

October 11, 2016



Chancellor Howard Gillman
Office of the Chancellor
University of California, Irvine
510 Aldrich Hall
Irvine, CA 92697-1900
Via email: chancellor@uci.edu



Dear Chancellor Gillman:



We, the undersigned organizations, condemn the hateful and racist [posters](#) placed on UC Irvine’s campus last week, slandering a faculty member and multiple student groups by name as “terrorists” and “Jew-haters” for their support for Palestinian rights. We insist that the administration take immediate steps to publicly condemn the posters, and protect the safety and speech of students and faculty who face intimidation, bullying and fear-mongering. The poster campaign has drawn sharp criticism and has been covered by the [LA Times](#), [The Guardian](#) and [NPR](#). Pulitzer Prize winner Junot Diaz also [expressed concern](#) over the posters. The UCLA administration has already [condemned the posters](#) as “a focused, personalized intimidation that threatens specific members” of the campus community.

The posters at Irvine were created by the David Horowitz Freedom Center, a far-right off-campus organization whose founder, David Horowitz, is labeled an extremist by the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#), which calls him a “driving force of the anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and anti-black movements” in America. In recent years, the Horowitz Center has become notorious for plastering campuses

across California with posters that, like those found at Irvine, slander student and faculty using hateful language and images. To track names of students and faculty on campus, the Horowitz Center used [Canary Mission](#), an anonymous organization that posts the names, universities, employers, and social media accounts of students and faculty who support Palestinian rights.

Students for Justice in Palestine seeks equality and freedom for Palestinians. Criticism of the unjust policies of the Israeli government, including support for the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement for Palestinian freedom, is principled human rights advocacy. It is also protected speech under the U.S. and California Constitutions, and U.C. policy.

Administrators have a responsibility as educators to protect and promote campus discourse on the vital human rights issues of our time, including Israel/Palestine. We commend the brave and principled students and faculty who continue to organize in the face of outside intimidation and repression. We ask you to do the same.

Sadly, the appearance of these posters at UC Irvine is not a new or isolated incident. The Horowitz Freedom Center has taken credit for multiple poster harassment campaigns on campuses across California in recent years. As documented in recent reports by [Palestine Legal](#) and [Jewish Voice for Peace](#), these posters are part of a larger pattern of intimidation and suppression of Palestinian right advocacy. A network of well-funded pro-Israel groups across the country uses similar tactics of fear, intimidation, harassment, and misinformation to pressure administrators, stifle student voices, and chill speech on campus.

This is also, unfortunately, not the only time Irvine students have been targeted by campaigns of intimidation and disinformation. A network of Israel advocacy organizations recently promoted a defamatory campaign against these same students, leveling [false accusations](#) against them for participating in a protest of a campus event. Chancellor Gillman, you unfortunately [rebroadcast false accusations](#) in a public statement, echoing the claims of Israel advocacy organizations. A thorough factual investigation by UCI concluded that [the allegations were unfounded](#), but the damage to SJP's reputation had already been done and the original erroneous statement has not been retracted. The university's failure to correct false accusations leveraged against advocates for Palestinian rights has a serious chilling impact on campus life.

In a national climate of rising anti-Muslim and anti-Arab racism, Palestinian, Arab and Muslim students at UC Irvine, have been [repeatedly targeted](#) with intimidation and hateful speech not only by outside organizations, but often also from fellow students. It is the responsibility of administrators to ensure a safe campus environment for all students, especially those most vulnerable to these attacks.

We call on the administration of UC Irvine to join the [Associated Students UCI \(ASUCI\) Office of the President](#), other [administrators](#) and faculty, in condemning and publicly recognizing how

harmful these tactics are to students' wellbeing and rights. Recently, over 1000 faculty across the country signed onto [a statement](#) condemning Canary Mission's fear-mongering, and insisting that the website 'should not be trusted as a resource to evaluate students' qualifications for admission.

We support the student demands for administrative action, including that UCI administrators: (1) unequivocally denounce the Horowitz posters, and request similar denunciation from the UC Regents and President Napolitano; (2) reaffirm that Students for Justice in Palestine is a student group that engages in education and peaceful advocacy for human rights; and (3) arrange a meeting between yourself and Students for Justice in Palestine to learn about their experience as students at UCI.

Sincerely,

Palestine Legal

National Lawyers Guild, Los Angeles and Orange County Chapters

American Muslims for Palestine

Council on American-Islamic Relations, Greater Los Angeles

Jewish Voice for Peace

Cc: Thomas A. Parham, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs