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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

March 26, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Dr. Hatem Bazian
Chairman, Americans Muslims for Palestine
President, Americans for Justice in Palestine Educational Foundation Inc.
Department of Ethnic Studies
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Dear Dr. Bazian:

Since October 7, 2023, the nation has watched as anti-Israel demonstrations on college campuses from New York to California have grown, leading to serious threats to campus safety and resulting in over 3,000 arrests and detentions.¹ The U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) is investigating the role that non-campus groups, including terrorist organizations, have played in helping to organize, support, and facilitate these demonstrations, in order to determine what additional federal actions may be required to protect students.

According to reports, at least nine individuals with ties to American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) and its partner organization, Americans for Justice in Palestine Educational Foundation (AJP),² including you, have past or present ties to groups associated with the Foreign Terrorist Organization Hamas. AMP also reportedly helped to incubate and fund the development of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapters, which have been active in the campus demonstrations and banned or suspended on a growing number of campuses due to security

¹ See *Where Protesters on U.S. Campuses Have Been Arrested or Detained*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (July 22, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/pro-palestinian-college-protests-encampments.html>; Erin Ailworth, et al., *Hundreds of Protesters Arrested as Universities Blame Outsiders for Escalating Violence*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (May 2, 2024), <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/education/columbia-ucla-college-protests-police-25418aa5>.

² While AMP describes AJP as its “fiscal sponsor,” the Attorney General of Virginia describes AMP and AJP, a “public nonprofit with its headquarters located in Falls Church, Virginia,” as the same organization. *About AMP*, AMERICAN MUSLIMS FOR PALESTINE, <https://www.ampalastine.org/about-amp> (last visited June 4, 2024). See Press Release, Attorney General of Virginia, Attorney General’s Office Opens Investigation Into American Muslims for Palestine Nonprofit (Oct. 31, 2023), <https://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/2630-october-31-2023-attorney-generals-office-opens-investigation-into-american-muslims-for-palestine-nonprofit>.

concerns.³ Activity that threatens the safety of others is not constitutionally protected free speech, and conduct that violates campus rules should not be tolerated. Also, reports of individuals with ties to terrorist groups or their affiliates engaging with students on college campuses are cause for the highest alarm. Accordingly, I write to ask that you immediately produce records relating to AMP, AJP, their personnel, and their activities on college campuses to HELP.

AMP's alleged ties to Hamas, which the U.S. State Department has designated as a "Foreign Terrorist Organization," are extensive.⁴ According to past congressional testimony by Jonathan Schanzer, the Executive Director at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, AMP is allegedly associated with the following individuals who are tied to Hamas or Hamas-linked groups:

- **Jamal Said:** "[A] regular keynote speaker at AMP fundraisers" and head of the Mosque Foundation, which sponsors AMP conferences. He also raised money for the Holy Land Foundation (HLF), a now-shuttered charity founded by Hamas's Deputy Director, Mousa Abu Marzook. The HLF was shut down by the U.S. government after it "sent approximately \$12.4 million outside of the United States with the intent to willfully contribute funds, goods, and services to Hamas."⁵
- **Kifah Mustafa:** "[A] speaker at AMP's conferences and events." He also raised funds for the HLF.⁶
- **Salah Sarsour:** An AMP board member and Director of AJP who advertises and fundraises for AMP conferences. He also raised funds for the HLF and reportedly sent funds to Adel Awadallah, a Hamas military leader.⁷
- **Mohammed El-Mezain:** One of the speakers at a 2023 event sponsored by AMP. He was also a leader of the HLF.⁸
- **Rafeeq Jaber:** Prepared tax forms for AJP. He previously served as President of the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP), an organization that was "founded with startup

³ *The sources of the pro-Palestinian demonstrations*, FOX NEWS (May 11, 2024), <https://www.foxnews.com/video/6352755454112>; *Who's really behind Students for Justice in Palestine*, FOX NEWS (Apr. 23, 2024), <https://www.foxnews.com/video/6351492889112>; Hannan Adely, *Rutgers lifts suspension of chapter of the Students for Justice in Palestine. Here's why*, NORTHJERSEY.COM (Jan. 17, 2024), <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/education/2024/01/17/rutgers-students-for-justice-in-palestine-reinstated-heres-why/72247736007/>; Martin Weil and Susan Svrluga, *GWU suspends group over projection of pro-Palestinian slogans*, THE WASHINGTON POST (Nov. 15, 2023), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2023/11/14/gwu-images-palestinian-students-for-justice/>; Nick Robertson, *Columbia suspends Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace*, THE HILL (Nov. 10, 2023), <https://thehill.com/homenews/education/4304627-columbia-suspends-student-group-palestine-jewish-israel-hamas/>; Jericho Tran, *Brandeis University Bans pro-Palestinian student group*, NBC10 BOSTON (Nov. 7, 2023), <https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/brandeis-university-bans-pro-palestinian-student-group/3183990/>.

⁴ *Foreign Terrorist Organizations*, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/> (last visited June 5, 2024).

⁵ *From Ivory Towers to Dark Corners: Investigating the Nexus Between Antisemitism, Tax-Exempt Universities, and Terror Financing*, Hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee, 118th Congress (2023) (statement of Dr. Jonathan Schanzer), <https://gop-waysandmeans.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Schanzer-Testimony.pdf> at 5-6.

⁶ *Id.* at 6.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.* at 7.

money from Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzook” and that provided “media, communications, and fundraising services” to the HLF.⁹

- **Abdelbaset Hamayel:** Listed on a public Internal Revenue Form (IRS) Form 990 as the individual “who possesses the [AJP’s] books and records,” and described on social media in 2014 as AMP’s executive director. He previously served as “secretary general” of the IAP, as well as a representative for KindHearts, a now-shuttered charity connected to HLF and IAP whose assets were temporarily frozen by the U.S. Treasury before it closed under the conditions of a settlement agreement with the U.S. government. Kindhearts’ founder, Khaled Smaili, reportedly worked for Global Relief Foundation, which the U.S. Treasury sanctioned in 2002 for funding al-Qaeda.¹⁰
- **Sufian Nabhan:** A former member of AMP’s National Board. He previously served as “Michigan representative” for the IAP.¹¹
- **Osama Abuirshaid:** The current executive director of AMP. He previously “worked as the editor of IAP’s newspaper, Al-Zaytounah,” “has . . . published interviews that highlight his communications with Hamas leader Abu Marzook and other Hamas leaders in Gaza . . . [and] in 2014 . . . was featured on the website of Hamas’s self-declared military wing, the al-Qassam Brigades.”¹²

In addition, you were allegedly “a frequent speaker at IAP events” and “helped raise money for Kindhearts in 2004.”¹³

Despite these extensive ties to terrorist-linked organizations and their affiliates, AMP has been actively involved in organizing college students. It has worked for more than a decade to support SJP campus groups which, according to reports, have been actively involved in campus demonstrations. Although you have denied preparing the founding documents for SJP,¹⁴ reports show that AMP has been heavily involved in SJP’s development. As far back as 2010, AMP provided trainings to more than a hundred students from “a few dozen universities” and called its reported SJP initiative a “Signature Project.”¹⁵ An undated post archived in 2016 noted that AMP dedicated “a large portion of its budget to support student activism on college campuses” and

⁹ *Id.* at 7-8.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 8, 11.

¹¹ *Id.* at 8.

¹² *Id.* at 9.

¹³ *Id.* at 11.

¹⁴ Will Carless and Romina Ruiz-Goiriena, *Amid campus protests, organizers with past ties to Hamas support also emerge*, USA TODAY (May 22, 2024), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2024/05/22/gaza-student-protests-american-muslims-for-palestine/73775372007/>.

¹⁵ *AMP Seeks to Coordinate Student Anti-Israel Activity*, ADL.ORG (Dec. 21, 2010), <https://www.adl.org/resources/news/amp-seeks-coordinate-student-anti-israel-activity> (last visited June 5, 2024). See also *AMP Campus Coordinator meets with new SJP chapters*, AMP (March 24, 2012), <https://www.ampalestine.org/media/media-room/news/amp-campus-coordinator-meets-new-sjp-chapters> (last visited June 5, 2024); *Profile: American Muslims for Palestine*, ADL.ORG (Mar. 29, 2013), <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/american-muslims-for-palestine-2013-03-29-v1.pdf> (last visited June 5, 2024).

offered “free materials, information, speakers, infrastructure like the apartheid wall, and grants to help ensure [campus groups had] the best chance possible of achieving [their] goals.”¹⁶

These efforts are ongoing. In January 2023, AMP helped to organize an SJP conference at Rutgers, and, in February 2023, AMP was involved in a National Students for Justice in Palestine (National SJP) Conference at UCLA.¹⁷ According to an AMP blog post, the conference “hosted hundreds of students from across the U.S. Workshops and speeches were organized and led by AMP from UC Berkeley to Harvard to the University of Minnesota to Butler, with the intent to contribute to the future generation leading the path towards liberation.”¹⁸ In addition, the blog post states that “AMP has been actively engaged in supporting student-led on-campus organizing for Palestine” and “sponsored student-led delegations to Palestine from four major universities including Harvard, Georgetown, University of Michigan, and Tufts” that involved “[h]undreds of students.”¹⁹

AMP leaders also engaged with college students during anti-Israel campus demonstrations last year. According to press reports, AMP Executive Director Osama Abuirshaid addressed students at Columbia University and George Washington University. You addressed students at UC Berkeley, where you teach, and at the University of Pennsylvania.²⁰ Taher Herzallah, AMP’s Director of Outreach and Grassroots Organizing, addressed students at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, where he also teaches.²¹ These campuses have become sites for a combined total of approximately 300 arrests and detentions.²² UCLA, where AMP helped to organize the National SJP conference, has been the site of more than 200 arrests or detentions.²³

AMP and SJP’s close ties with campus SJP groups raise serious questions about AMP’s involvement in planning, organizing, and funding campus demonstrations that have posed significant threats to campus safety. Importantly, since October 7, 2023, a growing number of universities have banned or temporarily suspended SJP chapters from operating on their campuses.

While college campuses should welcome free speech and the free exchange of ideas, they should never be havens for terrorist organizations or their affiliates to engage with college students or instigate conflict for their own political purposes. In order for HELP to investigate these matters

¹⁶ *Campus Activism Resources*, AMP (Sept. 8, 2023), <https://web.archive.org/web/20160524225435/http://www.ampalestine.org/index.php/component/content/article/9-projects-a-events/595-campus-activism-resources>.

¹⁷ *Student Activism for Palestine is The Pride of Our Movement*, AMP (Mar. 31, 2023), <https://www.ampalestine.org/media/blog/student-activism-palestine-pride-our-movement>.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ Will Carless and Romina Ruiz-Goiriena, *Amid campus protests, organizers with past ties to Hamas support also emerge*, USA TODAY (May 22, 2024), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2024/05/22/gaza-student-protests-american-muslims-for-palestine/73775372007/>; Susan Snyder and Beatrice Forman, *Penn weighs risk of removing encampment, saying it ‘is causing fear for many’*, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER (May 6, 2024), <https://www.inquirer.com/education/upenn-statement-campus-protests-encampments-20240506.html>.

²¹ Will Carless and Romina Ruiz-Goiriena, *Amid campus protests, organizers with past ties to Hamas support also emerge*, USA TODAY (May 22, 2024), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2024/05/22/gaza-student-protests-american-muslims-for-palestine/73775372007/>.

²² *Where Protesters on U.S. Campuses Have Been Arrested or Detained*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (July 22, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/pro-palestinian-college-protests-encampments.html>.

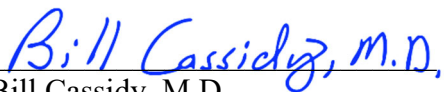
²³ *Id.*

further to ensure campus safety, please respond to the following, on a question-by-question basis, no later than April 9, 2025.

1. Please describe the relationship between AMP, AJP, and their affiliates, as well as individual SJP chapters and the National SJP. The description should provide an in-depth explanation of all forms of financial assistance and organizational support that AMP, AJP, and their affiliates have historically provided and continue to provide to SJP chapters, the National SJP, and their affiliates.
2. Please produce all records relating to AMP, AJP, and their affiliates' activities on college campuses since January 1, 2010, including communications, planning documents, meeting agendas, schedules, conference materials, relevant financial records, and other memoranda. This should include, but not be limited to, all records relating to AMP and AJP's involvement in planning, organizing, attending, and/or otherwise supporting campus demonstrations that have taken place since October 7, 2023. It should also include all communications with outside parties, including donors and other supporters, relating to AMP and AJP's activities on college campuses.
3. Please provide a list of all current AMP and AJP personnel responsible for interacting with students on college campuses. Please describe their responsibilities, your connection to them, and their connections, if any, to the following entities and individuals: Hamas, the al-Qassam Brigades, Mousa Abu Marzook, the Holy Land Foundation, the Islamic Association for Palestine, Kindhearts, the Global Relief Foundation, Jamal Said, Kifah Mustafa, Salah Sarsour, Mohammed El-Mezain, Rafeeq Jaber, Abdelbaset Hamayel, Sufian Nabhan, and Osama Abuirshaid.
4. Please produce all communications between AMP, AJP, and college or university representatives since January 1, 2010.
5. Please produce all AMP and AJP financial records since January 1, 2010, documenting any and all funding provided by AMP and AJP to students and campus student groups, including SJP chapters and the National SJP. In addition, please provide financial documentation showing the sources of that funding.
6. Please produce all records in AMP's possession relating to decisions by universities to ban or suspend SJP's activities on their campuses.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Bill Cassidy, M.D.

Chairman

U.S. Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, and Pensions