

Zoom Cancels Palestinian Icon Leila Khaled's Webinar at California University

By [Middle East Monitor](#)

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Web-based video-conferencing platform Zoom has cancelled a webinar hosted by San Francisco State University in which Palestinian resistance icon Leila Khaled was to be one of the guest speakers.

Facebook and YouTube have also chosen to censor the event, both of whom – according to [Electronic Intifada](#) – have a long history of censoring Palestinians on behalf of Israel.

“Zoom is committed to supporting the open exchange of ideas and conversations, subject to certain limitations contained in our Terms of Service, including those related to user compliance with applicable US export control, sanctions, and anti-terrorism laws,” Zoom said in a statement.

“In light of the speaker’s reported affiliation or membership in a US designated foreign terrorist organization, and SFSU’s inability to confirm otherwise, we determined the meeting is in violation of Zoom’s Terms of Service and told SFSU they may not use Zoom for this particular event,” the statement continued.

The Jerusalem Post reports that Zoom’s cancelling of the SFSU webinar came amid pressure by Israeli and Jewish lobby groups including the Lawfare Project and the newly established #EndJewHatred movement.

Naturally the first case of Zoom blatantly censoring content at a university was done to silence Palestinians on behalf of Israel. Will all the “free speech” and “cancel culture” warriors speak up? <https://t.co/yiNeaDfcJI>

— Ali Abunimah (@AliAbunimah) [September 23, 2020](#)

Khaled, who as a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and notable in the hijacking of the El Al Flight 219 on 6 September 1970, was due to speak yesterday at an event hosted by SFSU’s Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) study programme, titled “*Who’s Narratives? Gender, Justice and Resistance: a conversation with Leila Khaled*”.

SFSU’s President, Lynn Mahoney, said in an [open letter](#) entitled “*Academic Freedom Debate Continues*” that the university disagreed with Zoom’s decision but recognised its right as a

private company to enforce its policies.

“We worked hard to prevent this outcome and have been actively engaging with Zoom,” Mahoney said.

“Based on the information we have been able to gather to date, the University does not believe that the class panel discussion violates Zoom’s terms of service or the law.”

The decision was welcomed by Israel’s Strategic Affairs Minister, [Orit Farkash-Hacohen](#), who tweeted

“Glad to see @Zoom_us preventing PFLP terrorist Leila Khaled from abusing its platform to spread her bigotry and calls for Jewish State’s destruction at a @SFSU event today. Tech companies need to uphold policies & protect the safety of all of its [sic] users against such hate-speech.”

The Workers World Party (WWP) [condemned](#) the censoring of the event and their own Facebook page has been threatened with being unpublished following their endorsement of the event. They have reiterated their support in working with the event organisers to defend the continued access to “these important digital organizing spaces”.

GUPS statement in response to the Zoom cancellation of the “Whose’s Narratives? Gender, Justice & Resistance” open classroom.

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pic.twitter.com/rKNWnZNhzD

— GUPS SFSU (@GUPS_SFSU) [September 23, 2020](#)

Following the Zoom cancellation, AMED shared a [statement](#) on how to follow AMED and the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS). According to Samidoun, the Palestinian Prisoners Solidarity Network, video footage of the event, which still took place, will be distributed soon.

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*Featured image: Palestinian resistance icon Leila Khaled in Vienna, Austria on 18 January 2009
[FunkMonk/Wikipedia]*

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