

THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO DEFEND PROFESSOR RABAB ABDULHADI
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Federal judge rules to move forward with Abdulhadi's lawsuit against SFSU amidst death threats and continued university harassment. Over 500 organizations and individuals around the world call on SFSU and CSU in support of Abdulhadi

[Over 500 organizations and individuals around the world delivered today a petition to incoming SFSU President Lynn Mahoney, and CSU Chancellor Tim White.](#) The timing of the petition could not be more appropriate. Last week, Federal Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers ruled against SFSU motion to dismiss Dr. Abdulhadi's lawsuit giving the go-ahead for her case. Only a couple of days earlier, Dr. Abdulhadi had received an anonymous death threat letter from someone claiming to be a former New York City Detective. The death threat echoed Islamophobic, misogynist and racist slurs used by President Trump and other white supremacists and targeting Congresswomen Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar.

Last Friday, Judge Gonzalez Rogers, Northern District Court of California, [rejected the motion to dismiss filed by SFSU thus allowing Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi's lawsuit \(holding SFSU accountable\) to go forward.](#) The case charges SF State, in collusion with pro-Israel groups, with harassment and retaliation against Dr. Abdulhadi because of her teaching, research, and advocacy for justice for and in Palestine. Dr. Abdulhadi joined SF State 12 years ago when she was hired to found and direct the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) studies program in the College of Ethnic Studies. Since 2009, university administrators have violated the terms of Dr. Abdulhadi's hiring contract, refused to hire any new professors to the AMED program, and denied Dr. Abdulhadi research support. Her lawyers, Mark Kleiman, and Behnam (Ben) Gharagozli, are in the process of discovery to present the necessary evidence for Dr. Abdulhadi's affirmative lawsuit. Both Kleiman and Gharagozli are confident that they have a winning case, just as they did against the pro-Israel group, the Lawfare Project, in 2017.

Dr. Abdulhadi's cases have garnered widespread support from academics, public intellectual and grassroots communities internationally, in the US as well as in the Bay Area. On Thursday, August 22 the International Campaign to Defend Professor Rabab Abdulhadi submitted a petition to the SF State President and the California State University (CSU) Chancellor asking them to stop harassment, retaliation, and muzzling of Dr. Abdulhadi and to ensure institutional support for AMED Studies. To date nearly 500 organizations and individuals have endorsed the petition with new signers on daily. The list is reflective of the global and ecumenical range of national and regional organizations, such as American Muslims for Palestine, National Lawyers Guild, Jewish Voice for Peace, Kairos USA, US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, California Scholars for Academic Freedom, and Black for Palestine. Individual signatures include internationally recognized scholars and intellectuals in Native American and Indigenous Studies, Black Studies, Queer Studies, Feminist Studies, American Studies, Ethnic Studies, Middle East Studies, and Critical legal studies. The list also includes SFSU alumni, and signers across Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, and the Pacific, including Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Holland, India, Ireland, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Puerto Rico, Slovenia, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom.

The AMED program has been under attack by pro-Israel lobby groups since its inception. By 2013, the attacks had escalated to make Dr. Abdulhadi a prime target, falsely alleging that she supports terrorism and promotes antisemitism through her international research and decolonizing curriculum. In 2017, the right-wing Lawfare Project filed a lawsuit against Dr. Abdulhadi and SFSU falsely alleging a hostile environment for Jewish students as a result of a Palestine-centered curriculum, scholarship and advocacy at SFSU that is centered in critical ethnic studies. Federal Judge Orrick subsequently dismissed the lawsuit with prejudice. In collusion with the Israel lobby, SFSU Administrators cut funding and support for Dr. Abdulhadi and AMED Studies and fostered an openly hostile work environment for her and her students, including the cancellation of a June 2019 summer study abroad program to Palestine. This systemic pattern of university discrimination against a Palestinian professor and the program she was explicitly hired to direct is especially troubling given the climate of rampant violence, Islamophobia, racism and white supremacy in this country presently.

As the campaign to support Dr. Abdulhadi gained more momentum [an individual claiming to be a retired New York City police officer threatened her life](#). In a threat letter sent to her university office in the College of Ethnic Studies, the letter's author claims to be a "hardcore" Christian crusader. Employing white supremacist, Islamophobic, misogynist, and xenophobic slurs, the author expresses admiration for the Israeli military and the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu while calling for attacks against Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims and their "ethnic cleansing" and forced removal from the USA by the FBI, CIA, and NSA. The letter threatens Dr. Abdulhadi's personal safety,

"please be careful re: your personal safety. Careful when crossing intersection, careful when walking alone at night, careful about seemingly trivial arguments with anyone... accidents will happen and if (when?) one should strike you..."

Immediately upon receiving the threatening letter, Dr. Abdulhadi alerted her colleagues in the College of Ethnic Studies and the student groups she advises, General Union of Palestine Students, Muslim Student Association and Muslim Women Student Association, that they too may be in danger. Disappointingly, SFSU Administrators, including the University Police Department, downplayed the threat referring to it as "hate mail" and telling Dr. Abdulhadi to seek help "If you feel threatened". No affirmative steps have been taken by SFSU to guarantee her safety and the safety of her students on campus. Dr. Abdulhadi's legal team are pursuing all channels for protection. They have reported the threatening letter to the U.S. Postal Inspection Services for a federal investigation. Meanwhile, it is unclear what safety measures SFSU will take to protect Dr. Abdulhadi, her colleagues and students as the Fall semester is set to start next week.

This is not the first time threats have been made against Dr. Abdulhadi at SF State. In her letter to colleagues, she warns against systemic university failure, given the rising national concern over mass shootings and white supremacist attacks and their links to Islamophobia, racism and anti-immigrant xenophobia. College and university administrators must heed the danger to their faculty and students, particularly those from minority and immigrant backgrounds, of this scourge of violence and hatred.

For those who wish to support the campaign, a collection fund has been organized at launchgood.com/supportRabab