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JCRC STATEMENT

Zahra Billoo's Incitement is not the Way Forward

In this era of rising antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, and xenophobia, JCRC is deeply committed to uniting the Bay Area Jewish community with our neighbors, recognizing we must work together to uproot the forces of hate. We unequivocally condemn those who chose a path of incitement. These attempts to turn marginalized communities against one another set back the cause of building a just and secure future here at home, as well as in the Middle East.

In an antisemitic [speech](#) to American Muslims for Palestine on November 27, 2021, Zahra Billoo, the Executive Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, San Francisco Bay Area (CAIR-SFBA) office, suggested most mainstream Jewish organizations and synagogues “are your enemies” who will stab you in the back at the first opportunity and asserted far-reaching conspiracy theories on the “the connection between Islamophobia and Zionism.” She called the idea of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict “laughable” and went on to attack Muslim institutions who work with organizations supporting Israel as being “in some ways worse than the Zionists.”

Replacing the word “Zionists” with the word “Jews” in her remarks reveals the dog whistle used in a poor attempt to obscure classic antisemitic conspiracy theories. Half of the world’s Jewish population lives in Israel, and opinion polls consistently show 80-90 percent of Jewish Americans hold an affinity with Israel, even as they hold wide ranging and often critical views of its political leadership. “Zionism” is an umbrella term referencing Jewish self-determination and sovereignty in our ancient homeland of Israel – not an ideological or prescriptive position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Put simply, the identities of an overwhelming majority of Jewish Americans and global Jewry include attributes of Zionism in meaningful ways.

We call on our friends, partners, and allies to join JCRC in supporting and getting involved with interfaith and intercommunal efforts that produce real solutions for marginalized communities, such as: resettlement of Afghan refugees, accountability of law enforcement and policing practices, addressing rising hate crimes against our Asian and Muslim neighbors, supporting fair and inclusive ethnic studies in our schools, and addressing racial and economic disparities in our society.

And when it comes to Israel and Palestine, JCRC strongly supports a two-state solution, works to amplify coexistence organizations working on the ground to bring peace and a shared future for Israelis and Palestinians, and promotes civic discourse around the conflict here at home to build respect and understanding of each other’s narratives.

We will not let ugly rhetoric and efforts to separate and divide our communities or destroy our cooperative efforts, which are needed today more than ever.

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