**Public Comments - “From the River to the Sea"**

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Palestinians and pro-Palestinians generally complement the phrase “From the River to the Sea” with “Palestine will be free” in demonstrations, protests, social media posts…etc. I agree with Meta’s original position that the phrase does not constitute a violation to its rules on hate speech, violence and incitement. It is an inspirational, almost poetic, slogan which is based on historical facts.

It declares an aspiration that Palestine and Palestinians desire and deserve to be free. It does not call for violence or hate against any people. Historically, Palestine was one state from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, and Arab Palestinians whether Muslims or Christians lived in that state along with many Jews. International colonial powers divided historic Palestine and created the State of Israel. This was one political arrangement that reflected certain realities then. Other political options were available then and can be available in the future, including the establishment of one democratic state called Palestine where all its citizens are free and equal, whether Arabs or Jews.

The phrase does not constitute a violation to Meta’s rules on Dangerous Organizations and Individuals, as it predates the founding of Hamas and is widely used by Palestinians and non-Palestinians, including Jews and Israelis, who are not members or supporters of Hamas or any other organizations or individuals who fit Meta’s definition of “Dangerous Organizations and Individuals”. Hamas was established in the 1980s and the phrase has been used in Palestinian literature since the 1960s.

Since October 7th, 2023, the phrase has been used in countless pro-Palestine demonstrations, protests, speeches, written materials, and social media posts across the world, and they have been very peaceful. In fact, almost all the reported violence associated with any of those demonstrations and protests was directed towards the pro-Palestine demonstrators and protestors. In addition, there have been no reports for violence towards Israelis or Jews resulting from any online use for the phrase.

The phrase is categorically neither antisemitic nor anti-Israelis, as witnessed by the thousands of Jewish and Israelis participating actively in peaceful demonstrations and protests and chanting it with their fellow demonstrators and protesters around the globe.

You can refer to the Israeli historian, Ilan Pappe’s answer to an American interrogation in Detroit Airport when asked about the phrase in this interview recorded today, May 21. He answered: everywhere where there is a river and there is a sea and people living between them, they should be free.

<https://www.democracynow.org/2024/5/21/ilan_pappe_airport_detention>

Worth mentioning at the end of my comments is the fact that the Israeli Likud Party in its 1977 Election Manifesto used a similar phrase that read in full “Between the sea and the Jordan there will only be Israeli sovereignty”. This version clearly denies any non-Israelis their right of self-determination, or worse, their right to exist.