

April 1, 2025

To: United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

Re: Investigation into American Muslims for Palestine (“AMP”) and Alleged Ties to Hamas

Zachor Legal Institute (“Zachor”) is a nonprofit legal think tank and advocacy organization dedicated to combating discrimination, defending constitutional rights and countering terrorist influence within the United States. We respectfully submit this memorandum to the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (the “Committee”) in response to Chairman Cassidy’s inquiry into American Muslims for Palestine (“AMP”) and its alleged ties to Hamas.

For several years, Zachor has carried out extensive research into the domestic and international operations of organizations allegedly tied to U.S.-designated terrorist groups. Our findings indicate that entities presenting themselves as charitable or humanitarian may, in fact, function as conduits for financing or promoting extremist activities within the United States.

We commend the Committee’s proactive stance in investigating antisemitic disruptions on college campuses and exploring the potential connections between AMP and foreign terrorist organizations. In this memorandum, we seek to offer an overview of our advocacy efforts and investigations to assist the Committee in its inquiry.

Please note that the information provided herein is a concise summary of our work; we stand ready to elaborate further upon request. Additionally, should the Committee find it beneficial, we welcome the opportunity to testify before the Senate regarding this matter.

1. Zachor’s 2018 Letter to the Department of Justice requesting a RICO Investigation of Domestic Terror Affiliates

In a comprehensive 2018 submission titled “*Call for Investigation of Domestic Activities of Affiliates of Certain Designated Foreign Terror Organizations*” (the “2018 Letter”),¹ Zachor petitioned then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Associate Attorney General Jesse Panuccio, and Assistant Attorney General Brian Benczkowski to investigate the domestic operations of entities allegedly linked to Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (“PFLP”), and Palestine Islamic Jihad (collectively, the “Designated Terror Organizations”).

¹¹ Available at Zachor’s website, <https://zachorlegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Final-DOJ-Letter.pdf?189db0&189db0>.

The 2018 Letter argued that several U.S.-based organizations—collectively referred to as “Domestic Terror Affiliates”—were providing material support or otherwise coordinating with these foreign Designated Terror Organizations under the cover of humanitarian or civil-rights activism. Although our submission encompasses multiple groups, such as Dream Defenders, Muslim Student Association, Students for Justice in Palestine, the BDS Movement and Samidoun, we will focus here on its findings relevant to AMP.

Zachor’s research identified AMP as an outgrowth of the Holy Land Foundation (“HLF”), a charity previously prosecuted for directing funds to Hamas.² Specifically, the 2018 Letter explained how certain individuals implicated in the HLF case reemerged under AMP leadership and continued to promote or enable activities beneficial to Hamas and other proscribed groups.³

Among the documentation provided was analysis of how AMP and its affiliated entity, Americans for Justice in Palestine Educational Foundation, managed to obscure overlapping leadership and fundraising streams with charities tied to the Islamic Association for Palestine and KindHearts—both shuttered or held liable for providing financial support to Hamas.⁴

Zachor described multiple examples of AMP leadership linked to these predecessor groups⁵, including founding member *Hatem Bazian*, who, at a 2009 rally in San Francisco, appeared to urge violent “resistance against the American-Israeli and Arab elite agenda.” Likewise, current AMP’s Executive Director, *Osama Abu Irshaid*, served as editor of *Al Zaytounah*, the Islamic Association for Palestine’s official newspaper, which the U.S. government identified as a propaganda platform for Hamas. Another key individual, *Salah Sarsour*, was allegedly involved in funding Hamas through the HLF; FBI memoranda and Israeli investigative records tied him to material support activities in the 1990s. Further, *Hossein Khatib*, a former AMP board member, served as a regional director for HLF;⁶ and *Jamal Said*, a frequent AMP keynote speaker, was named as an unindicted co-conspirator during the HLF prosecution.⁷

In support of these allegations, the 2018 Letter referenced Dr. Jonathan Schanzer’s Congressional testimony⁸ and accompanying exhibits tracing AMP’s lineage to Hamas-affiliated entities.

² <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/federal-judge-hands-downs-sentences-holy-land-foundation-case>

³ The 2018 Letter. P.1

⁴ <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/js4058>

⁵ The 2018 Letter. P. 24

⁶ The 2018 Letter. P 6 and 7

⁷ The 2018 Letter. P. 26

⁸ Israel Imperiled: Threats to the Jewish State, Joint Hearing Before H. Foreign Affairs Comm., Subcomm. on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade and the Subcomm. on the Middle East and North Africa, 114th Cong., 2d Sess. (Apr. 19, 2016) (statement of Jonathan Schanzer, Vice President of Research Foundation for Defense of Democracies), <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA18/20160419/104817/HHRG-114-FA18-Wstate-SchanzerJ-20160419.pdf>.

Building upon the work of Dr. Schanzer and others, the 2018 Letter showed how AMP and affiliated groups employed co-sponsored events, nominally charitable structures, and targeted financial transfers to advance the political and strategic goals of Hamas, the PFLP, and comparable extremist networks.

The 2018 Letter further detailed that AMP in conjunction with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement (“BDS”) led a 2017 delegation of Americans to the Palestinian Territories to meet with high representatives of the PFLP.⁹

In addition, the 2018 Letter included a detailed overview of Samidoun an organization recently placed on the Office of Foreign Assets Control (“OFAC”) Specially Designated Nationals (“SDN”) list, describing its role as a proxy for the PFLP and chronicling its overlapping leadership with AMP at both the regional and national levels. Our research showed how Samidoun activists served as AMP board members or chapter leaders, helped coordinate protest activity on U.S. campuses, and maintained direct ties to known PFLP operatives in the Middle East.¹⁰

Importantly, the 2018 Letter analyzed relevant provisions of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (“RICO”)—18 U.S.C. §§ 1961–1968—to suggest a legal framework for addressing whether these Domestic Terror Affiliates acted in concert to commit racketeering offenses. “Material Support to Terrorism” offenses, as defined by 18 U.S.C. §§ 2339A and 2339B, were presented as a primary predicate. We underscored how disguised financial transfers, events co-sponsored with outspoken Hamas supporters, and the strategic manipulation of nonprofit statuses could be indicative of ongoing criminal enterprises under RICO.

The 2018 Letter contended that AMP’s purported educational and advocacy functions served as a front to camouflage or legitimize Hamas’s activities within the United States. On this basis, we requested that the DOJ pursue a comprehensive investigation into AMP and other Domestic Terror Affiliates under RICO authority, urging the deployment of federal investigatory resources to uncover and disrupt clandestine terror-support networks.

As exhibits to the 2018 Letter, we provided the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) with comprehensive documentation on the Domestic Terror Affiliates, including detailed profiles of each organization’s operatives and their respective connections to foreign terrorist groups. We also enclosed a chart and accompanying report that illustrated the interrelationships among the Domestic Terror Affiliates and the Designated Terror Affiliates. In our view, a thorough

⁹ See Exhibit E from the 2018 Letter, “Report on 2017 Meetings Between Designated Terror Organizations and BDS Affiliates”.

¹⁰ See Exhibit F to the 2018 Letter for documentation on the statements made on the ties between Samidoun, BDS and the PFLP in this section.

examination of these materials would strongly support a formal prosecution of AMP and related entities for providing material support to foreign terrorist organizations.

Despite the fact that Zachor did not receive a direct response from the DOJ, we believe our submission may have prompted investigations by other government agencies into whether universities and related entities were unwittingly hosting organizations that provided material support to terrorists.¹¹

2. Zachor’s 2020 Follow-Up Letter to the DOJ requesting an investigation of Domestic Terror Affiliates

Despite not receiving a direct response to our 2018 Letter, the nationwide upheaval following George Floyd’s death and the subsequent rise of the Black Lives Matter (“BLM”) protests prompted Zachor to send a new letter in July 2020 (the “2020 Letter”).¹²

In this follow-up communication, we emphasized that several of the same groups we had previously described as Domestic Terror Affiliates—including AMP—were now openly affiliating with or exploiting the BLM movement to advocate violent tactics and rhetoric, posing a threat to public order and national security.

In the 2020 Letter, we reiterated our position that these Domestic Terror Affiliates “*are not acting on their own. They are, instead, fronts and proxies for the Designated Terror Organizations and are not only providing them with the same types of material support as we previously documented, they are also now receiving support from those Designated Terror Organizations. The relationship between the two groups has developed into open and bilateral collaboration.*”¹³

To illustrate this point, we referenced news reports showing how groups historically tied to Hamas and the PFLP began framing U.S. protests as an “Intifada”—a term strongly associated with violent Palestinian uprisings—and highlighted statements from the PFLP itself expressing solidarity with American demonstrations by invoking a parallel between U.S. racism and the

¹¹ See letters from the Department of Education to three universities (June 28, 2019), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/06/28/2019-13904/notice-of-investigation-and-record-requests> and the subsequent letter from the General Counsel of the Department of Education to Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, United States Senate (Nov. 27, 2019), https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/psi-nov27-2019.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=.

¹² Available at Zachor’s website, <https://zachorlegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/DOJ-letter-re.-BLM-Riots-Sent-to-DOJ-on-July-8-2020-1.pdf>.

¹³ 2020 Letter P. 2

Israeli-Palestinian conflict.¹⁴ Zachor argued that, by adopting these slogans, the Domestic Terror Affiliates sought to radicalize public demonstrations and align them with extremist aims, potentially signifying not just ideological affinity but also operational collaboration.

We also noted that tactics historically employed in Palestinian terror campaigns—ranging from vehicular assaults to the use of incendiary devices—appeared to be repurposed for these nationwide protests. Alongside the intensification of anti-Israel rhetoric, these developments posed an elevated threat not only to Jewish Americans, but to the wider American public and the foundational principles that sustain our nation.

Against this backdrop, Zachor once again pressed the DOJ to investigate AMP and its allied Domestic Terror Affiliates under the RICO statute, drawing attention to what we viewed as substantial evidence of deeper networks linking these domestic entities to Designated Terror Organizations. By allowing such groups to operate unchallenged, the 2020 Letter warned, federal authorities risked enabling more pronounced violence that jeopardized the foundational values and institutions of the United States at large.

3. Zachor’s 2022 letter requesting DOJ to investigate seven PFLP Proxies

Following the 2018 and 2020 submissions to the DOJ, Zachor again wrote to the DOJ in October 2022 (the “2022 Letter”),¹⁵ expanding upon our prior findings regarding entities in the United States allegedly linked to designated foreign terror organizations.

We detailed how seven PFLP proxies—Samidoun, the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees (UPWC), ADDAMEER, Bisan, Al-Haq, Defense for Children International-Palestine (DCI-P), and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)—all function as extensions of the PFLP’s broader network. Drawing on insider testimony and Israeli security investigations, we presented evidence of how these entities collectively perpetrate fraud and forgery to misappropriate charitable donations for terrorist ends and coordinate activities with PFLP leadership under the pretense of humanitarian work.

This latest correspondence served as an addendum to our 2018 Letter further underscoring how this groups masquerade as civil or human rights organizations while, in reality, raising funds, recruiting members, and otherwise supporting the terrorist group PFLP.

¹⁴ Sean Savage, “Groups on the Far-Left, Far-Right, co-opt Black Lives Matter Movement to Target Israel”, JNS.ORG (June 9, 2020), <https://www.jns.org/groups-on-far-left-far-right-co-opt-black-lives-matter-moves-to-target-israel/>.

¹⁵ Available at Zachor’s website, <https://zachorlegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Final-DOJ-Letter-2022.pdf>.

Specifically, we noted that these seven PFLP Proxies:

- Conduct events and fundraising in major U.S. cities and on college campuses, often targeting American youths.
- Share leadership with known or suspected PFLP operatives, underscoring the deliberate coordination among these networks.
- Adopt BDS tactics and rhetoric aimed at inciting hostility toward Israel, thereby fueling antisemitic sentiment that places Jewish communities—and the broader public—at risk.

While the 2022 Letter focused on PFLP infiltration, it dovetails with our earlier findings on AMP by highlighting a similar pattern of employing nominally “charitable” or “humanitarian” structures to legitimize extremist agendas in the United States. Samidoun—one of the seven PFLP proxies—was already referenced in our 2018 Letter for overlapping leadership with AMP, including board and chapter-level interactions, co-organized events, and ties to PFLP operatives abroad.

Thus, the 2022 Letter reinforced our concern that multiple domestic nonprofits form part of a broader terror-affiliated ecosystem, with each group leveraging a variety of front organizations to cultivate funding and exert ideological influence.

As with AMP, these PFLP proxies appear to exploit the nonprofit format to obscure material support activities that benefit the Designated Terror Organizations. The 2022 Letter urged the DOJ to initiate a thorough investigation, emphasizing that if left unchecked, these proxies could deepen extremist footholds on U.S. soil, much like we previously warned regarding AMP’s concealed affiliations with Hamas.

4. Zachor’s 2025 Letter, signed by a Coalition of over 40 civil rights organizations

In February 2025, Zachor—together with over 40 allied civil rights organizations—submitted a comprehensive letter (the “Coalition Letter”)¹⁶ to the Department of the Treasury (“Treasury”). This request urged OFAC to:

1. Add six additional groups to its SDN list,
2. Revise SDN alias rules to enable more rapid designation of successor or “alter ego” nonprofits formed by existing SDNs, and

¹⁶ Available at Zachor’s website, <https://zachorlegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Final-Coalition-Letter-to-Treasury-00010089xF5606-1.pdf>.

3. Reform Fiscal Sponsorship programs, which allow non-registered charities to exploit a sponsoring 501(c)(3) to obtain U.S. tax benefits—an arrangement foreign terror organizations can manipulate to collect donations with minimal oversight.¹⁷

This letter grew out of Zachor’s ongoing advocacy against groups that allegedly funnel support to designated terrorist organizations under the guise of humanitarian work. In October 2024, after more than a year of persistent advocacy, Treasury finally designated Samidoun—one of the Seven PFLP proxies we identified in our 2022 Letter—as an SDN. Unfortunately, this left six other PFLP proxies off the SDN list, despite Israeli intelligence naming them as direct affiliates. Nor did Treasury act on our request to update fiscal sponsorship rules, despite documented evidence that nonprofits are allowing terror-linked entities to tap into the U.S. tax-exempt system.

By failing to designate the remaining six proxies or to close the fiscal sponsorship loophole, Treasury essentially paved the way for terror fronts to continue illicit fundraising activities in the United States.

The situation involving PFLP proxies reflects a pattern we have observed in our research on AMP: namely, that terror factions exploit 501(c)(3) frameworks—often using fiscal sponsorship—to avoid scrutiny and launder funds. Just as we called on the DOJ to investigate AMP under RICO, we also pressed the Treasury to deploy its SDN authority more assertively to combat the proliferation of offshoot nonprofits established by already-sanctioned groups.

As part of our Coalition Letter, we included an exhibit that delves further into weaknesses in the current SDN system. This document illustrates how terrorist groups exploit alias loopholes, manipulate 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsorship rules, and ultimately circumvent existing designations by operating under newly formed front organizations. Building on the arguments raised in our Coalition Letter, the exhibit offers targeted proposals to streamline SDN alias designations and strengthen oversight of fiscal sponsorship arrangements to help prevent terror entities from illegally fundraising in the United States.

In conjunction with our previous submissions to DOJ, Zachor continues to press the relevant agencies to coordinate enforcement strategies so that potential SDN designated organization successors and similar entities cannot simply rebrand, attach to a fiscal sponsor, and resume terror financing under a new name.

¹⁷ There are a number of variations for fiscal sponsorship, from the sponsored project or entity becoming a part of the sponsor to the sponsored project or entity obtaining grants from the sponsor while retaining its independent existence and being obligated to file with the IRS. *See, e.g.*, <https://fiscalsponsorship.com/the-models-summary/>. *See, also*, Emma Geering, *The Legal Value of Fiscal Sponsorship: A Proposal of New Law*, 72 HASTINGS L.J. 1605, 1615 (2021), available at: https://repository.uchastings.edu/hastings_law_journal/vol72/iss5/6, <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/eotopico83.pdf> and https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/tege_act_rpt11.pdf.

By urging Treasury to designate these additional PFLP proxies and reform the underlying structures that allow their fundraising, we strive to complement our earlier efforts at the DOJ level. This synergy is crucial to dismantling the layered financing strategies of Hamas, the PFLP, and other Designated Terror Organizations and to ensuring that AMP—and analogous groups—cannot simply exploit legal technicalities to operate unchallenged on American soil.

4. Legal Scholarship

Before concluding, we also wish to highlight our recently published legal scholarship, which further supports the arguments advanced in our previous letters. Published in the Boston University Review of Banking and Financial Law and titled *Judicial Aiding and Abetting of Terror*,¹⁸ the article examines the evolution of U.S. federal anti-terrorism laws and the application of aiding and abetting liability under the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA).

The paper analyzes how terrorist organizations and their proxies exploit charitable structures and affiliated entities in ways that frequently evade traditional regulatory regimes. It underscores many of the points we raise in our advocacy regarding AMP and other Domestic Terror Affiliates, illustrating how ostensibly legitimate nonprofits can obscure direct links to designated terrorist groups such as Hamas or PFLP.

Moreover, the paper contends that JASTA should be construed more broadly to encompass not only primary violators, but also those whose activities—though seemingly tangential—significantly enable foreign terrorist organizations. It traces JASTA’s legislative history and underlying policy goals to conclude that Congress intended an expansive application of the statute, one that would prevent terror groups and their sponsors from avoiding liability simply by operating through charitable fronts or nominally separate legal entities.

By advocating a broader definition of “aider and abettor,” the scholarship emphasizes how terrorist networks exploit nonprofit structures and intricate funding mechanisms to evade accountability—a key concern reflected in our work on AMP and other domestic terror fronts.

Conclusion

Zachor appreciates the Committee's ongoing efforts to investigate potential ties between AMP and Designated Terrorist Organizations such as Hamas. As detailed in our submissions to the DOJ and Treasury, and reinforced by our legal scholarship, Zachor has consistently

¹⁸ <https://www.bu.edu/rbfl/files/2025/02/GREENDORFER-MACHOL.pdf>.



documented and raised awareness about entities operating under the guise of legitimate nonprofit work while facilitating or directly supporting terrorist activities.

We stand ready to provide the Committee with further details, documentation, and analysis to support your investigation. Should the Committee require additional information or clarification regarding the submissions referenced herein—including our prior letters, coalition advocacy efforts, exhibits, or legal research—we remain fully at your disposal.

Additionally, if it would aid the Committee’s deliberations, representatives from Zachor would welcome the opportunity to testify before Congress, further elaborating on our findings and recommendations. We remain committed to assisting in safeguarding American institutions and communities from covert extremist influences.

We welcome your response and should you wish to discuss the matter, feel free to contact the undersigned at Marc@Zachorlegal.org or Vanessa@Zachorlegal.org.

On Behalf of Zachor Legal Institute,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marc Greendorfer', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

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