



STATE OF WASHINGTON
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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WA Human Rights Commission Resolution in Solidarity with Palestinians, Arab-American, and Muslim Communities, Honoring Washington Human Rights Advocates

WHEREAS, Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims in the U.S., like all people, deserve to live in peace and security, with the right to learn, work, play, pray, rest, and protest without facing intimidation, violence, or threats to their lives, and to do so with dignity and the freedom to pursue happiness;

WHEREAS, the United States Federal Government holds immense diplomatic power to protect Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim lives abroad and in the U.S.;

WHEREAS, the International Criminal Court (ICC), the International Court of Justice (ICJ), foreign governments, international human rights organizations—including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Israeli organization B'Tselem—and a near-unanimous United Nations have expressed deep concern and criticism over U.S. financial and military aid that supports the occupation and systemic human rights abuses in Palestine, which many have described as apartheid or even genocide, from which discrimination in our local community has emerged and affected Washington residents; (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)

WHEREAS, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) documented 4,951 complaints of anti-Palestinian, Islamophobic, and anti-Arab hate from January to June 2024, a 69% increase over the same period in 2023; (7)

WHEREAS, according to a 2024 survey conducted by CAIR-WA, 38.6% of Washington Muslims reported experiencing heightened discrimination since the escalation of violence in Gaza on October 7, 2023, underscoring the direct impact that international conflicts can have on local communities, and further emphasizing the need for strong protections against discrimination in Washington State and across the nation; (8)

WHEREAS, on October 14, 2023, Wadea Al Fayoume, a 6-year-old Palestinian-American child, was fatally stabbed, and his mother, Hanaan Shahin, was also stabbed by their landlord in what authorities have described as a hate crime motivated by Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian sentiment; (9)

WHEREAS, on November 25, 2023, three Palestinian college students—Tahseen Ali Ahmad, Kinnan Abdalhamid, and Hisham Awartani—were shot while wearing keffiyehs and speaking Arabic in Burlington, VT, in what is considered a hate crime, leaving Hisham Awartani with an incomplete spinal injury; (10)

WHEREAS, on February 7, 2024, Zacharia Doar, a 23-year-old Palestinian American, was stabbed in the back in Austin, Texas, after attending a protest in support of Gaza, which was classified as a hate crime; (11)

WHEREAS, on May 19, 2024, a three-year-old Muslim and Palestinian child was the victim of an attempted drowning in an apartment complex pool in Euless, Texas, by a woman, in what investigators have deemed a hate crime; (12)

WHEREAS, the Washington Human Rights Commission continues to be deeply concerned about the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza, the West Bank, and surrounding areas due to Israel's ongoing military actions, as well as the documented human rights violations, which contribute to deteriorating Israeli-Palestinian relations and result in discrimination against Arabs, Palestinians, and Muslims within Washington State and beyond; (1) (2) (3)

WHEREAS, Rachel Corrie, from Olympia, WA, dedicated her life to the pursuit of justice and human rights, and was killed in 2003 by an Israeli soldier operating a bulldozer while nonviolently protesting the demolition of Palestinian homes in Gaza, demonstrating her unwavering commitment to peace and solidarity with the Palestinian people; (13)

WHEREAS, Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi, a dedicated activist from Seattle, WA, was killed in 2024 while standing in solidarity with Palestinians in the West Bank, and her tragic death highlights the grave dangers faced by those who advocate for peace and justice in the region, as well as her unwavering commitment to defending the human rights of the Palestinian people; (14)

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Washington Human Rights Commission strongly condemns any violence, hate, and discrimination directed at Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, and those speaking out for Palestinian freedom;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Washington Human Rights Commission reaffirms its ongoing commitment to protecting all Washington residents from discrimination, as per RCW Chapter 49.60, which ensures protections against unfair practices in employment, real estate, public accommodations, credit, insurance, and whistleblower complaints;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Washington Human Rights Commission encourages educational institutions across Washington State to include comprehensive curricula on the vibrant history, culture, struggles, and resistance of the Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim peoples;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Washington Human Rights Commission stands firmly against any efforts to silence, intimidate, or harm individuals and organizations advocating for Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim human rights, reaffirming the importance of protecting freedom of expression;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Washington Human Rights Commission encourages employers to provide training and resources to educate their workforce on free speech protections and anti-discrimination policies, particularly as they relate to activism and support for international human rights;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Washington Human Rights Commission urges the U.S. government to cease supplying military aid to Israel, a nation that has repeatedly violated international and U.S. laws;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Washington Human Rights Commission extends its deepest condolences to the family of Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi and to the family of Rachel Corrie, and calls on the United States to independently investigate these deaths and provide closure to the affected families by holding perpetrators accountable;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Washington Human Rights Commission supports initiatives aimed at fostering dialogue and understanding between diverse communities to combat Islamophobia, anti-Arab, and anti-Palestinian sentiment.

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NOW, BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to:

President Joe Biden,

Vice President Kamala Harris,

Secretary of State Antony Blinken,

Superintendent Chris Reykdal of the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction,

Governor Jay Inslee,

The Washington State Congressional Delegation,

U.S. House Minority Leader,

Washington State legislators, and

Other interested stakeholders.

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Submitted to the Washington Human Rights Commission by Human Rights Commissioner Hân Trần and Chair Jeff Sbaih, August 22, 2024.

Resubmitted to the Washington Human Rights Commission by Human Rights Commissioner Hân Trần and Chair Jeff Sbaih, September 26, 2024.

Approved in open meeting September 26, 2024.

Sources

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5. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>
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