



US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

April 12, 2022

President Ari Berman
Yeshiva University
500 West 185th Street
New York, New York 10033
president@yu.edu

Dear President Berman:

On behalf of the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI), we write to condemn your trampling of academic freedom, by your act censoring the invited lecture from Professor Rabab Abdulhadi organized by the student organization, Cardozo on Israel and Palestine (CIP).

Before we turn to the specifics of this case, we think it is important to call your attention to the American Association of University Professors's (AAUP) [Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students](#), which holds that "Students should be allowed to invite and to hear any person of their own choosing." The AAUP statement adds: "The institutional control of campus facilities should not be used as a device of censorship"—as clearly has happened at Cardozo School of Law in this instance.

As you must know, Dr. Abdulhadi is the Founder and Director of the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) Studies program at San Francisco State University. She is also an esteemed member of the USACBI advisory board, in which capacity many of us have had the distinct privilege of working closely with her. We therefore know from our direct experience that Dr. Abdulhadi is a scholar of the highest caliber, and a person of principle and integrity. We can state, without doubt, that Cardozo School of Law students will benefit from hearing Dr. Abdulhadi speak and learning about her scholarship and activism, and as such, that the CIP invitation to her should be permitted reissue.

Cardozo School of Law, an avowedly secular institution that is distinct from Yeshiva University, must allow its students to explore diverse political narratives and invite speakers whom they feel represent their educational interests. Unilaterally canceling a student event without conversation or consultation with, and thus also without the consent of, the student organizers disrespects Dr. Abdulhadi and Cardozo students, and violates the academic freedom of both. Cardozo is obliged to respect and welcome student organized spaces for discussions about Israel and Palestine and, also, of necessarily intersecting topics such as LGBTIQ+ rights and anti-racism.

It is of considerable concern to USACBI that Yeshiva University's censorship of Dr. Abdulhadi's invited lecture evidences institutional hostility to her political views and, as such, institutional opposition to equality and freedom for Palestinians. It is, moreover, unquestionably the case—as we have noted above—that Cardozo's censorship of this invited lecture is in

material violation of established principles of academic freedoms, as articulated by the AAUP statement we have cited above. On these grounds alone, your act of censorship exposes the Cardozo School of Law to severe and, with time, steadily increasing reputational harm.

That said, it is first and foremost a matter of principle that you apologize publicly to Dr. Abdulhadi for disrespecting and censoring her, and also that the CIP's "Forms of Activism for Liberation in Palestine" event, with Dr. Abdulhadi as an invited speaker, take place at a place and time acceptable to the student organizers, Heidi Sandomir and Sydney Artson, and of course Dr. Abdulhadi.

Respectfully,

Cynthia Franklin
University of Hawai'i, Manoa

David Palumbo-Liu
Stanford University

Terri Ginsburg
University of Concordia

Andrew Ross
New York University

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New York University

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Pitzer College of the Claremont Colleges

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Purdue University (Emeritus)

All on behalf of USACBI; other institutional affiliations listed for informational purposes only.

Copies: Melanie Leslie, Dean of Cardozo School of Law
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 Charles Toombs, Chair of AAUP Committee on Academic Freedom
 Rabab Abdulhadi, SFSU