



Credit: Fordham SJP



# GROWING WITH THE MOMENT

Fall 2019 Newsletter

## A Letter from Our Director

This has been a year of **tremendous challenges and opportunities**—for our organization and for the movement for Palestinian rights.

We've seen **expressions of support** for Palestinian rights from public figures, and we've also seen the **growth of state repression** of the movement in the U.S. and abroad.

Even with this constant assault, we are inspired by the organizing that is happening to resist these forces. And with your help, **we're winning important victories**.

Our **lawsuit against Fordham University** won students the right to organize on campus as Students for Justice in Palestine, making clear we won't let private universities get away with anti-Palestinian censorship.

And though many anti-boycott laws are still on the books, the lawsuits we're supporting have courts saying that boycotts for Palestinian rights are **constitutionally protected**.

Thanks to you, **we're exposing pro-Israel censorship**, working on behalf of activists to challenge it every day.

We're committed to building our collective power to effect real change, with our partners in other freedom movements. **Thank you for speaking out** and working with us towards justice for all!



Onward,  
Dima Khalidi  
Director

## Responding to Governmental Attacks

Your support allows us to track and respond to legislative efforts to punish advocacy for Palestinian rights. Our [RightToBoycott.org](https://RightToBoycott.org) site remains a **go-to source for journalists and activists** about these legislative assaults.

On the state level, we've supported some of the pivotal lawsuits challenging anti-boycott laws this year. We **submitted important amicus briefs** to two federal appellate courts **in the cases against Arkansas and Arizona's laws**. We **expect to file a brief in the Texas case**, where the judge produced some of the most stunning rebukes of anti-boycott measures in his decision enjoining the Texas law.



This summer, we tracked the non-binding House anti-boycott resolution (H.Res. 246), and **joined over 40 organizations in supporting the right to boycott measure** (H.Res. 496) sponsored by Reps. Ilhan Omar, John Lewis, and Rashida Tlaib.

We're now **revamping our RightToBoycott site** to ensure that you have the information and tools to challenge this legislation on the ground!

FREEDOM, JUSTICE, AND EQUALITY FOR ALL IS  
**#WHYWEBOYCOTT**  
TELL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE TO SUPPORT H RES 496

# Defending Campus Activism & Community Events

Thanks to you, **we brought our first lawsuit on behalf of students, with the Center for Constitutional Rights and co-counsel Alan Levine—and won!** The court's rejection of Fordham University's SJP ban was a victory for the movement.

After four years, **Fordham SJP is finally able to organize on campus.** As Fordham signals it will appeal the decision, we'll continue to support the students' right to organize – as long as it takes!



**We won the case against Fordham's SJP ban!**

Your support has also helped us defend a number of important events:

- A reading of *P is for Palestine* at a public library in New Jersey was cancelled, and **after we intervened, the library agreed to reschedule it.**
- **Harvard reversed its imposition of security fees** on a student event on Black-Palestinian solidarity featuring Cornel West, Marc Lamont Hill, and Dima Khalidi after we wrote the university.
- The **University of Illinois reversed its refusal to rent space** to a community

group hosting a talk by Israeli author Miko Peled after we warned that their refusal was unconstitutional.

- **An event on free speech and Palestine at UMass Amherst moved forward when a judge rejected an anonymous lawsuit** to stop it. We supported local JVP attorney Rachel Weber in challenging the frivolous suit, and helped brief the public on the case.

The heart of our work is ensuring that activists and community members are able to organize and protest freely. **Thank you for sustaining this work.**

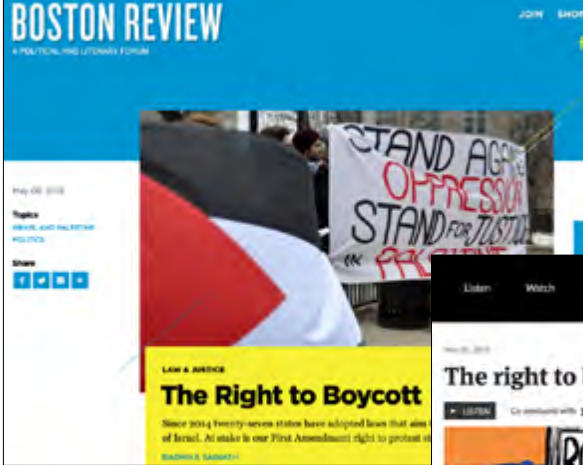


**Yamila Shannan, Cornel West, Marc Lamont Hill and Dima Khalidi at Harvard event on Black Palestinian solidarity.**

Credit: Harvard Palestine Solidarity Committee



# Reaching New Audiences



Our expertise is sought out by media outlets across the country. Our work was featured in *The New York Times Magazine* in March, and the *Times* has since published a Letter to the Editor from Radhika Sainath responding to an article on the boycott movement. Zoha Khalili was also quoted in the *Times* on government attacks on Middle East Studies at Duke and UNC.

We have also been featured in *Al Jazeera English*, *Democracy Now!*, *Electronic Intifada*, *The Intercept*, *The Nation*, *Newsweek* and dozens of other outlets. We contributed to an extensive Center for Public Integrity report, printed in *USA Today*, on the “Copy, Paste, Legislate” nature of anti-boycott bills across the country, and a *Reveal* podcast about anti-boycott laws that aired on NPR included an interview with Dima Khalidi.

## The House Resolution Condemning Palestinian Human Rights Movement is Blatantly Wrong [OP-ED]

The U.S. House passed a resolution this week condemning the peaceful Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement for Palestinian rights. Here's what's wrong about that decision.

Kristian Davis Bailey | JUL 26, 2015 4:27PM EDT



Our staff have also published writing of their own, including:

- Kristian Davis Bailey in *Colorlines* on congressional boycott resolutions
- Liz Jackson in *The Tampa Bay Times* arguing against Florida's law redefining anti-semitism to chill campus criticism of Israel
- Dima Khalidi in *New Jersey's The Star Ledger* on the dangers of that state's antisemitism redefinition bill
- Radhika Sainath in the *Boston Review* on the right to boycott and in *+972 Magazine* on the Fordham victory

We will continue **uplifting our clients' voices** and the narrative that advocacy for Palestinian rights is both moral and legally protected. **Thank you for amplifying these messages!**



Radhika with students  
at UMass Amherst.  
Credit: UMass Amherst SJP

## Affirming Academic Freedom

In the past few months, we have worked to address many threats to academic freedom.

Most recently, we **pushed back on the Department of Education's ultimatum** to the Middle East Studies consortium at Duke and UNC: change your curriculum or lose funding. We are **exposing the real intentions behind this attack**, which follows pro-Israel complaints about a conference on Gaza.

## Engaging the Public

So far this year, we've **led 8 Know Your Rights** workshops at colleges and in communities across the country. We've **participated in 20 speaking events**, including a Law for Black Lives webinar on criminalizing protest, the Netroots Nation conference in Philadelphia, the Palestine Lives conference in New York, and the People's Law Office 50th anniversary celebration in Chicago.

**Join us at more events this fall!** We'll be in Detroit for MOVE—the Arab American Social Change summit, Orlando for the National Muslim Lawyers Association conference, Durham for the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) Convention, at Yale and UConn law schools, and more.

We're proud to share that **two of our staff will be honored for their work** at NLG chapter celebrations: **Dima Khalidi** will receive the Arthur Kinoy award at the NLG Chicago dinner on November 15th, and **Liz Jackson** will be honored at the NLG Bay Area dinner in March 2020. We hope you can celebrate with us!

*The New York Times*  
**With New Investigation at Duke  
and U.N.C., Feds Hunt Anti-  
Israel Bias in Higher Education**



We have confidentially **advised several professors facing meritless complaints, tenure denials, harassment, and death threats** for their scholarship or speech critical of Israel. We also supported Pitzer College professor Dan Segal, attacked for organizing a successful vote to suspend the college's study abroad program in Israel due to its discriminatory entry policies.

**Thank you for helping us defend those in the academy** advocating for Palestinian rights.

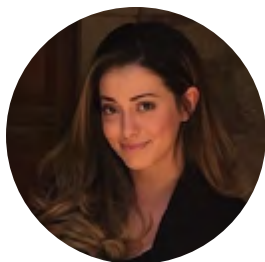
# Growing Our Team

We have grown remarkably this year thanks to your support! We hired senior staff attorney Meera Shah and communications manager Kristian Davis Bailey, opened an office in NYC, and recently welcomed our first Michael Ratner Justice Fellow, Amira Mattar. **Thanks to all who have contributed to the Michael Ratner Justice Fund to make this position possible!**



We all met for the first time as a group in early October at our new office in NYC, where we held our staff retreat. We hope you're as happy as we are to see our team this big!

Amira and our two fall law school interns reflected on being part of the Palestine Legal team:



**Amira Mattar**, Michael Ratner Justice Fellow

“Being the Michael Ratner Justice Fellow means that I get to support Palestinian human rights every day. I have the honor to continue Michael Ratner’s legacy by way of supporting Palestine advocates who march, sit-in, and protest for equality. I once relied on Palestine Legal as an activist and now my position allows me to assist those that ring the call for freedom despite efforts to smear and intimidate them.”



**Luna Martinez**, Fall Legal Intern

“As an aspiring movement lawyer, I am inspired by Palestine Legal’s role in supporting those who stand for justice in Palestine. I am grateful to support the fight for Palestinian liberation while having a daily example of the kind of progressive lawyering I’d like to practice upon graduation.”



**Shezza Dallal**, Fall Legal Intern

“As an organizer with Columbia SJP, I benefited tremendously from Palestine Legal’s support. Now in my second year of law school, it only feels natural to join the legal intern team, learning how to embody my newly acquired skills and join the ranks of the next generation of movement lawyers.”

# Hearing from YOU!

**We couldn't do this work without the generosity** and commitment of our communities. Hear from some of our donors why supporting Palestine Legal is important to them!

## **Susan Abulhawa**

*"Pal Legal is one of the principal institutions insisting on justice within legal frameworks. We need them, and I'm proud to be among their longstanding supporters."*

## **Noel Sanborn**

*"Palestine Legal has become one the most important gives I make each year as Israeli lawfare has dialed up their assault on American civil rights in order to enable Israel to continue denying Palestinians their human rights. Palestine Legal is our front line, all too often our only line, of defense."*

## **Mae and Jared Tinklenberg**

*"We're proud to support Palestine Legal because of their effectiveness in upholding human rights for all. Over the years, they have been engaged in some of the most difficult legal issues faced by Palestine activists. Pal Legal's exemplary track record gives hope to everyone who cherishes the rule of law and our constitutional democracy."*

## **Marc Van Der Hout and Jody LeWitter**

*"In these challenging times, nothing is more critical than supporting the amazing and crucial work of Palestine Legal. Nobody protects and defends the voices of those daring to speak out for the rights of Palestinians like Palestine Legal. Thank you, PL!"*