



B ' N A I B ' R I T H I N T E R N A T I O N A L

CHARLES O. KAUFMAN, PRESIDENT

DANIEL S. MARIASCHIN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

October 21, 2020

President David Lassner
University of Hawaii
2444 Dole St.
Bachman Hall 202
Honolulu, HI 96822

Dear President Lassner:

On behalf of B'nai B'rith International, the world's oldest Jewish humanitarian organization with thousands of members and supporters around the world, we write to express our deep dismay that your University is planning to host an event in two days, on October 23, with convicted Palestinian terrorist Leila Khaled.

In response to this, a spokesperson for your University stated you are an institution that values “the sharing and debate of diverse and difficult ideas...” This event, however, is not focused on sharing “difficult ideas,” but rather to provide a platform to a terrorist, Khaled, who is still a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Khaled cannot enter the United States, not only because of membership in a State Department-designated terrorist organization, but also because she was involved in some of the more noteworthy acts of international terror hijackings in the 1960s and 1970s.

Khaled is no mere spokesperson for the Palestinian cause. She was armed and clearly willing to bring down planes, and their hundreds of passengers with them. That both her hijackings did not result in mass casualties was sheer luck. Her targets were not random. The fact that she chose a flight to Israel on an American airliner, specifically an El Al flight, meant that the great number of passengers were Jewish, and most likely citizens or supporters of Israel.

We ask you, would the 9/11 hijackers be welcomed at the University of Hawaii? Do would-be or actual killers and assassins have anything fundamentally positive to teach students? If you are not able to draw that line, something is terribly askew in how your University sees the very basic definition of morality and the sharing of “difficult ideas.”

Moreover, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) — an extremist group — is co-sponsoring this event. SJP is extremist because it is a proponent of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which is anti-Semitic in nature, according to the working definition of anti-Semitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), adopted by over 30 countries around the world. The BDS movement strategically uses language couched in human-rights and social justice terminology in order to appeal to progressive, well-meaning individuals, most

especially college students, looking to impact change. Activists claim it is a non-violent form of protest; however, they offer no equitable solution to the conflict and in fact seek to challenge Israel's right to exist as the sole Jewish state. This is anti-Semitism.

Further, Zoom has found that this event violates its terms of service and will not allow a terrorist to speak on its platform. This echoes Zoom's decision, as well as YouTube's decision, to ban Khaled from using their platforms to speak at San Francisco State University last month. Facebook and Twitter have also recently created new policies regarding hate speech and Holocaust denial on their platforms.

We sincerely hope your University will follow suit, and not allow this profoundly offensive event to take place under the University's banner. Further, we hope in the spirit of education, that this situation will ultimately better inform students, faculty and University officials about contemporary manifestations of anti-Semitism in order that they may be better able to identify and combat it — least of all to provide the world's oldest hatred a voice by way of a convicted terrorist.

Sincerely,

Charles O. Kaufman
B'nai B'rith International President

Daniel S. Mariaschin
B'nai B'rith International CEO