a framework which advances national liberation [sic]" (Day Of Resistance Toolkit, October 12, 2023).
- ▶The toolkit offers a "framing" of the message, which among other things emphasizes a "narrative which centers the legitimacy of resistance and the necessity of complete liberation " and declares that "Palestine will be free from the river to the sea, and our resistance, through their courage and love of the land, will continue to bring honor to the Palestinian people." Other messages are "Resistance comes in all forms, armed struggle, general strikes and popular demonstrations. All are legitimate and necessary" (Day of Resistance Toolkit).
- ▶In view of the organization's positions and its stated support for the Hamas movement and the October 7th terrorist attack, several academic institutions in the US have taken steps against Students for Justice in Palestine:
 - ◆ On November 15, 2023, the activities of the SJP chapter at George Washington University in Washington, DC, were suspended after members of the chapter projected messages on the library building, including the slogans "Respect our [sic] martyrs" and "Let Palestine be free from the river to the sea." The university administration determined the slogans were anti-Semitic and a violation of the university's protocol (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 15, 2023).
 - ◆ On November 10, 2023, Columbia University in New York City announced that the local SJP chapter and the Jewish Voice for Peace student organization would be

officially suspended until the end of the fall semester, would not be able to hold events on campus and would not receive funding from the university. Gerald Rosberg, senior executive vice president of the Columbia University and chair of the special committee on campus safety, noted that the decision was made after the two organizations held an unsanctioned event that included "threatening rhetoric and harassment" (Forward, November 10, 2023).

◆ On November 6, 2023, Brandeis University in Massachusetts announced that since the SJP national body called on its chapters to carry out activities that supported Hamas and for the violent destruction of Israel and the Jewish people, it absolutely prohibited the local chapter from operating on campus or using the name of the university, and it was stopping its funding; students who engaged in activities supporting Hamas would be considered as violating the university's code of conduct (Jewish Insider, November 6, 2023).

◆ On October 24, 2023, the state government of Florida instructed all public universities to dismantle their SJP chapters after determining that the toolkit published by the organization's national body violated the state anti-terrorism law. However, the instructions was not followed, because the commissioner of the Florida public university system stated that the chapters in Florida were not subject to the national body and therefore there might be legal consequences for closing them (National Review, November 15, 2023).

Within Our Lifetime (WOL)

► Within Our Lifetime defines itself as a "Palestinian-led community organization that has been building the movement for Palestine in NYC since 2015" (WOL website, undated). Its stated goal is to promote the right of return of the Palestinian refugees "to their homeland in all of 'historic Palestine'⁴ from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea." It is absolutely opposed to Zionism, which it calls "a settler-colonial racist ideology of white supremacy built on genocide and dispossession of the Palestinian people." It fully supports "for the right of the Palestinians as a people under occupation to oppose the 'Zionist occupation' by all necessary means," and it opposes "the violence of the American empire at home and

⁴ A non-existent concept.

abroad," in solidarity "with all the national liberation struggles around the world that oppose American imperialism" (WOL website, undated).

►WOL's founder and leader is Nerdeen Kiswani, who was a law student at the City University of New York and served as president of the local SJP chapter. She espoused anti-Semitic and anti-Israel positions in posts on social media and in public statements and expressed support for terrorists such as Laila Khaled of the PFLP, who hijacked a plane on its way to Israel in September 1970 (Jerusalem Post, December 23, 2020). In March 2017 she wrote on Instagram that "Israel must disappear;" At a rally in July 2021 she declared that "I hope that pop-pop will be the last noise some Zionists hear in their lifetime" (Canary Mission, November 20, 2023).

►WOL promoted anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist campaigns as part of the BDS Movement while encouraging the activists to use violent tactics. In the summer of 2021, the organization launched a "globalize the intifada" campaign, stating that the call for an intifada was "rooted in direct action and driven by the belief that all colonized and oppressed people have the right to take back their land, to realize self-determination, and to win their liberation by any means necessary." (WOL website, July 30, 2021). The campaign also included a map with the addresses of ten Jewish and Zionist organizations and foundations in New York as targets for protest (JNS, March 31, 2022).

►**WOL and its members expressed complete support for Hamas' terrorist attack and massacre on October 7.** Its announcement stated that "supporting Palestinian elections is supporting any means necessary to get there... by all means necessary. No exceptions and no fine print" (WOL Instagram account, October 7, 2023).

►Kiswani wrote on her Instagram account that "freedom has always been achieved only through resistance." "If you support Palestine, you must understand that it needs support for our right to defend ourselves and liberate our homeland by all necessary means... You cannot claim to be on the side of Palestine if you prefer to be slaughtered rather than fight back" (Nerdeen Kiswani's Instagram account, October 7, 2023).

►Immediately after the beginning of Operation Iron Swords, WOL began leading the demonstrations in New York and other American cities "for Palestine throughout the US and around the world," while accusing Israel of committing "genocide" in the Gaza Strip. and presenting slogans such as "Cherish the martyrs of Palestine" and "Support the Palestinian resistance" (WOL Instagram account, October 30, 2023).



WOL ad for a demonstration in New York (WOL website, November 10, 2023)

- ▶ On October 11, 2023, the organization published a toolkit for rallies and demonstrations which included slogans, some of them encouraging terrorism, such as "There is only one solution: the intifada revolution," "The door to al-Aqsa [Mosque] is made of iron, only a shaheed can open it" or "There is no Allah but Allah, and the shaheed is loved by Allah" (WOL website, October 11, 2023).
- ▶ On November 15, 2023, on its Instagram account WOL published an updated version of the 2021 "globalize the intifada" campaign map with 16 "targets" in New York City, including Fox's New Corp Building, NBC news studios, The New York Times building, the Museum of Modern Art and the Puma flagship store , each of which the organization claimed was "connected to the ongoing 'genocide' in Gaza and 'settler colonialism' in 'Palestine'." Kiswani stated that "we have to demonstrate at the sites on the map every day since they are the enemies of the people" (Canary Mission, November 2023).
- ▶ On November 17, 2023, WOL held a march that passed by some of the sites marked on the map, and the demonstrators chanted slogans such as "intifada, intifada, long live the intifada" and "We don't want two states, we want 48 [sic]." Near The New York Times building, protesters chanted "Bomb The New York Times!" (New York Post, November 17, 2023).



**Decolonize This Place ad for the demonstration on October 20
(the organization's Instagram page, October 17, 2023)**

- ▶Decolonize This Place expressed unequivocal support for the Hamas terrorist attack. On October 7, it posted videos to its Instagram account showing the tractor that knocked down the border fence and the murderous attack on the revelers at the Nova Music Festival. "Today, we are confronting the armed Israeli settlers and the colonial settler army," the post read. "Today, the Palestinians provide another act of imagination about the need to act to be free, against all odds" (Decolonize This Place Instagram account, October 7, 2023).
- ▶On October 10, 2023, videos were posted of the Hamas terrorist attack on the kibbutzim near the Gaza Strip border, including the use of motorized gliders and motorcycles. The post read, "This is a new chapter in the Palestinian 'struggle' for liberation that everyone everywhere is invited to join" (Decolonize This Place Instagram account, October 10, 2023).
- ▶The movement also does not recognize Hamas as a terrorist organization, calling it instead a "liberation" movement. "Hamas is an acronym for the Islamic resistance movement, one of the many factions involved in the liberation of the land, and is made up of Palestinians who live under settler colonialism, occupation and apartheid," reads the post dated October 27, 2023, which also claimed that "referring to the resistance as 'Hamas' is a deliberate attempt to undermine credibility for liberation" (Decolonize This Place Instagram account, October 27, 2023).

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

- ▶The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee is one of the most prominent organizations of the Arab community in the United States. It was founded in 1980 by the late Senator James Abourezk (D-SD) "in response to stereotypes, defamation and discrimination directed against Americans of Arab descent " (committee website, undated).

- ▶ The main objectives of the organization are to protect and promote the human rights, civil rights and liberties of Arab-Americans and other people of Arab heritage; to serve as a public voice for the Arab-American community in the United States on issues of domestic and foreign policy; and to educate the American public to promote a greater understanding of Arab history and culture (committee website, undated).
- ▶ The committee enjoys a position of respect in the American public system, including from senior government officials. In June 2010, Attorney General Eric Holder attended the committee's annual conference and praised the organization for three decades of "advancing the promise of civil rights for all Americans" (US Department of Justice website, June 4, 2010). In June 2023, Secretary of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas, spoke before the annual conference and stated that the Biden administration was committed to protecting the rights of all Americans, including Arabs and Muslims (Arab News, June 19, 2023).
- ▶ The Arab-American Committee has been praised despite its often-expressed anti-Israel positions. The committee called Israel an "apartheid state" and defended the activities of the BDS Movement by arguing that its members were "exercising their constitutional right" when they called for a boycott of Israel (committee website, June 13, 2018). In late September 2023, the committee filed a federal lawsuit against Israel's inclusion in the visa-waiver program, accusing the administration of "bending the laws in Israel's favor" (The National, September 27, 2023).
- ▶ **On October 7, the Anti-Discrimination Committee expressed support for the Hamas terrorist attack and massacre.** "The unprecedented and continuous resistance by the Palestinians in Gaza, which surprised Israel, did not occur in a vacuum. It was the reaction of people who were pushed beyond endurance," the official statement claimed. "The Palestinians were exercising their right to self-fulfillment [sic] and demanded their freedom unequivocally. Never underestimate the desire of an oppressed and occupied people to be free" (Facebook page of the committee, October 7, 2023).

The Palestinian Youth Movement

- ▶ The Palestinian Youth Movement, which operates in the United States and Canada, defines itself as "a transnational, independent, grassroots movement of young Palestinians in Palestine and in exile worldwide as a result of the ongoing Zionist colonization and occupation of our homeland." (Palestinian Youth Movement website, undated).

- ▶The movement expressed solidarity with the PFLP, and its logo has appeared on the movement's social networks and at its demonstrations, and it publishes messages associated with it. The movement also sponsors an annual scholarship in the name of Ghassan Kanafani, a PFLP leader and writer who was eliminated by Israel in Beirut in 1972 (The Hill, April 22, 2017).
- ▶On October 7, 2023, the movement published a message of support for the Hamas terrorist attack and massacre accompanied by a photo of Palestinians celebrating on an IDF jeep in the Gaza Strip with the caption, "Palestine lives! The resistance is alive!" "The resistance in Gaza stormed the illegitimate border fence and re-entered Palestine of 1948 for the first time in many of our lives," the message said. "We continue to stand by our people in Gaza and throughout occupied Palestine in their legitimate 'resistance' against the occupiers. In the name of our shaheeds, the struggle for freedom and return continues" (Facebook page of the Palestinian youth movement, October 7, 2023).
- ▶The movement also provided "information" which it claimed provided the "true context" of the events. "What the traditional media in the English language refers to as the 'Gaza-Israel' war is actually the struggle for freedom of people living under colonialism," claimed the explanation, calling the attack "a historic moment" (Reddit, October 2023).
- ▶Since the beginning of Operation Iron Swords, the Palestinian Youth Movement has been organizing demonstrations, rallies and other protest actions on a daily basis in many cities in the United States and Canada, accusing Israel of 'genocide' and calling for a ceasefire in the war. On October 17, 2023, the movement organized a demonstration in front of the White House, where they carried signs reading "End the Palestinian Holocaust" and "Stop financing the ethnic cleansing" (Anadolu Agency, October 17, 2022).



Support from Hamas from the Palestinian Youth Movement (Palestinian Youth Movement Facebook page, October 7, 2023)

► On November 4, the Palestinian Youth Movement was one of the organizations that led a large pro-Palestinian demonstration in Washington, DC, calling for a ceasefire, lifting the blockade of the Gaza Strip and the end of American aid to Israel (ABC News, November 4, 2023).

Jewish Voice for Peace

► Jewish Voice for Peace was founded in San Francisco in 1996 and defines itself as "the largest progressive Jewish anti-Zionist organization in the world" working to promote solidarity with the "Palestinian struggle for freedom" (Jewish Voice for Peace website, undated). The organization participates in the campaigns of the BDS Movement and does not accept that criticism of Israel and Zionism is anti-Semitism. The organization also expressed support for convicted Palestinian terrorists such as Marwan Barghouti (Anti-Defamation League, October 25, 2023).

► On October 7 expressed support for the Hamas terrorist attack and massacre, stating that "the root of violence is oppression." The organization also called the terrorists "Palestinian fighters" and linked the attack to "16 years of Israel's military siege" (Jewish Voice for Peace Instagram page, October 7, 2023).

► Since the beginning of Operation Iron Swords, Jewish Voice for Peace has held demonstrations and protest activities throughout the United States. The most notable were taking over the lobby of one of the office buildings of the House of Representatives in Washington and demonstrations at the Grand Central Terminal in New York and the Statue of Liberty (Reuters, 7 in November 2023).

▶Although the demonstrations focused on calling for a ceasefire, Jewish Voice for Peace activists also expressed support for Hamas terrorism. At a rally held by the chapter in Philadelphia on October 12, 2023, it was said that "Palestinians and all occupied and oppressed peoples have a right to armed self-defense" and that "the anti-colonial armed 'resistance' of the Gaza Strip is the result of decades of violence by the Israeli state and if it is not reported that way, it is wrong and misleading" (Anti-Defamation League, October 25, 2023).

▶On November 10, 2023, Columbia University in New York announced the suspension of the local Jewish Voice for Peace and SJP chapters after they violated university policy and held an unauthorized protest (The Forward, November 10, 2023).