

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

October 16, 2023

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland:

In the wake of the brutal terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel, we have witnessed an alarming rise in support for violence against the Jewish people. Public reports indicate that several far-left student groups have lined up to effectively cheerlead Hamas's genocidal war against the people of Israel:

- At Harvard University alone, 34 student organizations signed a letter declaring that they “hold the Israeli regime entirely responsible for all unfolding violence,” and that Israel is “the only one to blame” for the unfolding carnage.¹
- The University of California, Los Angeles witnessed a massive protest by students screaming “intifada, intifada”—a call for a violent uprising and the murder of Jewish people.²
- In New York, Columbia University was forced to close its campus to the public after an Israeli student was violently assaulted by an allegedly pro-Palestine student.³
- The University of Virginia chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine announced that the mass murder of civilians was “a step towards a free Palestine . . . reflect[ing] the power and resilience of the Palestinian people.”⁴

Other examples are legion. These student organizations are seemingly lobbying in support of the murder of innocent people, including children and babies. They are menacing Jewish Americans within our cities. And they are doing so in what appears to be a coordinated fashion.

There is a long and sordid history of supposedly independent “human rights” groups operating within American borders, that possess longstanding ties to foreign terrorist organizations. To name just one high-profile example, in the early 2000s, the Department of Justice shuttered the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development and jailed its founders, after finding that this supposed charitable organization was funneling money into the pockets of Hamas.⁵ It is entirely possible that many of these student organizations, at some level or another, are enmeshed in similar networks—whether as recipients of funding from these malicious actors or as conduits for it.

¹ <https://www.voanews.com/a/some-left-wing-us-students-voicing-support-for-hamas-/7308620.html>

² <https://twitter.com/AvivaKlompas/status/1712613678166466862>

³ <https://www.dailysignal.com/2023/10/12/columbia-tightens-campus-access-following-attack-jewish-student-pro-palestine-protests/>

⁴ https://twitter.com/zach_kessel/status/1711756934758412298?s=20

⁵ <https://www.justice.gov/archive/ag/speeches/2004/72704ag.htm>

Given the potential scale of this threat, I urge you to immediately deploy DOJ resources to investigate these organizations' funding sources. The First Amendment protects the right to protest. But it does not protect the provision of material support to terrorist organizations. Nor does it insulate financial transactions that threaten our national security. Hamas, as you are well aware, is designated a terrorist organization pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. DOJ should deploy all appropriate authorities to investigate any potential links to organizations that operate within the United States.

In particular, the Department should prioritize investigating the following questions:

1. Of those student organizations presently calling for the effective destruction of Israel and justifying the recent massacre of Jewish people, how many receive significant funding from third-party groups?
2. Of those third-party groups that offer financial support to pro-Hamas student organizations, or for which pro-Hamas student organizations conduct fundraising, how many have financial or ideological ties to Hamas?

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Josh Hawley
United States Senator