

Sign-On Community Leadership Letter: Muslim Community of Pennsylvania Calls on Governor Shapiro to End His One-Sided Discourse; Meet with Muslim Leadership
October 12, 2023

Dear Governor Shapiro,

We are the Muslim community leaders hailing from all corners of Pennsylvania. We are proud Muslims and Pennsylvanians. We are deeply disturbed and disappointed with your statements in reaction to the recent cycle of violence in Palestine and Israel.

You failed to represent, recognize, and respect all Pennsylvanians, despite your rhetoric to the contrary in numerous talks in the last year — some uttered in our houses of worship where we hosted you.

We are a people of justice and balance. We do not condone violence against civilians, whoever may be the perpetrator; our faith dictates that we condemn injustice even when it may be done by our own. We value all human life — whatever faith they hail from. We had hoped you would join us in recognizing the humanity of over 2.5 million people being held hostage, facing death and famine in Gaza. There are those of us who have lost family members to airstrikes targeting civilians in Gaza and they, too, emphasize a Muslim's most cherished quality is Justice.

Since last weekend, you have not even once publicly recognized the inhumane treatment of civilians, systematic occupation and apartheid, and dehumanization by Israel against civilian Muslim, Christian, Druze Palestinians. Not only did you fail to recognize the structural root causes of the conflict, you chose to intentionally ignore the civilian loss of life in Gaza. With all due respect, Governor Shapiro, you missed the opportunity to speak as the Governor of all Pennsylvanians. Your one-sided statements are not shared by our beautiful, dynamic, long-standing, and proud Community.

It is not lost on us that an otherwise promising young politician would ignore these facts:

- The people of Gaza have been forcibly trapped for decades under abhorrent conditions.
- In the West Bank, settlers terrorize entire Palestinian villages, soldiers raid and demolish Palestinian homes, soldiers murder Palestinians in the streets, and
- Israeli ministers call for genocide and expulsion.

Words matter, Governor Shapiro. The rhetoric coming from our elected officials create a context where anti-Muslim and anti-Arab hate found flourishing ground and we are concerned for our communities.

Your statement on Monday October 9, 2023, is an effective endorsement of all these policies and the racist, militaristic discourse coming from Israel.

We will continue to call you out when you fail and celebrate when you serve. Choosing to ignore and disrespect thousands of Palestinian Pennsylvanians for whom this state has been a home for decades will be marked as a shame on your record.

We are used to politicians who visit our communities for photo-ops. We thought you were different.

We are sad to be proven wrong by our Governor.

In a spirit of principled conversation and speaking truth to power, we underline our readiness for a meeting with you where we can share more on the dignified people of Palestine, the inhumane conditions they have been experiencing, and the meaning of the Holy Land for our communities.

We look forward to hearing from your Office.

List of Signatories:

- CAIR-Philadelphia
- CAIR-Pittsburgh
- Philistine Relief Fund
- Muslim Association of Lehigh Valley
- Masjid Al-Wasatiyah
- Masjid Ar Rahman Coatesville
- Alhidaya Islamic Center
- Muslim Society of the Delaware Valley
- Foundation for Islamic Education
- Solidarity Society of South Central PA
- Muslim Youth Lehigh Valley
- Attawheed Islamic Center
- Masjid Al-Nur
- Muslim Association of Pittsburgh
- Zubaida Foundation
- Majlis Ash-Shura of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley
- Masjid Al-Falah Philadelphia (Indonesian Community of Greater Philadelphia)
- Muslim Community of the Greater Pittsburgh
- Muslim Alumni Association
- Islamic Center of Western Pennsylvania
- Islamic Education Center of Pennsylvania
- Khair Community Center
- Islamic Center of Pennsylvania
- Islamic Center of Delaware County
- 3 Puerto Rican Imams
- EPMA
- Muslim Aid Initiative (MAI)
- Islamic Society of Chester County
- Philly Palestine Coalition
- Islamic Center of PA
- BiH Islamic Center of Pennsylvania
- Penn State American Muslim Medical Student Association
- American Muslim Student Association
- Islamic Community Center of Lancaster
- Islamic Society of Greater Valley Forge
- Islamic Center Masjid Al-Sabereen
- PSCOM American Muslim Medical Students' Association
- Center City Mosque (Philadelphia)
- Islamic Circle of North America Harrisburg Chapter
- Islamic Center of Western Pennsylvania
- ISD
- Hershey Islamic Center
- Islamic Center of Pittsburgh