



Rutgers Law School

Center for Security, Race and Rights



Dear Friends,

With the start of a new academic year comes opportunities for engaged discussions and learning from renown experts on matters of public importance. Such opportunities exist only when there is freedom to speak, critique power, and dissent against government practices without fear of retaliation from employers, teachers, or politicians. Yet, such freedoms have eroded significantly in the United States over the past three years, especially on college campuses—the very institutions whose missions are to expose students to various ideas as they learn to critically think, fact check and conduct their own research.

First in line to be censored and face retaliation often have been Muslim, Palestinian, and Arab communities that humanize Palestinians and reject the securitization of an entire people as presumptively terrorist or antisemitic. The normalization of rights infringements eventually spreads to other communities, as we are witnessing in violent immigration raids against Latino and Black communities. Over time, social norms change to the advantage of authoritarian governance.

To address the challenges of our times, CSRR is hosting two lecture series and publishing a groundbreaking policy report ***Punished for Participating: Islamophobia in U.S. Electoral Politics***. This forthcoming report examines the experiences of Muslim American political candidates and elected officials as they encounter overt hostility and attempts to exclude Muslim American communities from public service. That is, Muslims are punished for participating in one of the most American acts—running for office in democratic elections.

The experts featured in this year's annual lecture series, ***Confronting Authoritarianism, Defending Equality***, examine the legal, social, and political factors contributing toward an increase in explicit Islamophobia in U.S. electoral politics, the continued impact of the "Global War on Terror," gendered Islamophobia in Western feminist movements, and the paradox of a revered Constitution as a redemptive guide while it fails to prevent imperialism abroad and systemic racism at home.

We are also proud to host the third annual ***Humanizing Palestine Lecture*** series featuring Palestinian scholars deliver book talks based on their extensive research of the experiences, history, and politics of Palestine. We begin the series with Dr. Munther Isaac providing the experiences of Palestinian Christians living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. Dr. Areej Sabbagh-Khoury will present her groundbreaking research on the role of the ***Zionist leftist movement*** in the making of the Palestinian Nakba. Mouin Rabbani offers a sobering accounting of an ***apocalyptic reality*** of 2 million Palestinians in Gaza left without homes, schools, and work due to the ***Israeli military's genocidal campaign***. We conclude the ***Humanizing Palestine*** lecture series with Dr. Salman Abu Sitta who offers a moving ***memoir of the devastating impact of the Nakba*** on generations of Palestinians. If you missed the first and second annual lecture series, subscribe and watch them on CSRR's Youtube channel ***here***.

To be sure, the work of the ***Center for Security, Race and Rights*** attracts the very anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian racism that it attempts to combat through its research, educational programming, and advocacy. Rather than engage in civil debate that challenges ideas on the merits, detractors seek to censor, punish, terminate, and silence people with whom which they disagree—a standard authoritarian response.

This is precisely why ***your financial support*** is so essential. Join us in increasing research and education about America's diverse Muslim, Arab, ***Palestinian***, and South Asian communities as a means of combating hate. Become a ***monthly donor*** today!

By exercising our constitutional rights on a regular basis through education, civil debate, and political engagement, together we can resist the forces pushing our nation toward authoritarianism.

In solidarity,

Sahar Aziz

Distinguished Professor of Law
Chancellor's Social Justice Scholar
Executive Director
Rutgers Law Center for Security, Race and Rights

Confronting Authoritarianism Defending Equality Lecture Series



R Rutgers Center for Security, Race, and Rights

**Confronting Authoritarianism
Defending Equality
Lecture Series**

 SAHAR AZIZ Punished for Participating: Islamophobia in U.S. Electoral Politics September 9, 2026	 ERIC MCDANIEL Under Siege: Islamophobia and the 9/11 Generation October 20, 2026	 JASMINE ZINE Under Siege: Islamophobia and the 9/11 Generation October 20, 2026
 AZIZ RANA The Constitutional Bind: How Americans Came to Idolize a Document That Fails Them December 3, 2026	 DARRYL LI Discriminating Against Dissent: The Weaponization of Civil Rights Law to Repress Campus Speech on Palestine February 9, 2027	 SHAHED EZAYDI The Othered Woman: How White Feminism Harms Muslim Women April 13, 2027

All lectures start at 12:15 pm EDT.

Register Today: go.rutgers.edu/confrontingauthoritarianism



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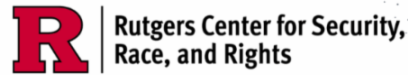
Across North America and Europe, the rise of White right-wing populism is fueling political polarization that scapegoats racial minorities, Muslims, and immigrants for real and imagined domestic problems. Such efforts are conducted in ways that threaten the liberal democratic ideals on which these nations were founded. Manifestations range from violent mass deportations of Latino, Muslim and Black communities and Islamophobic political campaigns intended to exclude Muslim Americans from elected office to the weaponization of anti-discrimination laws to punish protected campus speech on Palestine. The repeated abuse of

executive power coupled with incendiary rhetoric intended to delegitimize the judiciary are normalizing a culture of authoritarianism.

The Rutgers Law Center for Security, Race and Rights 2026-2027 Annual Lecture Series features experts who will examine the mounting challenges to equality and democracy arising from practices more commonly found in authoritarian countries.

Register here: go.rutgers.edu/confrontingauthoritarianism

Humanizing Palestine Lecture Series



HUMANIZING PALESTINE LECTURE SERIES



MUNTER ISAAC

**The Other Side of the Wall: A
Palestinian Christian Narrative of
Lament and Hope**
September 30, 2026



AREEJ SABBAGH-KHOURY

**Colonizing Palestine: The Zionist Left and
the Making of the Palestinian Nakba**
November 12, 2026



MOUIN RABBANI

Gaza Apocalypse: A Genocide Diary
March 10, 2027



SALMAN ABU SITTA

Mapping My Return: A Palestinian Memoir
May 11, 2027

All lectures start at 12:15 pm EDT.

Register here: go.rutgers.edu/humanizingpalestine2026



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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

Resisting Repression: Educators and Students on the Front Lines of Dissent

Resisting Repression: Educators and Students on the Front Lines of Dissent (6/3/26)

Using the “Faculty on the Front Lines: AAUP Members Share Stories of Repression and Resistance” video series as a point of departure, this panel event explores the escalating illiberal campaign to purge higher education and K-12 of faculty, staff, and students who teach, speak out on, or organize around social justice issues. Watch [here](#).



Race, Resistance, and the Criminalization of Speech under Trump with Vince Warren

Race, Resistance, and the Criminalization of Speech under Trump with Vince Warren (4/16/2026)

Free speech is a lofty principle taught in American schools but not consistently protected when racial minorities collectively dissent against government practices. Vince Warren addresses the contemporary manifestations of these longstanding tensions between law on paper and enforcement in practice. Watch [here](#).



Watch Previous Lecture Critical Perspectives on Relations Between Iran, Israel and the United States

Critical Perspectives on Relations Between Iran, Israel and the United States with Dr. Juan Cole, University of Michigan & Dr. Mojtaba Mahdavi, University of Alberta (3/17/26)

On February 28, 2026, Israel and the United States militarily attacked Iran without provocation or credible evidence of an imminent threat posed by Iran. Iran has responded by invoking its right to self-defense under international law by attacking U.S. military targets, Gulf countries, and Israel. The Israeli and U.S. war of aggression has prompted heated debates on the legality, political motives, and global economic impact of America's return to military intervention in the Middle East.



The Rutgers Law Center for Security, Race and Rights hosted Professor Juan Cole and Professor

Mojtaba Mahdavi to provide critical analysis of the complex history, politics, and international relations between Israel, the United States and Iran by experts on Iran and the broader Middle East. Watch [here](#).



Watch Previous Lecture *Hindutva in America: A Threat to Equality & Religious Pluralism*

Hindutva in America: A Threat to Equality & Religious Pluralism (11/12/2025)

Hosted by the Rutgers Law chapter of the American Constitution Society (ACS) and the Center for Security, Race, and Rights (CSR). Join us for an engaging discussion on the rise of Hindutva—a Hindu nationalist ideology—and its influence in the United States. This conversation will explore how religious nationalism manifests within diaspora communities, its impact on civil rights and pluralism, and the role of law and policy in addressing related challenges. Watch [here](#).



Watch Previous Lectures in *Humanizing Palestine* Lecture Series

Uncivil Rights: Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom with Professor Steven Salaita (3/25/26)

Professor Salaita will discuss his book *Uncivil Rites: Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom* that combines personal reflection and political critique to provide a thorough analysis of his controversial termination. He situates his case at the intersection of important issues that affect both higher education and social justice activism. Watch [here](#).



From Apartheid to Democracy: A Blueprint for Peace in Israel-Palestine (11/5/25)

For more than three decades, the illusion of a two-state solution under the auspices of the Oslo Accords has allowed Israel to maintain a one-state reality of permanent occupation and apartheid.

Michael Schaeffer Omer-Man and Sarah Leah Whitson challenge this approach, presenting a road map to end these crimes and create a rights-respecting regime for everyone now living under Israeli control. Only once basic safety and legal equality are assured can Jewish Israelis and Palestinians determine their futures—in one, two, or more states if they choose—through an inclusive, democratic process. Breaking with the failures of the past, the plan presented here makes clear that ongoing violations of basic human rights must be ended before issues of governance can be equitably addressed.

Clear-eyed yet hopeful, Omer-Man and Whitson offer proof of concept that democracy and equality are indeed attainable—and call on the international community to create the conditions required for them to flourish.

Watch [here](#).



One Day, Everyone Will Always Have Been Against This with Omar El Akkad (10/22/25)

What does it mean to engage in literature at a time when so many institutions and power centers of the western world are actively ignoring, justifying or in some cases celebrating the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people? In this talk, author Omar El Akkad shares some of his experiences writing against yet within this time of overwhelming cruelty, and what, if anything, authors and their work can do in the face of one of the most horrific crimes of this century. Watch [here](#).



To Stand with Palestine: Transnational Resistance and Political Evolution in the United States with Karam Dana (10/9/2025)

Professor Dana discusses his book ***To Stand with Palestine: Transnational Resistance and Political Evolution in the United States*** that provides a new lens on activism around Palestinian issues, demonstrating how the global Palestinian diaspora has driven transnational political movements. Karam Dana explores the ways that exile has shaped Palestinian identity and allowed for new forms of global activism. He examines the social, political, economic, and technological forces that have created space for Palestinian voices to be heard by wider audiences worldwide. Watch [here](#).



The Threshold of Dissent: A History of American Jewish Critics of Zionism with Professor Marjorie Feld (4/9/26)

Throughout the twentieth century, American Jewish communal leaders projected a unified position of unconditional support for Israel, cementing it as a cornerstone of American Jewish identity. This unwavering position served to marginalize and label dissenters as antisemitic, systematically limiting the threshold of acceptable criticism. In pursuit of this forced consensus, these leaders entered Cold War alliances, distanced themselves from progressive civil rights and anti-colonial movements, and turned a blind eye to human rights abuses in Israel. In *The Threshold of Dissent*, Marjorie N. Feld instead shows that today's vociferous arguments among American Jews over Israel and Zionism are but the newest chapter in a fraught history that stretches from the nineteenth century. Watch [here](#).



Black Power and Palestine: Transnational Countries of Color with Prof. Michael R. Fischbach (3/3/26)

Journalists and others have taken note of the many Black students, religious leaders, and others who took part in demonstrations and other forms of Palestine solidarity during the recent Gaza war. This was in fact not a new phenomenon: Black solidarity with the Palestinian people dates back decades, when Black Power figures like Malcolm X and groups like SNCC and the Black Panther Party embraced the Palestinian cause in the 1960s 1970s. This lecture examines the historical roots of Black support for the Palestinians during that tumultuous period of American history and connects it with events today. Watch [here](#).



Academic Freedom: From Professional Norm to First Amendment Right (2/11/2026)

Is academic freedom a First Amendment right? Many think so, yet its relationship to free speech as guaranteed by the Constitution is anything but straightforward. David Rabban examines the extensive case law addressing academic freedom and free speech at American universities, developing a robust theory of academic freedom as a distinctive subset of First Amendment law. Watch [here](#).



Beyond Liberal Zionism with Mohammad Fadel (9/25/2025)

Based on his recent academic article, Professor Fadel argues that the principles of political liberalism offer a way forward by distinguishing the politically legitimate claims of Zionism from those that require permanent domination of Palestinians. He offers specific proposals for how to reform Israel's basic structure to produce a conception of Zionism that is consistent with Palestinian equality. Watch [here](#).



Threats to Free Speech and Palestinian Civil Rights: IHRA Definition of Antisemitism with Professor Raz Segal and Professor Sahar Aziz (9/17/2025)

State legislatures across the country seek to quash free speech, violate academic freedom, and promote anti-Palestinian racism by codifying the erroneous IHRA definition of antisemitism. Join us for a timely discussion on how such legislative efforts coercively censor criticism of the foreign state of Israel and the political ideology of Zionism, and in turn erase Palestinian experiences, history, and culture. Watch [here](#).



A Global Enemy: Muslims and 21st Century Racism with Professor Saher Selod (9/11/2025)

Based on her critically acclaimed book, Dr. Saher Selod examines how Muslims experience racialization on a global scale with a focus on the United States, China, India, and the United Kingdom. Counterterrorism policies, hyper-surveillance and racialized policing are grounded in transnational negative representations of Islam which in turn legitimize and institutionalize state-sponsored racism against Muslim minorities. Watch [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](#).

Presumptively Antisemitic: Islamophobic Tropes in the Palestine Israel Discourse with Mitchell Plitnick and Jonathan Matz

This episode examines the weaponization of antisemitism accusations within Israel-Palestine discourse and its counterproductive impact on combating genuine antisemitism. The discussion centers on a groundbreaking report titled 'Presumptively Antisemitic: Islamophobic Tropes in the Palestine-Israel Discourse,' which reveals how accusations of antisemitism have escalated particularly amid recent calls for ceasefire and human rights advocacy in Gaza. The conversation explores the complex political dynamics where legitimate criticism of Israeli policies becomes conflated with antisemitism, creating a chilling effect on free speech and academic discourse. This weaponization not only silences important human rights advocacy but paradoxically undermines authentic efforts to address antisemitism by diluting its meaning and creating confusion about what constitutes genuine anti-Jewish prejudice versus legitimate political criticism. Listen [here](#).



Systemic Racism in U.S. Law with Anthony Farley and Benjamin Davis

The intersection of domestic civil rights struggles and international human rights law represents a critical frontier in the fight against systemic racism and state-sanctioned violence. The UN Human Rights Council's historic George Floyd resolution marked a watershed moment, demonstrating how international legal mechanisms can be mobilized to address persistent patterns of racial oppression within the United States. This development reflects broader questions about the relationship between legal systems and liberation, particularly when examining how the rule of law itself may function as a mechanism for perpetuating racial hierarchies rather than dismantling them. Critical race theorists have long argued that legal structures, rather than providing pathways to freedom, may actually constitute sophisticated forms of control that maintain white supremacist power relations through seemingly neutral juridical processes. Listen [here](#).



Commemorating New York's Little Syria at Al Qalam. *Platform*. Alex Dika Seggerman. (2026).

Into the urban cacophony of New York City's Financial District, a new memorial arrived a few weeks ago: Al Qalam: Poets in the Park. The artwork sits in Elizabeth H. Berger Plaza, a small oblong park opened in 2018 with plentiful benches and three entrances to the Rector Street subway station. The site commemorates the Syrian American community that lived in the neighborhood at the fringes of Lower Manhattan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Called Little Syria, the vibrant immigrant enclave, home to more than two dozen of nationalities, had shops, places of worship, and Arabic-language newspapers and magazines. Its tenement buildings were cleared through eminent domain in the 1940s to construct the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, and community dispersed (some to nearby Radio Row, itself cleared in the 1960s for the construction of the World Trade Center). Read more [here](#).



FIFA Caving In to Trump Highlights the Crisis of Institutional Independence. *Newsweek*. Faisal Kutty. (2026).

By now, the outrage over FIFA's decision to allow U.S. striker Folarin Balogun to play despite receiving a red card should surprise no one. What should concern us is not merely that it happened, but that so many people still believed it could not. President Donald Trump personally intervened with FIFA President Gianni Infantino after Balogun received a red card that, under the ordinary rules of international football, should have ruled him out of the United States' Round of 16 match against Belgium. FIFA instead exercised extraordinary discretion and lifted the automatic suspension. Balogun played. The United States still lost 4-1. 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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