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December 4, 2015

Students for Justice in Palestine list of Demands

Students for Justice in Palestine - UC San Diego

[41 mins](#) · [La Jolla, CA](#) ·

On the morning of Friday, November 13, 2015, racist and Islamophobic posters targeting Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and the Muslim Student Association (MSA) were found plastered on the campus of UC San Diego, along library walk and at the information center on Gilman & Osler Lane. The posters, which can be found below, align MSA with alleged terrorist Anwar Al-Awlaki and depict SJP as anti-Semitic terrorists. This is not an isolated incident - these posters were found at multiple UC campuses, including Irvine and Los Angeles. The posters come as no surprise and only expose the rising Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian sentiments on campus and within the United States.

Foremost, these posters imply that SJP and MSA are interchangeable organizations, when in actuality, these entities serve separate purposes and operate independently. The Muslim Student Association aims to serve underrepresented Muslim students, staff, and faculty at UCSD by creating a space of mutual cultural and religious understanding while increasing awareness and fighting social injustices related to Muslim identity. Students for Justice in Palestine advocates for the Palestinian right to self-determination; an end to the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip; an end to the apartheid system within the occupied territories of Palestine and within Israel; and the right of return for Palestinian refugee populations displaced under Israeli settler colonialism as guaranteed under international law. While Islamophobia and Orientalism are certainly central to the existence, maintenance, and justification for Israeli apartheid, conflating these two organizations is problematic as it reduces the Palestinian genocide and occupation to a de-historicized, de-politicized religious conflict, as opposed to an issue of systematic racism, colonialism, and ethnic apartheid. This also works to erase the experiences of Palestinian Jews, Palestinian Christians, and other Palestinian religious minorities facing Israeli persecution. Furthermore, SJP's membership is not organized around religion, but rather a mutual understanding that Israel is a settler colonial state that is responsible for violations of Palestinian human rights.

These posters are merely one iteration in a series of incidents at UC San Diego specifically targeting Muslim students and students who participate in pro-Palestinian activism. Both organizations have been at the receiving end of racist features in UCSD's infamously offensive newspaper, The Koala, during major events. Every year during Islam Awareness Week, Christian fundamentalist preachers distribute Islamophobic pamphlets to students passing by on Library Walk and attempt to provoke members into heated discussions. Social media platforms like Yik Yak are rife with Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian

comments at UCSD. Posters and advertisements for both Islam Awareness Week and Justice in Palestine Week have been defaced and vandalized, while students participating in these events have been harassed by off-campus groups such as The United West as well as by students with Islamophobic and/or pro-Israel views. These groups film students without their consent, even when explicitly asked not to, and post images on social media in lists labeling these individuals as terrorists. Specifically, the David Horowitz Freedom Center held an event at UC San Diego in response to Justice in Palestine Week in 2010, labeling MSA's as jihadists, terrorists, and Hitler supporters. This group also began a smear campaign against a member of MSA and SJP, sending hate mail and harassing the individual. This same group took responsibility for the distribution of these posters at various campuses in the UC system in the Spring of 2014. With the lack of administrative action and sanctions in regards to the poster's put up in the spring, the David Horowitz Freedom Center has repeated these inflammatory, hurtful, and dangerous actions, while at the very least, completely disregarding university policies around campus postings. We understand that administration has no jurisdiction over off-campus organizations; however, the lack of a response from the university and the lack of protection and support that students associated with MSA and SJP receive points to the glaring prevalence of Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian sentiments on this campus.

Incidents like these are not uncommon - people of color and other marginalized communities are constantly made to feel unwelcome and unsafe on college campuses throughout the United States, from the University of Texas at Austin to the University of Missouri to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to UC San Diego. Whether it is racially themed parties, violent threats against students, or the distribution of racist material, it is clear that universities across the nation are unequipped to deal with the effects of systematic racism on their students. We urge administration to address this toxic campus climate by actively listening to student needs and implementing student demands to create a more inclusive and meaningfully diversified campus.

We propose these solutions in order to make UCSD more welcoming to Muslim students:

1. The creation of an Islamic Studies minor under the Department of the Study of Religion within three years (Fall 2018).
2. The creation of a Muslim Studies minor under the Ethnic Studies Department, with the identification and allocation of sustained funding for the creation of three new tenure-track junior faculty lines and three new tenure-track senior-faculty lines for this minor within five years. At least two members of the Muslim Student Association should sit on the hiring committee for these positions (Fall 2020).
3. The identification and allocation of sustained, additional funding for Counseling and Psychological Services to be used in the hiring of at least two full-time clinical staff psychologists specializing in the needs of Muslims by Spring 2017.
4. The accommodation of Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha in the academic calendar as official holidays with campus closed on these days by the 2018-2019 academic year.
5. The creation and sustenance of themed housing for minority populations on campus, including housing for Muslim-identified individuals within five years (Fall 2020).
6. The establishment of permanent prayer rooms in each of the six colleges by Fall 2017.
7. The remodeling of the bathrooms by the Contemplation Lounge to provide a space for Muslim

students to make wudhu (ablution) within three years.

8. The accommodation of Muslim eating restrictions at all dining halls as well as Price Center, i.e. the use of zabihah meat, by Spring 2017.

9. Quarterly meetings initiated by and with the office of the VC EDI, in addition to all relevant campus entities, to ensure that these accommodations are made.

We propose these solutions in order to make UCSD more welcoming to Palestinian and pro-Palestinian students:

1. The deshelfing of Sabra hummus from all dining halls and markets, including Sunshine Market, by Spring 2016.

2. The identification and allocation of sustained funding for the creation of one new tenure-track junior faculty line and one new senior faculty line faculty positions under Ethnic Studies specifically for the hiring of Palestinian faculty and faculty specializing in Palestine, under the guidance of Students for Justice in Palestine within three years (Fall 2018).

3. The dismantling of The Koala and the active prevention of similar types of hate speech by the end of Spring 2016.

4. The allocation of permanent yearly funding for Palestinian scholars and speakers for on-campus events and programs at least once per academic year by the 2016-2017 academic year.

5. The pressuring of and active advocacy to the UC Regents to: follow through with student demands for the divestment of UC funds from companies complicit in the Israeli occupation; reject the State Department's definition of anti-Semitism, as it problematically and inaccurately conflates Zionism and Judaism, and prohibits any criticisms, whether they be political, legal, humanistic, or otherwise, of the state of Israel; and release a statement recognizing the existence of the state of Palestine as well as Palestinian rights to sovereignty and return.

6. Quarterly meetings initiated by and with the office of the VC EDI, in addition to all relevant campus entities, to ensure that these accommodations are made.

Until Return & With Peace,

Students for Justice in Palestine at UC San Diego

Muslim Student Association at UC San Diego

Alpha Lambda Mu, UCSD Chapter

Endorsed By:

Student Affirmative Action Committee

Lambda Theta Phi, Latin Fraternity Inc. at UCSD

Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/a de Aztlan

Coalition for South Asian Peoples

Coalition for Critical Asian American Studies

Native American Student Alliance

Kamalayan Kollektive

Black Student Union

Pakistani Student Association
Asian & Pacific Islander Student Alliance