

UESF Reaffirmation of Our Condemnation of Anti-Semitism and Support for the Rights of Palestinians and Israelis to Live in Peace

Whereas, adherence to the principles of tolerance, acceptance of differences, religious freedom, and equal rights and protection under the law is vital to the education and well-being of our students and to the diverse communities, including religious groups, of the United States; and

Whereas, bigotry, discrimination, oppression, and racism threaten democracy and should have no place in our political discourse; and

Whereas, white supremacists in the United States have exploited and continue to exploit bigotry and weaponize hate for political gain, targeting historically persecuted peoples, including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, the LGBTQ community, immigrants, and others with verbal attacks, incitement, and violence; and

Whereas, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., taught that persecution of anyone is an assault on the rights and freedoms of everyone; and

Whereas, on August 11 and 12, 2017, self-identified neo-Confederates, white nationalists, neo-Nazis, and Ku Klux Klansmen held white supremacist events in Charlottesville, Virginia, where they marched on a synagogue under the Nazi swastika, engaged in racist and anti-Semitic demonstrations and committed brutal and deadly violence against peaceful Americans; and

Whereas, on October 27, 2018, the perpetrator of the deadliest attack on Jewish people in the history of the United States killed 11 worshippers at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue and reportedly stated that he "wanted all Jews to die";

Whereas, synagogues across the United States have been vandalized and NPR reports over 300 possible (waiting further investigation) anti-Semitic physical and verbal attacks during May 2021 alone; and

Whereas, anti-Semitism is the centuries-old bigotry and form of racism faced by Jewish people simply because they are Jews; and

Whereas, in 2017 the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported a 37 percent increase in hate crimes against Jews or Jewish institutions and found that attacks against Jews or Jewish institutions made up 58.1 percent of all religious-based hate crimes; and

Whereas, there is an urgent need to ensure the safety and security of Jewish communities, including synagogues, schools, cemeteries, and other institutions; and

Whereas, Jews are the targets of anti-Semitic violence at even higher rates in many other countries than they are in the United States; and

Whereas, anti-Semitism includes blaming Jews as Jews when things go wrong; calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or extremist

view of religion; or making dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotyped allegations about Jews; and

Whereas, the Israeli government continues to pursue the forced expulsion of Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood; the Israeli police responded with disproportionate force to demonstrations at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's holiest sites, during the month of Ramadan; subsequently, there has been violent unrest by extremist groups terrorizing Arab-Jewish towns and cities; attacking innocent people, Arab homes and businesses, churches and mosques; burning synagogues, theaters and cars; and other violent acts; and

Whereas, since Monday May 10th, over 240 people, mostly civilians and including 66 children, have been killed by Israeli airstrikes in Gaza; Hamas and others have fired rockets and mortars from Gaza toward Israeli cities and towns, killing and wounding civilians and sending hundreds of thousands of Israelis, Arabs and Jews into bomb shelters; additionally, on Saturday, May 15, 2021, the Israel military targeted and bombed a 12-story building that houses major news organizations, including The Associated Press and Al-Jazeera; and

Whereas, the recent violence follows decades of systemic discrimination and the violation of the human rights of Christian and Muslim Palestinians, including militarily enforced restrictions of movement for over 4.7 million Palestinians; a brutal blockade on Gaza; confiscation of land; economic exploitation; and suspension of basic civil liberties. These actions and more, are a breach of international law, the Geneva convention, and basic human rights, and

Whereas, while a ceasefire is critical to end this month's violence between Israel and Hamas, it cannot lead to a lasting and permanent peace if the underlying causes of the violence remain unresolved. This is the moment for ending both the occupation and the blockade. It is critically important for rebuilding to begin immediately, but that rebuilding must occur on a solid, democratic and rights-respecting ground; and

Whereas, United Educators of San Francisco deplores the fact that Israeli airstrikes killed hundreds of civilians including children; and we deplore, as well, that Hamas rockets killed Israeli civilians and children. We deplore the destruction of schools in Palestine and Israel, and the conversion of many schools from centers of learning into emergency shelters housing displaced people; and

Whereas, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, convicted of corruption, worked closely with former United States President Donald Trump, leading to an escalation of violent acts against Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere; and

Therefore be it Resolved that United Educators of San Francisco joins the call for renouncing violence and engaging in direct negotiations, with the objective of bringing an end to the Israeli occupation and the blockade of Gaza; and

Be it Further Resolved that United Educators of San Francisco supports the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, calls on both sides to refrain from any provocative acts that will undermine

the ceasefire, and urges Congress to pass H.R. 2590, The Palestinian Children and Families Act, introduced by Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN), which states that the U.S. will not fund the Israeli government's imprisonment and torture of Palestinian children; theft and destruction of Palestinian homes and property; or any further annexation of Palestinian land; and

Be it Further Resolved that United Educators of San Francisco reaffirms that we:

- Reject the perpetuation of anti-Semitic stereotypes in the United States and around the world; and
- Condemn anti-Semitic acts and statements as hateful expressions of intolerance that are contradictory to the values that we hold as educators of children; and
- Reject attempts to justify hatred or violent attacks as an acceptable expression of disapproval or frustration over political events in the Middle East or elsewhere; and
- Encourage all public officials to confront the reality of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, and other forms of bigotry, and to embrace and learn from the historical struggles against bigotry, to ensure that our country will live up to the principles of tolerance, religious freedom, and equal protection as embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the first and 14th amendments to the Constitution; and

Be it Further Resolved that United Educators of San Francisco affirms its support for a just and lasting solution to the tragic conflict that will ensure the labor and human rights and social and economic justice of all the people in the region; and

Be it Further Resolved that United Educators of San Francisco calls upon our local community to ensure that the tension and passions around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are not used to divide us at home and are not used as a pretext for anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, or other hateful statements and judgements against whole groups of people; and

Be it Finally Resolved that United Educators of San Francisco reaffirms our condemnation of anti-Semitism in all its forms and recognize and acknowledge that it is a real danger that we must resist.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Solomon, Anabel Ibanez, Cathay Sullivan, Ken Tray