

Dear Senator X,

We, the undersigned constituents and members of the University of Wyoming Middle East North Africa (MENA) Club, University of Wyoming students, researchers, and other citizens of Wyoming, are writing to you concerning the current situation in Israel and the Palestinian Territory of Gaza and its reverberations within the United States. As a diverse academic community, we are closely connected with international students, many of whom are deeply affected by the events in their home countries.

Among these students is Abdalrahim Abu Warda, a Palestinian Fulbright Scholar from Gaza, who has become a notable figure in the School of Politics, Public Affairs, and International Studies and a highly active member of the MENA Club. Abdalrahim's commitment to his family in Gaza while pursuing a Master's degree in International Studies in the U.S. exemplifies the resilience and aspirations of those impacted by global conflicts.

Given these circumstances, we wish to draw your attention to H.R. 6211, introduced by Montana House Representative Ryan Zinke. This bill, aimed at restricting entry into the U.S. for holders of travel documents issued by the Palestinian Authority, raises significant concerns regarding the principles enshrined in the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

Specifically, Articles 3 and 4 of the Convention require non-discrimination based on nationality and the freedom to practice one's religion. The proposed bill contravenes these fundamental principles by discriminating against individuals based on their nationality or country of origin.

Moreover, Article 33's prohibition on expulsion or return ("refoulement") directly challenges the essence of H.R. 6211. This article safeguards refugees or any person whose home state provides an immediate risk of death or dismemberment from being returned to territories where their lives or freedom might be threatened. Abdalrahim, his family, and others like them should not be unjustly penalized or threatened with expulsion under such legislation. This bill requires the removal of Palestinians for reasons beyond a conclusion that they are "a danger to the security" of the U.S., as provided in Art. 33, (2). Additionally, many Palestinian civilians have been killed in Gaza during the Israeli campaign against Hamas. Thus Palestinian Territory may be considered an area that poses a threat to "life or freedom... on account of [their] race, religion,

nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” for persons removed from the U.S. by this bill. Since other conventions specify that these removals require a return to the asylee’s country of origin, the bill’s content violates Art. 33.

Furthermore, Article 31 emphasizes the importance of not penalizing refugees for their illegal entry or presence if they come from territories where their life or freedom was threatened. This highlights the need for empathy and understanding in situations like that of Abdalrahim's, although Abdalrahim is legally present in the United States as a Fulbright Scholar.

Given the profound implications of these considerations, we strongly urge you to stand against H.R. 6211, which not only contravenes international legal principles but also threatens to marginalize and dehumanize individuals based on their nationality. If passed, this legislation would affect not only Abdalrahim but countless others who share his hopes and struggles.

Abdalrahim’s story is a testament to the resilience and aspirations of the Palestinian people, a narrative often overshadowed by mainstream political discourse. To bring this perspective to light, we propose a personal meeting between you and Abdalrahim, either in Laramie or Cheyenne. This encounter would offer a unique opportunity to understand the human dimension behind these policy decisions, illustrating how actions taken in legislative chambers resonate in the lives of real people, people who are living in your state and supported strongly by your constituents. Such a dialogue could serve as a powerful reminder that behind every policy are individuals and communities whose lives and futures hang in the balance.

**As concerned Wyoming citizens and constituents, deeply knowledgeable on issues regarding the Middle East and representing various communities throughout Wyoming, the MENA Club hereby formally requests engagement directly with you either in an in-person meeting or via a tele-video call to introduce you to Abdalrahim and discuss this bill and political matters regarding the Israel/Palestine Conflict.**

Thank you for considering our perspectives. We look forward to your response and the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue.

Sincerely,

University of Wyoming MENA Club

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