

## Sacramento Regional Coalition for Palestinian Rights

909 12<sup>th</sup> Street #118 - Sacramento, CA 95817

SacReg4PalestinianRights@gmail.com – www.Sac4Palestine.org

March 4, 2019

Senator Kamala Harris

Fax: 202-224-2200

Email: [www.harris.senate.gov/contact/email](http://www.harris.senate.gov/contact/email)

Dear Senator Harris:

We are writing to ask that you ensure S.J. Res. 7 does not include the last-minute amendments made to H.J. Res. 37 directed at silencing criticism of Israel.

S.J. Res 7 should deal only with the important subject of directing the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities in the Republic of Yemen that have not been authorized by Congress.

Unfortunately, Section 1 paragraphs 11, 12, 13 and 14 were added to H.J. Res 37 without any opportunity for public input. These sections are a blatant attempt to stop the vibrant, legitimate, and growing criticism of the Israeli government's abusive policies and practices that violate human rights and international law.

These H.J. Res 37 amendments:

- Attempt to conflate antisemitism with criticism of Israel. Criticism of Israel is NOT antisemitism. The vague terms "anti-Israel hatred" and "attempts to delegitimize" Israel are used by some who want to stop any criticism of the abusive policies and practices of the Israeli government by calling it "anti-Israel" and even "hatred."
- Ignore the reality that Israel operates as an apartheid state, not a democracy, in which non-Jewish citizens do not have the same rights or benefits as Jewish citizens and those under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Golan or under blockade and siege in Gaza have no say in the military law that rules their lives. Last year the Israeli Knesset passed the Nation State Law that gives the right to exercise national self-determination solely to the Jewish people. This leaves a quarter of Israel's citizenry in a tenuous and legislated unequal state.
- Are intended to silence those who oppose Israel's abuses including through the non-violent strategy of boycott, divestment and sanctions strategy that was used effectively to end apartheid in South Africa. Our right to boycott is protected by the Constitution.

As a human rights organization, we condemn prejudice against people who identify as Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or other religions, ethnicities or races. But we also condemn any effort to conflate criticism of Israel with the dangerous forms of true antisemitism that exist in the world today.

The people of the United States are waking up to the fact that the U.S. provides billions of dollars in aid as well as political cover to Israel so that the Israeli regime can continue its brutal occupation, ethnic cleansing, and apartheid. These are not values shared by those who support human rights and democracy.

We stand with the growing majority of your constituents in asking that you stand up for human rights, for international law and for the constitution and oppose legislation that aims to stop criticism of human rights violating governments, including Israel.

Trump is seen as a bully who acts in opposition to the interests of the majority of Americans. The Israel lobby, which stands behind legislation to try to stop criticism and human-rights-based boycotts of Israel, is no different.

We also ask that you oppose any other efforts by Congress or other legislative bodies to legally equate exercise of our protected free speech rights with antisemitism.

Sincerely,

*Sacramento Regional Coalition for Palestinian Rights*