

## Brandeis Center Joins AMCHA Initiative Urging Investigation into Misuse of California Taxpayer Funds to Support Professor's Meetings with Terrorists

The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law today joined with the AMCHA Initiative in demanding an investigation into the misuse of taxpayer funds in a San Francisco State University professor's trip to the Middle East to meet with persons who are affiliated with terrorist organizations. The Brandeis Center, AMCHA, and six other organizations called on California State University Chancellor Timothy White and San Francisco State University President Leslie Wong to investigate irregular tax-payer funded behavior by San Francisco State University Professor Rabab Abdulhadi.

Brandeis Center President Kenneth L. Marcus commented, "We are deeply disappointed to learn about this outrageous misuse of public funds. In the past, we have been impressed with the firm actions that San Francisco State University President Leslie Wong has taken in response to problems at his campus. We have every hope and confidence that he will respond with similar strength in response to this new outrage."

The AMCHA Initiative letter responds to San Francisco State University funds given to Professor Rabab Abdulhadi purportedly to support a "University-related trip" to Beirut to attend the 4th Center for American Studies and Research conference. As written on at least four official University documents, Abdulhadi asserted that she would use university funds to speak at this conference. However, as the Amcha Initiative learned through the use of the California Public Records Act, the purpose of the trip was actually to meet with convicted hijacker Leila Khaled, a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine terrorist organizations, and other figures affiliated with terrorist organizations. Before her trip, Abdulhadi revealed to the SFSU Risk Management Office that she would not attend the conference. The professor instead used California taxpayer funds to travel with a colleague and a student to "1948 areas of Palestine" to "build relationships between Palestinian and North American anti-Israel political activists in order to promote anti-Semitic academic, cultural, and economic boycotts of Israel."

Then-SFSU student Mohammad Hammad wrote on his Tumblr account that Abdulhadi had invited him to go with her and her delegation to Palestine on a 10-day trip in which he would meet prominent figures. He wrote, "I WILL GET TO MEET LEILA KHALED." Postings such as this suggest that such meetings were planned months in advance.

The Brandeis Center, AMCHA, and others called on University of California officials to "investigate this matter immediately, and to make public the results of [their] investigation." In addition to the Brandeis Center and AMCHA, signatories included StandWithUs, Scholars for Peace in the Middle East, Zionist Organization of America, Simon Wiesenthal Center, Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel, and Proclaiming Justice to the Nations.

**ABOUT THE LOUIS D. BRANDEIS CENTER**

The Louis D. Brandeis Center, Inc., or LDB, is an independent, nonprofit organization established to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all. The Brandeis Center conducts research, education and advocacy to combat the resurgence of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses. It is not affiliated with the Massachusetts University, the Kentucky law school, nor any of the other institutions that share the name and honor the memory of the late U.S. Supreme Court justice. For more information, contact the Brandeis Center at (202)-756-1822, or find us at [www.brandeiscenter.com](http://www.brandeiscenter.com).

## THE LETTER TO SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

To: Timothy White, Chancellor California State University

Leslie Wong, President San Francisco State University

Larry Mandel, CSU Vice Chancellor and Chief Audit Officer

Carrie Hemphill Reith, CSU Resource Attorney for Conflict of Interest & Governance

Dear Chancellor White, President Wong, Mr. Mandel, and Ms. Rieth:

We would like to inform you of something that we believe deserves your immediate attention.

Documents that we recently received in response to a California Public Records Act request submitted to SFSU on April 10, requesting any and all records regarding the University's funding of a "Labor Delegation to Palestine 2014" led by SFSU Professor Rabab Abdulhadi, suggest an egregious misuse of University and taxpayer funds.

According to these documents, Prof. Rabab Abdulhadi received more than \$7,000 from the University, including an advance of \$2,000, to cover the cost of her trip. However, we believe that in order to procure the administrative approval necessary for securing such University funding, the nature and purpose of Abdulhadi's trip were misrepresented on at least 4 official University documents that were reviewed and approved by the SFSU Risk Management Office and Abdulhadi's Dean, Kenneth Monteiro. And since Prof. Abdulhadi was requesting approval for travel to "high risk" countries, her official documents were reviewed and approved by both the President's and Chancellor's offices. (Request for Authorization to Travel/Travel Advance, Request for Travel Approval to High-Risk Country, Request for Foreign Travel Insurance Program (FTIP) coverage, and Request for Approval - International Travel)

Each of these 4 documents emphasizes that the purpose of Abdulhadi's trip was related to University business: to present a paper at the 4th conference of the Center for American

Studies and Research to be held at the American University in Beirut, Lebanon, as well as to conduct "research" and to meet with "potential collaborators towards [establishing a] memorandum of understanding with San Francisco State University" in Jordan and the West Bank.

However, a few weeks before her trip, though after she had already received confirmation of her approval for international travel as well as confirmation of her foreign travel insurance coverage, and presumably after she had received a \$2,000 advance from the University towards her trip, Abdulhadi sent a short email to the SFSU Risk Management Office informing them that she would be neither presenting a paper nor attending the conference in Lebanon. Oddly, Abdulhadi gave the following off-hand explanation for the significant change in her itinerary and focus: "Unfortunately my name was dropped from the Beirut conference."

Moreover, although on official University documents Prof. Abdulhadi had represented the purpose of her trip as being related to University business, there is considerable evidence showing that the purpose of Abdulhadi's University-funded trip was to engage in her own personal political pursuits and further her own personal political agenda. In an event on March 6, 2014 that was advertised on the SFSU Ethnic Studies website, Prof. Abdulhadi and two other members of the "Academic and Labor Delegation to Palestine 2014" -- SFSU Ethnic Studies Professor Joanne Barker and Abdulhadi's husband Jaime Veve -- discussed their trip to "the West Bank and the 1948 areas of Palestine [sic, i.e. Israel]". In her presentation at the March 6 event, Abdulhadi called the trip to Jordan, the West Bank, and Israel, which she had led, a "political solidarity tour," and she went on to say: "This was not 'solidarity light,' this was not 'pre-Solidarity 101'." Prof. Barker, in her blog documenting the trip, corroborated Abdulhadi's statement, writing that the delegation "established working relationships and furthered their solidarities with Palestinian scholars, artists, and activists engaged in BDS and other efforts against the occupation." The event announcement also confirmed that the purpose of Abdulhadi's University-funded trip was not to engage in University-related business but rather to pursue her own personal political goals: to promote "resolute actions in support of the academic and cultural boycott of Israel."

Prof. Abdulhadi also neglected to inform the University on the official documents required for the approval, insurance and funding of her trip, that she and the delegation she was leading intended to meet with individuals affiliated with organizations on the U.S. State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations:

- According to Prof. Barker's blog, the group's first meeting was in Jordan with Leila Khaled, a convicted hijacker and the most famous member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a terrorist organization responsible for 159 terrorist acts such as bombings, armed assault and assassinations, resulting in numerous injuries and deaths including those of more than 20 US citizens. As a result of her terrorist activities, Khaled has been refused entry to Israel, Britain, and Canada. Khaled still advocates armed struggle as "the only and the shortest way towards liberation [of Palestine]".

- The delegation led by Abdulhadi also met with Sheikh Raed Salah, leader of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel, who was convicted of funding Hamas, a terrorist organization whose charter calls for the destruction of Israel and the murder of Jews, and he served a two-year prison sentence 2003 - 2005. In 2008, Salah was charged by an Israeli court with incitement to violence and racism, over a speech he gave in which he accused Jews of using children's blood to bake bread. In 2010, Salah was arrested for his participation on the Mavi Marmara, a boat that was part of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla funded by the International Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), a known radical Islamic and anti-Western Turkish organization which, in addition to humanitarian efforts, provides support and funding to global jihad networks. And 6 weeks after meeting with Abdulhadi's delegation, Salah was sentenced to another term in Israeli prison for incitement to violence after he called for a third intifada.

Evidence that these meetings were planned before Prof. Abdulhadi submitted official University documents seeking approval of her trip comes from a March 2013 social media posting of Mohammad G. Hammad, then an SFSU student and member of the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS). In an entry on his Tumblr account, Hammad described how excited he was that his professor/advisor (whom he had identified in previous posts as Prof. Rabab Abdulhadi) had offered to have him "join her and a delegation that she is taking to Palestine on a 10-Day trip...during which we will be visiting with prominent figures associated with the Palestinian Resistance movement, as well as ex-Palestinian Detainees...But most of all / The thing that has me fangirling and going crazy / is / That as long as I can take care of some border/transportation issues / I WILL GET TO MEET LEILA KHALID". Not only does Hammad's posting demonstrate that meetings with Khaled and other "figures associated with the Palestinian Resistance movement" were planned by Abdulhadi months before she submitted to the University official documents in which she omitted all mention of these meetings, it also highlights the deeply troubling behavior of Prof. Abdulhadi, who involved a vulnerable student in her plans to meet with members of a known terrorist organizations. It is ironic that Hammad, who in May 2013 became President of GUPS, was no longer a student at SFSU by January 2014 after dozens of his social media postings, in which he expressed murderous violence towards Jews and glorified the terrorist organization PFLP, were revealed.

To summarize:

SFSU Professor of Ethnic Studies Rabab Abdulhadi went on a "political solidarity tour" to Jordan, "1948 areas of Palestine" [i.e. Israel] and the West Bank, a trip whose primary purpose was to build relationships between Palestinian and North American anti-Israel political activists in order to promote antisemitic academic, cultural and economic boycotts of Israel. Abdulhadi arranged for the delegation she led, which included SFSU Ethnic Studies Professor Joanne Barker and Abdulhadi's husband Jaime Veve, to meet with at least one known terrorist, Leila Khaled, as well as with a Muslim cleric who had been imprisoned by Israel because of his ties to Hamas and who was again incarcerated

by Israel a few weeks after meeting with Abudlhadi's delegation, on charges of incitement to violence.

On at least 4 official University documents signed by several SFSU and CSU administrators, including SFSU President Wong and CSU Chancellor White or someone from his office, Abdulhadi concealed the fact that the true purpose of her trip was political activism to promote efforts to harm the Jewish state, as well as the fact that she had planned to meet with individuals affiliated with organizations on the U.S. State Department's list of Designated Terrorist Organizations. Presumably by concealing these crucial facts, Abdulhadi was able to receive from the SFSU Office of Human Resources, Safety & Risk Management approval to travel to "high risk" countries and insurance coverage paid for by the University (and California taxpayers), and she was able to receive from the University (and California taxpayers) more than \$7,000 dollars for her transportation, lodging and food during the 21 days of her "political solidarity tour."

We believe that there has been an egregious abuse of university and taxpayer funds as well as potential violations of California state law prohibiting the use of state resources for personal or political purposes.

We urge you to investigate this matter immediately, and to make public the results of your investigation.

We and many California taxpayers look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

AMCHA Initiative

Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law

Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel

Proclaiming Justice to the Nations

Scholars for Peace in the Middle East

Simon Wiesenthal Center Campus Outreach

StandWithUs

Zionist Organization of America

Cc: CSU Trustees

CSU General Counsel Framroze Virgee

CSU Deputy General Counsel G. Andrew Jones

Kenneth Monteiro, Dean of SFSU College of Ethnic Studies

Sue Rosser, SFSU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Michael Martin, SFSU Associate Vice President, Enterprise Risk Management

Dao VanQuate, SFSU Associate Risk Management

Patricia Bartscher, SFSU Counsel

Attorney General Kamala Harris

Deputy Attorney General Stepan Haytayun

California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson

California State Senator Mark Leno (San Francisco)

California State Senator Leland Y. Yee (San Francisco)

California Assembly Member Philip Y. Ting (San Francisco)

California Senator Carol Liu, Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Education

California Assembly Member Das Williams, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Higher Education

California Assembly Member Shirley Weber, Chair of the Select Committee on Campus Climate

California State Senator Marty Block, Chair of Legislative Jewish Caucus

California Jewish Community Leaders