

President Leslie Wong
Office of the President
San Francisco State University
1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132

January 13, 2014

RE: San Francisco State University and Alleged Foreign Terrorist Organization Ties

Dear President Wong,

We are writing to express our serious concern that San Francisco State University is supporting a student group with ties to a U.S. State Department-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The student organization, General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS), has adopted the ideology and language of the PFLP. Furthermore, the president of the student organization, Mohammad G. Hammad, publicly touts his association with the PFLP on social media, and SFSU Professor of Ethnic Studies and GUPS advisor Rabab Abdulhadi glorifies a PFLP terrorist and promotes PFLP ideology to students.

As a result, the philosophy of this violent terrorist group, and its most famous member – Leila Khaled - is being incorporated into campus activities, creating a hostile and threatening environment for many members of the SFSU community, especially Jewish students.

The following letter will set forth new evidence showing the ties of members of the SFSU community to the PFLP, and its influence on GUPS students. In light of this information, we recommend that SFSU should de-fund and de-register GUPS as a student organization, as well as carefully investigate the conduct of individual students and faculty members who use university resources to promote a violent and antisemitic ideology, and take appropriate disciplinary action.

Background on the PFLP and Leila Khaled

The PFLP is a faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) which "aims to mobilize and lead the struggle of the Palestinian masses for the return to Palestine, self-determination, and the establishment of a Palestinian state. These, in turn, are steps along the path of defeating the Zionist entity, [and] liberating all of Palestine".¹

¹ <http://freepalestine.tripod.com/pflp.html>

In pursuit of these goals, the PFLP calls for armed resistance against Israel's "settler colonial occupation of Palestine."²

The PFLP is responsible for 159 documented terrorist attacks, which have resulted in significant deaths and injuries,³ including the deaths of at least 20 US citizens.⁴ The PFLP primarily targets private citizens. In one particularly horrifying incident, PFLP members hijacked a cruise liner and shot Leon Klinghoffer, a wheelchair-bound elderly Jewish tourist, in the forehead and chest and threw him overboard.⁵

The PFLP currently receives funding and logistical support from Iran to bolster its armed wing,⁶ Abu Ali Mustafa Brigade, which has been responsible for carrying out attacks on both civilians and military targets in Israel, including assassinations and suicide bombings.

Leila Khaled, a convicted terrorist, is the PFLP's most famous member. Still a member of the PFLP, Khaled continues to advocate for the elimination of the Jewish state through violent means as well as through boycotting the Jewish state, and the need for North American youth to join in struggle for the "liberation of Palestine." Speaking at "Return and Liberation," a student-organized conference at the University of British Columbia in May 2013, Khaled said:⁷

- "The day, Nakba, means that never ever will we co-exist with Zionists [loud applause]...the **Zionists are anti-human. They are the new Nazis of the 21st century**...this entity, which is called Israel, we should never ever recognize...[loud applause]."
- "I believe, and a very important part of our people believe, that **armed struggle is the only way...Armed struggle is the shortest way towards liberation**...Now there are calls for stopping using arms... We can't liberate a land with language only... and this will open the road for us to be back to our homeland."
- "I see a lot of you, the young people -- one day I was young, too -- and I think you will exceed me and exceed others with your work and with your struggle and with your minds, and with **using all means to escalate the struggle of our people.**"

The PFLP has long been listed on U.S. Government lists of terrorist organizations subject to

² <http://redantliberationarmy.wordpress.com/2011/12/15/pflp-44-years-of-the-popular-front-building-unity-through-resistance-and-challenging-the-occupation/>

³ START: A Center of Excellence of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Global Terrorism Database
http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?charttype=pie&chart=target&casualties_type=&casualties_max=&perpetrator=838

⁴ <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/65479.pdf>

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Klinghoffer

⁶ <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/09/iran-pflp-gaza-palestine-syria.html>

⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSfvBKGWDLk>

provisions of the Patriot anti terrorism act which ban any material support thereto. See, 18 U.S.C.Sec.2339(b) and Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project (2010) 130 S.Ct.2705. PFLP activists were targets of FBI raids in Chicago and Minneapolis in 2010 and are believed subject to continued federal and local law enforcement scrutiny and anti-terrorism controls.

GUPS President's Involvement with the PFLP

The student linked to the PFLP, by his own admission on social media outlets, is Mohammad G. Hammad, president of the university-sanctioned and funded group, General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS), which, as you know, was responsible for the November 7 event glorifying the murder of Jews.⁸ We have previously brought to your attention Hammad's postings on social media, which included a picture of himself brandishing a knife and statements indicating that he would like to murder an Israeli soldier⁹ and "all others who support the IDF."¹⁰

We have found many social media postings of Hammad from July 2010 to November 2013 which link the GUPS president to the PFLP, including the following:

- August 7, 2010: Commenting on a picture of five school-aged children in a classroom, he wrote: "The group I was in charge of...[was] named..."The Key to Freedom," and I was very pleased to find that they were all supporters of the PFLP :) "¹¹
- May 27, 2011: In a lengthy posting entitled "So a few years ago, I managed to meet [sic] a branch commander of the PFLP," Hammad described contacting a PFLP member in 2009 and he wrote: "I recently got in touch with him again, and I learned that he has worked his way up in the grand chain of things, and I will hopefully be meeting with him and some other actual members this following week in Jifna. For those unaware, the PFLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine] is the resistance group I associate myself with, so this is definitely a cool thing..."¹²
- August 10, 2012: Hammad wrote, "So apparently there's a rumor going around in Palestine that I've joined the armed resistance [a]nd that I've been in Palestine this whole time, actively engaged in armed combat against Israeli forces alongside the PFLP.." Calling it "an awesome rumor," Hammad went on to write: "rather than actively

⁸ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/GUPS1.jpg>

⁹ <http://amchainitiative.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0beb330b057061522bbe22a7f&id=bf37a48c95&e=af475dce6a>

¹⁰ http://amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/redphilistine_repost.pdf

¹¹ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Hammad-Posting-5.pdf>

¹² <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Hammad-Posting-6.pdf>

fighting for a worthy cause, I've been here...blogging about...stuff, and reposting pictures of people fighting. Does that count?"¹³

- September 27, 2012: When someone commented, "The PFLP is a terrorist organization and legitimizes why everyone calls you a terrorist," Hammad's response was, "I've stayed at the home of a branch commander and had dinner with his family. I've also participated in marches and gone to lunch with armed fighters..."¹⁴
- September 27, 2012: "You know things are good when your uncle introduces you as 'the radical one' of the family to friends. His words 'He lives to piss off right-wingers and will probably resurrect al-Jabha [the PFLP] when he goes back to Palestine.' Yes good I approve and hopefully I do."¹⁵
- January 11, 2013: In response to a question about the politics of the PFLP, Hammad wrote: "I will say, however, that between all the various Palestinian Faction, I support and identify with the PFLP the most...I love Leila Khalid, Ghassan Kanafani, Ahmad Sadaat and George Habash." He also included an image of the PFLP flag in the posting.¹⁶
- January 14, 2013: When Hammad was asked, "What Palestinian political party do you support?" his response was, "Although I am aware that each party has its pros and cons, I most support the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine)."¹⁷
- February 12, 2013: Hammad posted to the GUPS Facebook site an image of a Valentine's Day postcard with a picture of Leila Khaled in a keffiyah holding an assault rifle and the words "You've hijacked my heart." Hammad wrote: "Something that I found that I figured most of you would enjoy hahaha."¹⁸
- July 30, 2013: He posted a picture of himself holding his cell phone with a case emblazoned with the PFLP logo and with a caption that read: "New phone case came in today! I love it."¹⁹
- October 11, 2013: He posted a large image of the PFLP symbol and wrote, "I just convinced my cousin to get a PFLP logo as a tattoo. I am so happy."²⁰

¹³ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Hammad-Posting-9.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Hammad-Posting-2.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Hammad-Posting-3.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Hammad-Posting-8.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Hammad-posting-1.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Hammad-Posting-10.pdf>

¹⁹ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Hammad-Posting-7.pdf>

²⁰ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Hammad-Posting-4.pdf>

- July 2013 – November 2013: Several postings with photographs of graffiti and posters promoting the PFLP, often with captions indicating Hammad’s affinity for the PFLP-linked images.²¹

Besides making numerous postings on social media which connect him to the PFLP, Hammad has also posted several entries affirming his support for PFLP ideology, including his desire for the “liberation of Palestine...by any means necessary”²² and his desire for the killing of Jewish “settler colonialists”²³ and their leaders²⁴.

AMED Professor Rabab Abdulhadi’s Glorification of a PFLP Terrorist and Promotion of PFLP Ideology

SFSU Professor Rabab Abdulhadi, director of the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Initiative in the College of Ethnic Studies and a faculty advisor to GUPS students, has glorified and promoted PFLP members and their ideology among university students in general and GUPS students in particular, as can be seen in the following examples:

- In February and March 2013, Abdulhadi posted two announcements²⁵ for a university-sponsored event that consisted of a screening of the pro-Palestinian film *Leila Khaled Hijacker*, followed by a discussion of the film by Abdulhadi. Her postings on the GUPS webpage included pictures of Keffiya-adorned Khaled holding an assault rifle with a Palestinian flag coming out of it. In November 2013, Abdulhadi justified the GUPS students’ use of a stencil with an identical image of Khaled at the group’s November 2013 event,²⁶ writing that Khaled was “a popular icon” symbolizing “Palestinian women’s roles in anti-colonial resistance.”²⁷
- Abdulhadi, who, along with Leila Khaled, was a featured speaker at the May 2013 student-organized conference at University of British Columbia entitled “Return and Liberation,” advocated in her talk the PFLP’s platform of the full right of return of all

²¹ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/PFLP-images-from-Hammad.pdf>

²² <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Body-and-Soul-Why-I-am-no-longer-in-any-sense-of-the-phrase-for-the-two-state-solution.pdf>

²³ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Madridista-palestinianliberator-You-know-what.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Hammad-Posting-11.pdf>

²⁵ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Two-Postings-about-Leila-Khaled-Event-on-GUPS-Facebook-Page.pdf>

²⁶ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Leila-Khaled-GUPS-.jpg>

²⁷ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Rabab-Abdulhadis-letter.pdf>

Palestinian refugees and overthrowing the “settler colonial” occupation of Palestine by any means, including armed violence:²⁸

- “The 1968 program [of the P.L.O.] which talked about all of Palestine, talked about the right of return, talked about Palestinians in '48...was uncategorical and unwavering in opposition to Zionism... I'm not ready to give up on the PLO. I think there have been a lot of problems, but I think there is a way for us to restore the vision that we had from the 60's...[The PLO] needs to include Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Palestinians in the '48 areas.”
- “[The Palestinian leadership] moved from this amazing resistance, emancipatory, inclusive huge resistance movement, to something that is very narrow...it's not necessarily speaking to the Palestinian constituency...Now, definitely, we need to go back to re-framing the conflict as settler colonialism...So then the comparison with indigenous peoples becomes not only a rhetorical device, it has to become part and parcel of our mindset, of the paradigm shift in which we present the conflict.”
- “So in this sense it's really necessary for us to think about making the colonial rule ungovernable, making colonialism ungovernable, and for the PLO -- I still advocate for the PLO...- to go back to the 60's resistance, about liberation.”
- “When we talk about BDS...[saying] that BDS is ‘very nice because it's a non-violent option to these crazy kids who go blow themselves up out of despair because of they have nothing’...what is it that we are saying about the hundreds and thousands of martyrs who gave their lives up for the cause? It's one thing to say, 'yes, it is non-violent,' but at the same time don't delegitimize the struggle, whether you agree with armed struggle or disagree with it.
- “I do believe that armed struggle is the weapon of the weak, it's the self-defense that the United Nations and other international agencies gave us.”
- Abdulhadi, herself a founder of the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural boycott of Israel²⁹ and signatory of several petitions calling for the boycott of Israeli universities and scholars,³⁰ has promoted on the GUPS website the recent American

²⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0vSYbScWAs>

²⁹ <http://www.usacbi.org/about-us/>

³⁰ See, for example: <http://www.usacbi.org/endorsers/>;
<http://www.counterpunch.org/2010/03/10/a-joint-letter-to-the-international-society-of-iranian-studies-on-ariel-university-of-samaria-israel/>; <http://www.aurdip.org/Call-to-Boycott-the-Oral-History.html>

Studies Association academic boycott of Israel,³¹ a boycott which the PFLP advocates as a non-violent means of eliminating the Jewish state.

Conclusion

The public expression of affinity towards the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the promotion of its violent and antisemitic ideology, displayed by the president of the university-sanctioned GUPS group and by SFSU faculty member Rabab Abdulhadi, have encouraged violent rhetoric at on-campus events.

PFLP-inspired messages such as “My Heroes Have Always Killed Colonizers” and the romanticization and glorification of terrorists such as Leila Khaled have been incorporated into GUPS on-campus activities, with AMED support and University funding.

This is a situation that does not call for dialogue, but dictates an immediate and forceful response by University leadership and law enforcement.

In light of this information, we reiterate our recommendation that SFSU should de-fund and de-register GUPS as a student organization, carefully investigate the conduct of individual students and faculty members who use university resources to promote a violent and antisemitic ideology, and then take appropriate disciplinary action.

We are sharing this information with you now, in the hopes that you may act swiftly. Later this week we intend to share this same information with the Jewish community, the general public, and law enforcement.

We look forward to your response.

Thank you for your commitment to upholding a safe environment at SFSU.

Sincerely,

Leila Beckwith
Co-founder AMCHA Initiative

Tammi Rossman-Benjamin
Co-founder AMCHA Initiative

³¹ <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Abdulhadi-posts-ASA-boycott-on-GUPS-wall.pdf>