

2 Palestinian humanitarian activists denied entry into the US and deported back to the West Bank

Joshua Rodriguez
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Eid Hthaleen and Ouda Alhadlin, two humanitarian activists from the West Bank, were detained and denied entry into the US by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) upon their arrival on June 12 at San Francisco International Airport (SFO) despite holding valid B-1/B-2 visas.

Their visas were revoked upon arrival and the two were held overnight to be boarded onto a flight to Qatar on Thursday, June 13, from where they will eventually be deported back to the West Bank.

They were invited to speak at local churches and synagogues across the San Francisco Bay Area in order to raise money and awareness for children suffering under Israel's genocidal rampage throughout Gaza and the West Bank.

Hthaleen is an educator and Alhadlin is an artist. They come from Masafer Yatta, a collection of 19 villages located in the southernmost part of the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Masafer Yatta has been under illegal Israeli occupation since the end of Israel's Six-Day War in June 1967. It has been designated an active military "firing zone," giving Israel full military and civil control over the area ever since.

The village was featured in the critically acclaimed 2024 documentary *No Other Land*. According to a September 2022 article in the *Guardian*:

Palestinian water cisterns, solar panels, roads and buildings here are frequently demolished on the grounds that they do not have building permits, which are nearly impossible to obtain, while surrounding illegal Israeli settlements flourish. The community are mostly herders, raising goats

and sheep throughout scorching summers and freezing winters.

Phillip Weintraub, an immigration attorney and member of the Kehilla Community Synagogue, who had sponsored Hthaleen and Alhadlin's trip, stated that one of the men's family homes was destroyed last summer by an Israeli bulldozer.

The Kehilla Community Synagogue in Piedmont, California has given long-standing support to Hthaleen and Alhadlin's community and has advocated for an immediate ceasefire and unrestricted entry of humanitarian assistance into Gaza, according to its website.

Julie Litwin, member of the Kehilla Community Synagogue, stated, "They [Hthaleen and Alhadlin] wanted to come here to thank us for our help and to do further fundraising for these humanitarian causes, and we were very happy to welcome them here."

CPB has given no reason for its actions and all attempts to gather information have been denied, but it is highly likely that the order to deny Hthaleen and Alhadlin's entry into the US came from the Trump administration.

As Israel utilizes US-provided bombs and military equipment to attack Iranian nuclear facilities and implement its "final solution" to the Palestinian question, the stifling of all anti-war opposition from the working class takes on renewed importance for the ruling class.

The prevention of two valid visa holders from visiting and speaking to workers in the US is a continuation of efforts by the US ruling class to sabotage and disrupt anti-war organizations.

The deportation of Hthaleen and Alhadlin has provoked protests from the local population. Dozens of workers

have shown up at SFO to assert Hthaleen and Alhadlin's right to inform US workers of the war crimes committed against them in their home country and the effects they have had on their community's children.

David Cooper, who has known Hthaleen and Alhadlin for eight years and visited them multiple times in their home village, is the leading rabbi of the Kehilla Community Synagogue and was present at the protest at SFO.

"The United States government is now not wanting these human-to-human connections with people from outside our immediate experience," Cooper said, while noting that this coincides with immigrant deportations and protests that have swept the country nationwide.

San Francisco District 5 Supervisor Bilal Mahmood was present at the protest and stated:

If people are coming here with valid visas and immigration papers, and even they are being turned away... what does this mean for the residents who live in San Francisco and the country? This is another example of an escalating constitutional crisis in our country.

The *World Socialist Web Site* and the Socialist Equality Party condemn the denial of entry and deportation of Hthaleen and Alhadlin and call on all workers to oppose this blatant attack on free speech and association.

However, workers who wish to fight back must be warned that the Democratic Party will not aid them in their struggle. The attacks on anti-genocide protesters, including visa holders, began under the Biden administration and have been intensified under Trump.

The Democrats have propagated the big lie that all opposition to Israeli genocide is "antisemitic," even if this opposition comes from the Jewish community.



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