

18 Tammuz 5777  
12 July 2017

**Population and Immigration Authority, Acting Executive Director, Legal Advisor**

**Re: Omar Shakir - recommendation**

1. Omar Shakir is an American citizen of Iraqi origin, born in 1985. He grew up in the San Francisco Bay area and has a JD from Stanford University's School of Law and a master's degree in Arab Studies from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.<sup>1</sup>
2. Shakir has been appointed Israel and Palestine Director at Human Rights Watch (HRW). Note that HRW was founded in 1978. In practice, the organization advocates an anti-Israeli, pro-Palestinian policy, and has even called for divestment.<sup>2</sup>
3. Shakir has been active for years, mostly for "the Palestinian issue," first as a student and later as a researcher.<sup>3</sup> In terms of the matter at hand, **Shakir has actively and consistently supported strategies calling for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel (BDS), since his early days as a student and into the present.** He often retweets and shares content on BDS against Israel.<sup>4</sup>
4. Given the fact that **Shakir has actively and consistently been involved in promoting boycotts of Israel**, the position of the Ministry of Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy is that his **work permit should be revoked**. While such action would generate criticism of Israel in international media, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contends, our view is that **it is untenable to allow a person who has been consistently involved in activities intended to harm the State of Israel over many years to work in the country as if nothing has happened.** If this were not enough, Shakir cynically continues his activities against the State of Israel as expressed in his intensive involvement in the FIFA issue.



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<sup>1</sup> <https://islamic scholarshipfund.org/omar-shakir-2010-><https://www.hrw.org/about/people/omar-shakir> ;/recipient

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/01/19/occupation-inc/how-settlement-businesses-contribute-israels-violations-palestinian>, see report entitled Occupation Inc. which, among other things, calls on businesses operating in the settlements to end their operations there, and refrain from financing, administration and support of any kind. The report also calls on third-party countries to: "Assess trade with settlements and adopt policies to ensure such trade is consistent with states' duty not to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Palestinian territories," and require exporters to label goods. Robert Bernstein, who founded HRW and chaired the organization for its first two decades, harshly criticized HRW in a New York Times op-ed (2009 and onwards), claiming that the organization's reports on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "are helping those who wish to turn Israel into a pariah state", i.e., the ultimate goal of the de-legitimation campaign against Israel, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/20/opinion/20bernstein.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Shakir is mentioned in a book written by BDS activist Nora Barrows-Friedman as an individual committed to work to "end the occupation and to have a liberated Jerusalem" by 2030. He describes a visit to the territories with colleagues, and how they made a pact to check in with each other every year to see how they are working towards this goal. Watch (40:48) and view the transcript: <http://www.thejerusalemfund.org/3995/in-our-power-u-s-students-organize-for-justice-in-palestine>

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Shakir's Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/OmarSshakir/status/686769262233530368>.

Given all the above, we believe **Shakir should be stripped of his work visa and denied re-entry into the country.**

5. This position has been endorsed by the Minister for Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy.
6. Enclosed is a dossier on Shakir's activities in the boycott field over the years.

### Key activities in boycott field by Omar Shakir over the years

7. A review of Shakir’s involvement in the boycott field reveals, as stated that he **has been active in the field for years**, and this is not a single episode. As a student, Shakir was extremely active in BDS and de-legitimation campaigns against the State of Israel. He served as Co-President of the Students for Palestinian Equal Rights at Stanford University, which led the campaign for divestment from companies that profit from the occupation. The organization co-founded by Shakir was previously named Students Confronting Apartheid by Israel. We note that it is currently a branch of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) at Stanford.<sup>5</sup>

#### The organization in which Shakir served as co-president and its call for university divestment



*Students for  
Palestinian  
Equal Rights*

<a href="#">Home</a>	<p><b>About Us</b></p> <p>SPER was originally formed in fall 2006 under the name Students Confronting Apartheid in Israel, but in spring 2007 we changed our name to Students Confronting Apartheid by Israel to better reflect our aims and clear up any misconceptions.</p> <p>In summer 2012, we once again changed our name to Students for Palestinian Equal Rights, once again, in order to accurately reflect the mission of our organization and our desired goals.</p> <p>Since SPER's inception, successive generations of Stanford students have gathered to organize educational events, and to campaign for the University's divestment from companies profiting from Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories. You can read more about our previous events and divestment campaign on the <a href="#">past activities</a> page.</p> <p>SPER is a vibrant and dynamic organization that seeks to actively engage with the Stanford community. We enjoy working with other student organizations toward mutual goals. If you would like to contact SPER, our officers for 2011-12 are:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Co-President</td> <td>Omar Shakir</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Co-President</td> <td>Firas Abuzaid</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vice-President</td> <td>Joshua Schott</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vice-President</td> <td>Samar Alqatari</td> </tr> </table>	Co-President	Omar Shakir	Co-President	Firas Abuzaid	Vice-President	Joshua Schott	Vice-President	Samar Alqatari	<p><i>Are you interested in getting involved with SPER?</i></p> <p>→ Come to our next <a href="#">meeting!</a></p> <p>→ <a href="#">Join our mailing list!</a></p> <p>→ Come to our next <a href="#">event!</a></p> <p>→ "Like" our <a href="#">Facebook page!</a></p>
Co-President		Omar Shakir								
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<a href="#">About Us</a>										
<a href="#">Upcoming Events</a>										
<a href="#">Divestment @ Stanford</a>										
<a href="#">Learn About the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict &amp; Apartheid</a>										
<a href="#">Past Activities</a>										

8. Shakir addressed the international community during his talk marking Nakba Day (2010), encouraging it to “look to a campaign of boycott, divestment, sanctions,” as a way of ending the occupation.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Students for Justice in Palestine is the largest anti-Israeli student organization in the USA. It has a national leadership, scores of branches, and it promotes widespread de-legitimation and boycott work against Israel. This is the organization that leads Israeli apartheid week on campuses: <https://sjp.stanford.edu/about/>.

<sup>6</sup> See particularly 01:07 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0v5pqFFDD8A&feature=youtu.be&t=67>.

9. Shakir led the call for selective divestment from companies involved in human rights abuses in the territories (2011) at Stanford University.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> <https://web.stanford.edu/group/sper/images/divestmentflyer.jpg>

# Renewing the Call for Divestment: A Campaign to Divest from Companies that Profit from Human Rights Violations in Israel/Palestine

In the 1980s, Stanford students united to call for an end to our university's ties to South Africa, initiating a campaign that led to divestment from corporations tied to the apartheid regime. In 2005, Stanford students convinced the Board of Trustees to divest from companies that enabled the Sudanese government to carry out human rights abuses. On January 24, 2007 Stanford students initiated a campaign to encourage the university to divest from companies in Israel and the Occupied Territories that violate international law and abuse human rights. Now, on April 14, 2011 Stanford students, faculty and staff, alumni, and community will renew their call for divestment.

With the decisions of the Presbyterian Church, the Academic Union of Teachers in the United Kingdom, Hampshire College, and many other organizations to pursue divestment in the Israeli-Palestinian context, a growing international movement is building to pressure Israel to reform its policies and end its illegal occupation. At a time in which grassroots, people-led movements are bringing revolutionary change in the Middle East, Students Confronting Apartheid by Israel (SCAI) seeks to make Stanford a relevant player in this burgeoning movement and to ensure that, as the Stanford Code of Conduct dictates, "we fulfill our legal and ethical obligations... to persons outside Stanford."

Stanford law student and former Fulbright Scholar **Omar Shakir** will formally present the case for selective divestment from companies complicit in human rights violations in Israel/Palestine, to be followed by comments on the importance of divestment from **Joel Beinin**, the Stanford Donald J. McLachlan Professor of History and Professor of Middle East History, **Khalil Barhoum**, Senior lecturer at Stanford and Coordinator for the Program in Middle Eastern and African Literatures, Cultures, and Languages; and **Cecille Surasky**, the Deputy Director of Jewish Voice for Peace. While peace can sometimes feel elusive, divestment represents a practical step that we, here at Stanford, can take to end the occupation and bring peace to Israel and Palestine!



"I've been very deeply distressed in my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us black people in South Africa. I have seen the humiliation of the Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks, suffering like us when young white police officers prevented us from moving about."

- Desmond Tutu, South African Archbishop and Nobel Peace Laureate

7:30 - 9 pm - Thursday, April 14th  
Cypress - Tressider Union (2nd floor)  
Stanford University



STUDENTS CONFRONTING  
APARTHEID BY ISRAEL

10. Shakir explained why Stanford University should divest from Israel in a talk organized by the organization he founded (2012).<sup>8</sup> In another instance, Shakir called on the Stanford University Senate Board of Trustees to reevaluate university investments in companies that violate human rights and international law, including **Rival, Motorola, Caterpillar, Ahava, Mekorot and Veolia** (2013).<sup>9</sup>
11. Sahkir, together with organizations, groups and hundreds of individuals, signed a letter and petition calling to boycott the Muslim Leadership Initiative (MLI) delegation to Israel sponsored by the Shalom Hartman Institute, which is involved in the efforts to thwart BDS (2015). The letter says there is no “need for Muslim Americans to engage with the state of Israel or institutions complicit in its war crimes.” It concludes with the following:<sup>10</sup>
- We pledge to not give a platform to any MLI participant to speak about their experiences at our community centers, places of worship, and campuses and call on a complete boycott of MLI. **We pledge to be in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle and to do so by honoring the BDS call.** We pledge to engage with Palestinians in our communities and support delegations to Palestine that are meant to highlight the reality on the ground of occupation, apartheid, and ethnic cleansing.*
12. As a Bertha Fellow at the Center for Constitutional Rights, he took part in a panel entitled BDS Context and Challenges (2016), where, during his talk, he listed the advantages of the BDS strategy and why the European [sic] Community should adopt it as a way of ending an “unjust system” regardless of the political solution.<sup>11</sup>
13. Shakir also took part in a panel entitled, THE PALESTINE EXCEPTION TO FREE SPEECH IN AMERICA at Kent State University (2016), where he defined **BDS as “the most noble form of non-violent resistance.”**<sup>12</sup>
14. On Twitter, Shakir recommended an article entitled **How to practice BDS in academe**, written by Prof. Steven Salaita and published on the Electronic Intifada website as a “**helpful source** for academics.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oj0N-m\\_DhMg&feature=youtu.be&t=381](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oj0N-m_DhMg&feature=youtu.be&t=381) (beginning 53:39).

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.stanforddaily.com/2013/02/20/senate-meeting-in-uproar-over-palestinian-israeli-divestment-presentation/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20160122150454/http://boycottmli.org/2015/01/14/say-no-to-faithwashing-boycott-muslim-leadership-initiative/> (emphasis added).

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IK4K7-2sVR8>

<sup>12</sup> <https://boxcast.tv/channel/the-palestine-exception-to-free-speech-in-america-741009>, see beginning 01:20:00.

<sup>13</sup> <https://twitter.com/OmarSShakir/status/679689357184339969>, Electronic Intifada is one of the major platforms for the promotion of de-legitimation and boycott campaigns against Israel.



15. Recently (May 2017), together with HRW and in conjunction with political consciousness raising efforts by the Palestinian Authority and the actions of BDS organizations from all over the world, Shakir unsuccessfully attempted to move FIFA to suspected six soccer clubs from the organization.<sup>14</sup> In this context, he has recently been held for 18 hours at the airport and refused admittance into Bahrain’s capital Manama, where he “hoped to press FIFA on matches in illegal Israeli settlements.” We note that Shakir’s and HRW’s Twitter accounts are brimming with similar content and calls.<sup>15</sup>

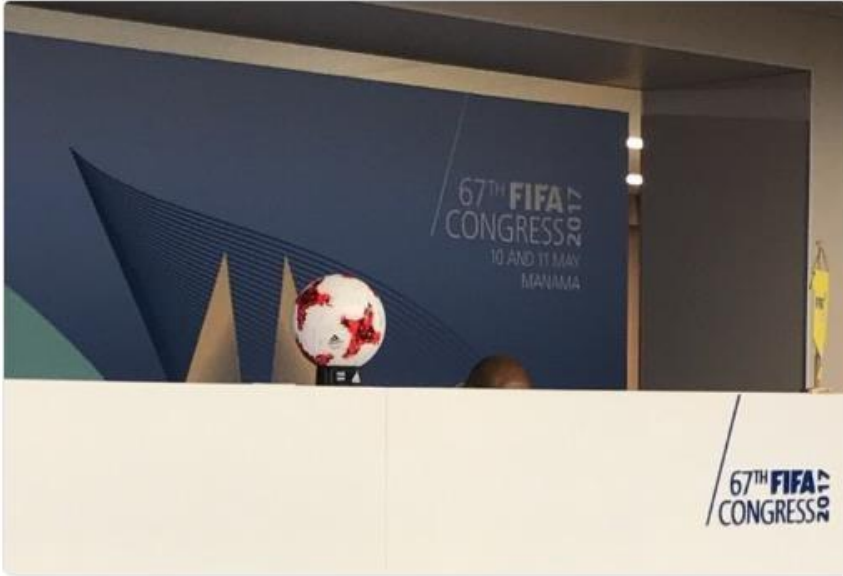
<sup>14</sup> For instance, the “Tell FIFA #RedCardsIsrael” campaign led by the **BDS movement** (BNC), see: <https://bdsmovement.net/news/fifa-urged-organizations-representing-millions-expel-israeli-clubs-settlements>. Palestine Solidarity Campaign led communication to top FIFA officials, see <http://palestinecampaign.iparlsetup.com/lobby/settlement-clubs>, website dedicated to the FIFA issue, “Red card Israeli Racism”, supported by the following entities (from the website) (emphasis added): *APSC (Palestinian Solidarity Campaign), FOA (Friends of Al-Aqsa) JBIG (Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods), and BIN (Boycott Israel Network) all support the campaign. They see it as part of the wider BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) activity that was formally established by Palestinians in 2005.*

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.rt.com/news/388100-bahrain-hrw-official-fifa/>.

Omar Shakir ציץ מחדש

10 במאי · @OmarSShakir **Omar Shakir**

Held 18 hrs, denied entry to Bahrain. Hoped to press FIFA on matches in illegal Israeli settlements. Space for rights defenders shrinking.



ConfedCup#

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