



Rutgers Law School

Center for Security, Race and Rights



Friends,

Our nation is undergoing seismic political and legal changes that threaten fundamental American values of free speech, equality, and the rule of law. In such unprecedented times, ***we share a collective responsibility to defend our democracy***. It starts with practicing our constitutional rights to dissent, peacefully petition our government, and continually strive for equal protection under the law for all.

For over two years, we have witnessed mass student anti-genocide protests across universities be systematically quashed, sometimes violently, by university administrators and local police at the behest of elected officials who openly express anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian bias. Faculty and students of diverse backgrounds have been doxed, harassed, and disciplined in retaliation for exercising their free speech rights to defend the humanity of Palestinians, criticize the foreign state of Israel or political Zionism, oppose United States foreign policy, and support diversity, equity and inclusion programs. University academic centers, law clinics, and ethnic studies departments have come under direct attack by state and federal politicians whose actions demonstrate deep antagonism toward two cornerstones of American higher education: academic freedom and independent intellectual inquiry.

The first targets are immigrants and racial minority communities. Similar to Italian, Irish, Catholic, and Jewish immigrants targeted during earlier eras of state repression, it is now Muslim, Palestinian, Arab, and Latino immigrants experiencing the harshest consequences of illiberal political and legal changes. Meanwhile, programs intended to counter anti-Black systemic racism are being defunded or prohibited by new laws.

The message from too many of our government officials is clear: independent universities, immigrants, and racial equality are not welcome in the United States of America.

But “We, the People” determine and defend our nation’s values of democracy, equality, and the rule of law.

Join us in living out this constitutional creed through our academic lectures, the Race and Rights Podcast, educational resources, and trailblazing policy reports.

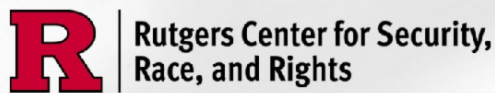
This academic year, CSRR is proud to host the **Free Speech and Racial Equality Lecture Series** and the **Humanizing Palestine Lecture Series**, which feature experts on the most pressing issues affecting fundamental American values: free speech, international law, genocide, Palestine, human rights, antisemitism, and Islamophobia. Join us for the virtual events by registering here.

Defending democracy is not free—of political risk, effort, and financial cost. Help the Center for Security, Race and Rights expand its important pro-democracy work: **become a monthly supporter** today here.

Working together, we must keep America committed to open intellectual inquiry, free speech, and racial equality.

In solidarity,

Sahar Aziz
Distinguished Professor of Law
Chancellor’s Social Justice Scholar
Director, Center for Security, Race and Rights
Rutgers University Law School



Free Speech and Racial Equality Lecture Series

About The Series

Denying citizens free speech rights and equality is a common attribute of authoritarian regimes. Learn from leading scholars in understanding the history, law, and politics of free speech in America, and why the First Amendment remains a bulwark for protecting our democracy.



SAHER SELOD

**A Global Enemy:
Muslims and 21st
Century Racism
SEPTEMBER 11, 2025**



RAZ SEGAL

**Threats to Free Speech and
Palestinian Civil Rights: IHRA
Definition of Antisemitism
SEPTEMBER 17, 2025**



SAHAR AZIZ



MOHAMED FADEL

**Beyond Liberal
Zionism
SEPTEMBER 25, 2025**



DAVID M. RABBAN

**Academic Freedom:
From Professional
Norm to First
Amendment Right
FEBRUARY 11, 2026**



MICHAEL R. FISCHBACH

**Black Power and
Palestine: Transnational
Countries of Color
MARCH 3, 2026**



MARJORIE FELD

**The Threshold of Dissent:
A History of American
Jewish Critics of Zionism
APRIL 9, 2026**

Register: go.rutgers.edu/freespeech

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SCAN HERE!

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Register: go.rutgers.edu/freespeech


Rutgers Center for Security,
Race, and Rights

HUMANIZING PALESTINE
LECTURE SERIES



KARAM DANA
To Stand with Palestine:
Transnational Resistance
and Political Evolution in
the United States
October 9, 2025



OMAR EL AKKAD
One Day, Everyone Will Have
Always Been Against This
October 22, 2025



SARAH LEAH WHITSON & MICHAEL OMER-MAN
From Apartheid to Democracy:
A Blueprint for Peace in Israel-Palestine
November 5, 2025



STEVEN SALAITA
Uncivil Rights: Palestine
and the Limits of
Academic Freedom
March 25, 2026

Register: go.rutgers.edu/humanizingpalestine2025



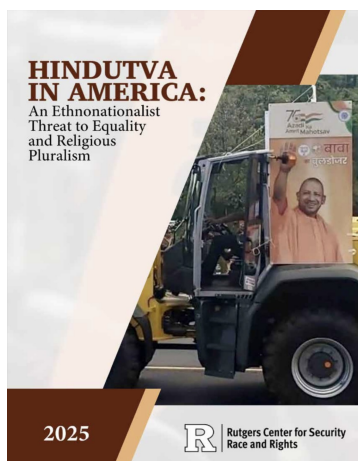
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American taxpayers fund the Israeli army with billions of dollars per year; however, they know little about the Palestinians who live under Israeli military occupation in the West Bank, are victims of a genocide in Gaza, or hold Israeli citizenship. Moreover, when Palestinians are discussed in American media or the halls of power, they are portrayed exclusively through a terrorism lens that reinforces false Islamophobic and anti-Arab stereotypes.

The annual Humanizing Palestine Lecture Series hosted by the Rutgers Center for Security, Race and Rights features scholars who center the lived experiences, voices, culture and political analysis of Palestinians and their allies.

Register: go.rutgers.edu/humanizingpalestine2025

New Report "Hindutva in America: A Threat to Equality and Religious Pluralism"



Hindu nationalism, also known as Hindutva, is a transnational far-right political ideology grounded in Hindu supremacy. In India, Hindu nationalists advocate a strict form of ethnonationalism that reimagines the secular Indian republic as an exclusively Hindu nation and seeks to relegate religious minorities—especially Muslims—to an inferior status. Hindu nationalism is distinct from Hinduism, notwithstanding Hindutva proponents' erroneous claims of representing all Hindus.

In the United States, Hindutva proponents seek to silence the voices of Indian Americans and others who disagree with their ideology, promote harmful policies favorable to India's Hindu nationalist political parties, and control knowledge about South Asia's diverse, multireligious history. In so doing, Hindutva advocates undermine American pluralism and spread hate against Muslims, Sikhs and other minority groups within American society.

To be sure, Hindutva is not Hinduism, both in terms of genre and its impact on American politics and society. Whereas the religion of Hinduism contributes to American pluralism and religious diversity, the political ideology of Hindu nationalism works against those core American values by perpetuating supremacist ideas and discriminatory conduct, especially against non-Hindu South Asians.

The report *Hindutva in America: A Threat to Equality and Religious Pluralism* examines how Hindu nationalists have capitalized on the anti-Muslim public discourse arising from the Global War on Terror to obtain greater acceptance of their ethnonationalist agenda. By

couching their rhetoric within the mainstream narrative that Muslims worldwide are presumptively terrorists and violent, Hindutva organizations join the chorus of other anti-Muslim right-wing groups.

Specifically, the various strands of Hindutva in the United States pursue two objectives: the othering of Muslims as suspicious outsiders and stymying academic freedom.

To prevent Hindutva-inspired groups from threatening the equality, safety, and lives of their minoritized targets in the United States, the report offers five recommendations:

1. Law enforcement, politicians, and civil society groups should cease partnerships with U.S.-based Hindu nationalist groups.
2. Federal authorities should ensure that U.S. groups that act as proxies of India's RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) and its affiliate organizations register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act.
3. U.S.-based Hindu nationalist groups, particularly those registered as charities, must be fully transparent about their financial links abroad, including material support originating overseas, financial resources directed overseas, and ties to foreign governments.
4. The U.S. government should impose sanctions on or refuse entry into the United States to persons who facilitate or provide material support for anti-minority violence in India.
5. University administrations should educate themselves about the threats caused by Hindutva-inspired discrimination in the United States and protect professors, staff, and students within their universities from caste-based and religion-based discrimination.

To read **Hindutva in America: A Threat to Equality and Religious Pluralism** , click [here](#).

The Race and Rights Podcast

The Race and Rights podcast explores the myriad issues that adversely impact the civil and human rights of America's diverse Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities here as well as abroad.

Host Sahar Aziz engages with academics and experts that provide critical analysis of law, policy, and politics that center the experiences of under-represented communities in the United States and the Global South.

To listen to the Race and Rights Podcast on YouTube, click [here](#).

Hostile Homelands—The New Alliance Between India and Israel with Azad Essa

In this episode, we speak with award-winning investigative journalist Azad Essa about his research on the evolving relationship between India and Israel. Our conversation explores the historical development and contemporary significance of this alliance, particularly in light of recent events in Gaza. Essa discusses how, despite growing grassroots pressure for India to implement an arms embargo against Israel, the Indian government has instead strengthened its military and financial ties with Israel. The discussion examines how the Hindutva political movement has played a significant role in supporting and expanding this partnership. Listen [here](#).



Hindutva in America: A Threat to Equality and Religious Pluralism with Dr. Audrey Truschke and Dr. Dheepa Sundaram

In this episode, Sahar Aziz is in discussion with Dr. Audrey Truschke and Dr. Dheepa Sundaram about the new groundbreaking report published

by CSRR entitled *Hindutva in America: A Threat to Equality and Religious Pluralism*, which is available for download at csrr.rutgers.edu

Audrey Truschke is a Professor of History and Director of Asian Studies at Rutgers University-Newark. She is the author of numerous books about India published by Columbia University Press, Stanford University Press and Princeton University Press. She just released her fourth book with entitled *India: 5,000 Years of History on the Subcontinent*. Listen [here](#).



CSRR in the News

Florida plan to deputize National Guard officers as immigration judges at Alligator Alcatraz would likely violate constitutional rights. *The Conversation*. Raquel E Aldana. (2025).

Seeking to expand Florida's role in federal immigration enforcement, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in May 2025 submitted the state's Immigration Enforcement Operations Plan to the Trump administration. The plan, endorsed by President Donald Trump, says all of Florida's roughly 47,000 law enforcement officers have received, or soon will receive, training to act as immigration officers. It's part of an effort to, as the plan notes, "maintain state-led border security operations in the absence of federal support." Read more [here](#).



Democrats will pay for ignoring base's qualms about Gaza. *MSN*. George Bisharat. (2025).

As the Democratic Party searches for direction in the post-2024 landscape, its leaders seem bent on alienating their own base over Gaza. This is not a matter of nuance or tactical positioning; it's a profound moral and political miscalculation. That failure is on vivid display in the decision by House Democratic Caucus Chair Pete Aguilar (Redlands) to help lead a delegation of mostly freshman Democratic representatives recently to Israel. The trip included meetings with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is on trial for corruption in Israel and is the subject of arrest warrants from the International Criminal Court alleging war crimes and crimes against humanity. Read more [here](#).



The Center for Security, Race and Rights (CSRR) engages in research, education, and advocacy on law and policy that adversely impact the civil and human rights of America's diverse Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities. We do so through an interfaith, cross-racial, and interdisciplinary approach.

To learn more about CSRR's work, visit our website at <https://csrr.rutgers.edu>

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Rutgers Center for Security Race and Rights | Rutgers Law School, 123 Washington Street |
Newark , NJ 07102 US