



# Democracy Project



## [Rutgers Hillel: Rutgers University Organization Funding Illegal Gaza Flotilla](#)

[Winfield Myers](#) • November 2, 2010 • [Uncategorized](#)

[The following press release was sent to me this afternoon.]

### **RUTGERS UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION FUNDING ILLEGAL GAZA FLOTILLA**

November 1, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Andrew Getraer, Executive Director, Rutgers Hillel, (732) 545-2407

I am writing to update you and/or make you aware of an event of great concern to the citizens of New Jersey, supporters of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, and the pro-Israel community everywhere.

#### **Description of the Flotilla Event**

Rutgers University is a public university, the State University of New Jersey. A registered Rutgers University student organization known as BAKA (Belief Awareness Knowledge and Action), a group of “students united for middle eastern social justice,” has applied for and received \$2,500 in funding from the university’s student run allocations committee for an event to support UsToGaza, an organization raising

money to purchase an American ship to run the Israeli military blockade of Gaza. You can read about them here: [www.ustogaza.org](http://www.ustogaza.org).

The BAKA event is called “U.S. TO GAZA FUNDRAISER, A Fundraiser for the Gaza Freedom Flotilla” and is scheduled for this coming Thursday night November 4 at a campus Student Center. It will feature four very high-level anti-Israel speakers (plus “a delicious Halal buffet dinner!”):

- *Colonel Ann Wright*, ex-US Army colonel and anti-war activist who was on the flotilla Mavi Marmara
- *Adam Shapiro*, co-founder of the International Solidarity Movement and board member of the Free Gaza Movement
- *Fida Qishta*, Palestinian journalist and filmmaker who will present a clip from her new documentary, “Where Should The Birds Fly?”
- *Nada Khader*, executive director of WESPAC Foundation.

We expect that this event will have substantial attendance, possibly in the hundreds, but that many of the attendees will be non-students, and most of the attendees will be people who are already squarely in the anti-Israel camp. It is our understanding that there will be a \$5 charge to enter.

### **Hillel’s response and the University’s involvement/funding**

Rutgers has 29,000 undergraduates and 7,5000 graduate students. There are some 5,000 Jewish undergraduates at Rutgers, and 1,000+ graduate students, the 4<sup>th</sup> largest Jewish population of any campus in America. Since 1943 Rutgers Jewish and pro-Israel students have been served by Rutgers Hillel, an affiliate of Hillel, is the Foundation for Jewish campus life, the largest Jewish campus organization in the world.

As soon as Hillel was aware of BAKA’s application for funding, we made the student allocation committee, Rutgers University President Richard McCormick and the university’s chief legal counsel aware that this event was occurring, and is potentially in violation of several federal laws.

Allocations committee decisions are CONTENT NEUTRAL, but any funds raised at student events must go to a 501(C)3 organization. USToGaza does not qualify on that account but BAKA has satisfied the university standards by finding a legitimate 501(c)3 charity to which they will give any funds raised. That charity is called the Institute for Media Analysis. The institute will funnel the money to a group called “Stand For Peace,” which provides the funding for USToGaza.

*This outcome may satisfy the university’s regulations – but it does not satisfy us.*

### **Legal issues**

This event and the University’s direct and indirect support raises a number of serious legal issues.

1) It is likely that the blockade runners will attempt to deliver goods, services or technical assistance to Hamas, a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). As you may know, it is a crime to provide any “material assistance” to an FTO, including goods, services, and technical help. See 18 U.S.C. § 2339B18 U.S.C. § 2339B and *Holder v Humanitarian Law Project*, – US – (2010). As the State Department has noted with regard to similar efforts, Hamas routinely interferes with such direct shipments.

2) The Neutrality Act, 18 USC 960, makes it a felony for private citizens to undertake any naval expedition

against a friendly nation. Critically for the University, the furnishing of money for such an enterprise explicitly would constitute the commission of this felony. Given that Israel's maritime blockade arises from, and is part of, an armed conflict, we think it is likely that a US court will agree that the gathering of funds, the organization of individuals, and the purchasing and using of a vessel to violate that blockade is prohibited under the Neutrality Act

3) It is very possible that the BAKA event and related planning constitutes an illegal criminal conspiracy to break the laws above. By funding and providing space for this event, the State University itself may part of any illegal criminal conspiracy.

### **Hillel's position**

While the First Amendment guarantees BAKA's right to present any of the four speakers, Rutgers Hillel is vehemently opposed to this event, given that it will use State University funds to promote activities that likely violate federal law, endanger lives, and are based on principles and values that we vehemently oppose.

Other events on campus contribute to creating an environment that is becoming increasingly anti-Israel, and supportive of terrorist organizations, such as Hamas.

- This past week Rutgers Hillel hosted an evening with Ishmael Khaldi, an Israeli Bedouin who served in Israeli Defense Ministry and has worked for the American embassy. Approximately 60 students attended this event, including a large and well-organized delegation of anti-Israel activists, who attempted to disrupt the event.
- November 10 in the Graduate Student Lounge, BAKA is hosting "Arabs and the Holocaust: A History of Competing Narratives," featuring GILBERT ACHCAR, who previously co-authored a book on The Middle East and U.S. Foreign Policy with Noam Chomsky. The event is cosponsored by BAKA and two academic departments the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and the Department of Journalism and Media.
- On November 16, BAKA will be bringing noted anti-Israel activist and Holocaust critic Norman Finkelstein to campus, along with a part-time Rutgers and Monmouth University professor, Ibrahim Baboulsi.
- There are rumors that Rutgers will be targeted for Israel Apartheid Week sometime next semester, an event that has plagued other campuses, but that we have avoided in the past.

### **6. Community Response**

Rutgers Hillel is on the front lines of Israel advocacy in our state. We seek the support of the entire pro-Israel community in ensuring that the campus of our State University remains a safe one for pro-Israel students, and that our tax dollars are not misused to support illegal activities. To that end:

- We welcome your assistance in communicating your objection to this event to University officials.
- Some of you may be of assistance is helping us to develop appropriate campus Israel programming.
- We welcome your assistance in communicating to state and national political leadership as part of our efforts.

We will keep you informed regarding this ongoing, developing situation on our campus.

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## Comments

### 5 Responses to “Rutgers Hillel: Rutgers University Organization Funding Illegal Gaza Flotilla”

1. [DOROTHY ONLINE NEWSLETTER | SHOAH](#) on November 8th, 2010 4:42 pm

[...] line of attack was predictable. In a press release Andrew Getraer, the executive director of Rutgers's Hillel, argued that there were [...]

2. [kontakty](#) on November 3rd, 2011 7:48 pm

I can tell the writer of this article went above and beyond to research this information. I'm very impressed with your views and writing style.

3. video arcade machines on November 23rd, 2011 4:52 am

More people need to read this and understand this aspect of the story. I cant believe you're not more popular.

4. [inception blu ray](#) on December 6th, 2011 8:55 am

I don't even know how I finished up here, however I believed this put up used to be good. I do not realize who you are but definitely you're going to a well-known blogger when you aren't already 😊 . Sorry for bad English Cheers from India!

5. [Chanell Swarts](#) on December 7th, 2011 6:55 am

I've been surfing online more than 3 hours today, yet I never found any interesting article like yours. It is pretty worth enough for me. In my view, if all web owners and bloggers made good content as you did, the web will be much more useful than ever before.

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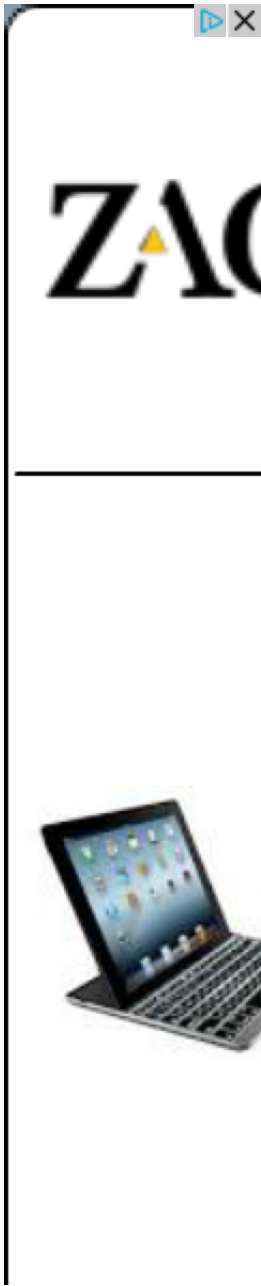
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