

**THE NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD AT  
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK SCHOOL OF LAW**

September 24, 2020

The National Lawyers Guild at CUNY School of Law stands in solidarity with our Palestinian colleagues in the fight for liberation from Israeli occupation. NLG is an anti-imperialist, pro-Palestinian organization, and we in the CUNY Law branch of NLG uphold those values. We condemn the law school's administration and the speed with which they abandoned a beloved colleague, student and human rights advocate to accommodate Pro-Zionist, Anti-Palestinian voices on social media. In prioritizing public perception over student safety, CUNY has enabled an onslaught of right-wing, Islamophobic attacks against an individual who embodies the values our law school purports to uphold.

The student in question is a deeply valued member of the CUNY Law community. Their commitment to organizing in service of the Palestinian struggle is unquestionable. It is horrifying, but not surprising that their work ethic, talent, and success has repeatedly been met with racist and Islamophobic abuse.

The reaction to the video in controversy comprised hundreds of threats to our colleague's safety and livelihood. Rather than take a principled stance on right-wing attacks against one of their own, the administration chose to align their values with those who would harm a member of our community.

The most charitable interpretation of the administration's behavior is that, in their panicked response to a perceived public relations crisis, they capitulated to the tendency to conflate opposition to the settler-colonial, white supremacist state of Israel and critiques of Zionist ideology with anti-Semitism. In doing so, they perpetuate the Zionist practice of weaponizing anti-Semitism to legitimize violence against Palestinians. We reject the conflation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism as yet another example of voices for justice being silenced by misrepresentations of their cause. We are already familiar with this tactic, as we have been called pro-crime for calling to defund the police and pro-terrorist for being anti-war. These bad faith attacks have not silenced us before and they won't now.

CUNY Law students engaged in the struggle for Palestinian liberation deserve the unambiguous support of the administration when faced with bad-faith attacks from those outside our community. The administration's response in this case is an outright failure in their obligations to the student body.

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The CUNY Law community has rallied around Palestinian students before and will do so again. It is deeply disappointing that, this time, we are in express opposition to the leadership of this institution.

**Student groups and student leaders across CUNY Law** have issued the following list of our collective demands:

1. WE DEMAND, CUNY School of Law immediately take down, remove, and not create further harmful social media posts on their Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter pages, which have ignited a hateful backlash against our colleague Nerdeen.
2. WE DEMAND, CUNY School of Law clarify their previous social media posts to rectify their enormous misrepresentation of anti-Zionism as anti-Semitism.
3. WE DEMAND, CUNY School of Law
  - ❖ Publicly acknowledge that the video posted of their Palestinian student was to serve a political, malicious attack against her and nothing else.
  - ❖ Publicly apologize to our colleague, the school's Palestinian students, and the larger Palestinian community.
  - ❖ In addition, CUNY must enact safety measures to protect the student from any present and future harm that could result as a consequence of the social media messages it posted. This includes protecting the student from any disciplinary measures and neutralizing any negative impression this could leave on the student's character and fitness, as well as other repercussions that the student may face as a result of this misrepresentation.
4. WE DEMAND, CUNY School of Law not conflate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. The conflation is harmful to Jewish students as it paints Jews as a monolith, assuming all Jews are Zionists. We further demand that CUNY stop using Jewish students to justify racist and Islamophobic actions. Conflating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism justifies the hate speech currently being launched at Nerdeen, as it makes it seem as though actions condemning the violent tactics that the IDF has employed against the Palestinian people are an act of anti-Semitism, which is completely untrue.

With Love, Rage, and Solidarity,

CUNY Law NLG

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Cardozo NLG (E-Board)  
CUNY Irish Law Students Association

Natasha Bynum, NLG E-Board, EJC E-Board, JLSA  
Maura Gingerich, NLG E-Board, HRP  
Krystin Hernandez, NLG E-Board, Student Government, WOCC E-Board, RSJO  
Ignacia Lolas Ojeda, NLG E-Board, Student Government, OUTlaws Steering Committee  
Xtin Maglabe, NLG E-Board, APALSA E-Board  
Kyla Raskin, NLG E-Board  
Uruj Sheikh, NLG E-Board  
Roxanne Zech, NLG E-Board, OUTlaws Steering Committee, RSJO

Gillian Rowland-Kain, CUNY NLG  
Mitchell Kaye, JLSA, CUNY NLG  
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Ella Nalepka, CUNY NLG, Labor Coalition, IRAP  
Lynn Zhong, CUNY NLG  
Lila Carpenter, CUNY NLG, FILSAA  
Michael Maskin, CUNY NLG, Labor Coalition  
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Kelly Mertz, PT 2L at CUNY Law  
Pablo Rojo, CUNY Law  
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Kendra Sorensen, University of Montana School of Law ABIII  
Andrew Thompson, CWRU SoL '23 (Individual)  
Jessica Coffrin-St. Julien, New York University  
Nancy Jin, Emory University School of Law

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Hugh Schlesinger

Anna Nathanson, Harvard Law '20

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