

May 21, 2024

Re: Posts that include “from the river to the sea”

To the Oversight Board:

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is the leading anti-hate organization in the world. Founded in 1913, its timeless mission is “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” Today, ADL continues to fight all forms of antisemitism and bias, using innovation and partnerships to drive impact. A global leader in combating antisemitism, countering extremism and battling bigotry wherever and whenever it happens, ADL works to protect democracy and ensure a just and inclusive society for all.

ADL brings decades of experience to the fight against hate and extremism online. Its Center on Extremism (COE) examines the ways extremists across the ideological spectrum exploit the online ecosystem to spread their messages, recruit adherents, finance hate, and commit acts of terrorism. COE works directly with threatened communities on the ground as well as law enforcement agencies across the country to prevent attacks and identify perpetrators. ADL’s Center for Technology and Society (CTS) works across four key areas -- policy, research, advocacy, and incident response -- to generate advocacy-focused solutions to make digital spaces safer and more equitable. For years, CTS has researched how platforms amplify hate and extremism through their user interfaces, recommendation engines, and algorithms. CTS also has years of experience researching the consequences of that amplification, including the radicalization of users and the spread of online hate to offline violence. CTS engages directly and regularly with social media platforms and online gaming companies, as well as with legislators and regulators, to push for policy and product changes, making a measurable difference in fighting online extremism.

ADL believes that the phrase “from the river to the sea” is hate speech. “From the river to the sea” is used as short-hand for “for the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” which is an antisemitic slogan commonly featured in anti-Israel campaigns and chanted at demonstrations.

This rallying cry, enshrined in the [charter of Hamas](#), has long been used by anti-Israel voices, including supporters of terrorist organizations such as Hamas and the PFLP, which seek Israel’s destruction through violent means. It is fundamentally a call for a Palestinian state extending from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, territory that includes the entirety of the State of Israel, which would mean the dismantling of the Jewish state. It is an antisemitic charge denying the Jewish right to self-determination, including through the forced removal of Jews from their ancestral homeland.

Usage of this phrase has the effect of making members of the Jewish and pro-Israel community feel unsafe and ostracized. There are many ways to advocate for Palestinian justice and rights, including a Palestinian State, without resorting to using this hateful phrase, which denies the right of the State of Israel to exist.

It's important to note that, [per recent polling](#), many — perhaps a majority — of college-aged Americans do not understand the geographic references and implications of the phrase, and nearly 70% actually changed their views on usage of the phrase once the issue had been fully explained.

Additionally, a [recent study](#) of the American campus environment from the Chicago Project on Security and Threats at the University of Chicago (CPOST) found that “66% of Jewish college students understand the pro-Palestinian protest chant “From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will Be Free” to mean the expulsion and genocide of Israeli Jews, while only 14% of Muslim students understand the chant that way; of Jewish students who understand the phrase this way, 62% report feeling afraid.” The same study found that “26% of all [surveyed] students say they understand the phrase to mean ‘expulsion or genocide of Israeli Jews.’”

According to the [request for comment](#): “Meta determined that, without additional context, it cannot conclude that “From the river to the sea” constitutes a call to violence or a call for exclusion of any particular group, nor that it is linked exclusively to support for Hamas.”

ADL respectfully disagrees with Meta’s decision about this phrase. In the past 7+ months, “From the river to the sea” has seeped into the mainstream and become associated with calls for Israel’s destruction.

Of course, there could be instances completely divorced from questions about Israel or Palestine where this phrase can be used innocuously, e.g. “I saw my friend kick a soccer ball all the way from the river to the sea.” But this is not how it is commonly used.

Also, the intent of a comment should be considered in terms of enforcement severity. Not everyone may be aware of antisemitic nature of this phrase and its impact on Jewish people, and the opportunity should be taken to educate users when appropriate.

And while the phrase might not always be directly linked to support for Hamas, it is exclusively linked to values, at this time, that Hamas pursues: the destruction of Israel.

/submitted

Jonathan Greenblatt
CEO
Anti-Defamation League

Examples of the use of the slogan “From the river to the sea – Palestine will be free” on FaceBook and Instagram:

US Palestinian Community Network - شبكة الجالية الفلسطينية
September 29, 2023

Today, September 28th, 2023, marks 23 years since the start of the Second Palestinian Intifada (Uprising), triggered by the war criminal Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Al-Quds (Jerusalem).

A five-year-long struggle, the Second Intifada led to the murder of at least 4,973 Palestinians, including 1,262 children and 32 medical personnel, according to the @pchrgaza. In addition, @dcpalestine reported that more than 10,000 children were wounded.

But the Intifada also proved the resilience of our people, who fought with bravery and unity to resist the racist, apartheid, settler-colonial state. Our movement for national liberation and our resistance continues today, as we see a growth of support for Palestine all over the world, especially for our resistance in #Jenin, #AlQuds, #SheikhJarrah, #Masafertata, #AlKhalil (Hebron), mighty #Gaza, #UmAlFahm, #Lydd, #Haifa, and all across historical Palestine!

We honor all the martyrs of the Second Intifada and throughout our struggle, as well as all our political prisoners -- as we continue to organize for Liberation and Return.

Palestine will be free, from the river to the sea!

Read more about the Second Intifada here: aje.io/c/7bah.

#JerusalemUnderAttack
#SecondIntifada



sjpatcsun
Anaheim, California

sjpatcsun Yesterday, SJP at CSUN joined PYM and hundreds of people in SoCal to mobilize in support of Palestinians in Gaza liberating themselves from the vicious occupation they live under. People living in Gaza, "the largest open - air prison in the world", for the first time in decades have been able to tear down military fences and cross over into the rest of Palestine.

SJP at CSUN calls on our campus to show up in support of Palestinians and their national liberation struggle. People in Palestine have experienced ethnic cleansing, displacement from their homes, and a brutal military occupation since the inception of Israel in 1948. Right now is a crucial moment in their history where people are rising up and removing the colonial power that's oppressing them.

Our stake in this fight as people living in the US is especially crucial. Just this weekend, President Biden supplied the Zionist state with \$8 billion in aid. At a time when people can't even afford to go to school or have secure food and housing, our politicians and institutions are investing in war and violence against civilians instead of services for people struggling to survive. Shame on them!!! We have a right to demand our tax dollars don't fund ethnic cleansing and a violent occupation.

We affirm that this is not a "conflict", with two powers that have equal footing, but an indigenous people's struggle for their native land and autonomy of it, against a settler colonial state that has robbed them of their right to it.

From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free! We will always have unequivocal solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, until their liberation and return to their homelands 🇵🇸

31w

Liked by sds_usc and 176 others
October 9, 2023

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FROM THE RIVER TO
THE SEA 🇵🇸🇵🇸🇵🇸

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Houston City Hall



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We call on our community to join us in honoring our martyrs and the struggle of our people against colonialism.

It is our duty to echo the calls for liberation of our homeland and our people, from the river to the sea!!! !!

Long live Palestine, long live the resistance, victory is ours!
🇵🇸 🤝