**DISCLAIMER**

California laws generally prohibit employers from retaliating against employees for their lawful political activities that are non-work related and occur during non-work hours. However, employees should be aware that political beliefs/affiliations are not protected categories under federal/state anti-discrimination laws, and political activity may not be a protected activity.  Private employers may still legally take adverse action against employees for pragmatic reasons, e.g., if an employee’s political activities interfere with their own job performance or that of their coworkers, disrupt the employer’s business, or if the employer believes the employee's work-related political statements are against the company’s beliefs, vision, or morals. This template constitutes suggested material to empower you to advocate on your own behalf. Please note that it does not constitute legal advice. Please use your personal judgment to adopt the content to your particular case, keeping in mind the possible legal ramifications noted here. If you need more direct assistance, please contact your local CAIR office’s Civil Rights Department.

Dear [Employer name],

The situation in Palestine and Israel is top of mind for many people right now, especially your Israeli, Jewish, Muslim, Palestinian, and Arab employees. I am concerned about the company’s one-sided stance to “Stand by Israel.” Taking such an absolute stand could be harmful to the company’s reputation and certainly to employee morale. Our company’s failure to acknowledge the loss of Palestinian life and the humanity of Palestinians can make Muslim, Palestinian, and Arab employees feel marginalized, unrecognized, and may create a hostile work environment and lead to retaliatory actions against them. I, and many in my community, are in a state of grief over the loss of lives, and the company’s failure to acknowledge that suffering in its unabashed support for Israel is concerning and has compromised my wellbeing in the workplace.

Following are some of the historical elements of the conflict that deeply trouble me and why I believe the company should take a more nuanced approach in their statements to ensure that Muslim, Palestinian, and Arab employees feel seen, valued, respected, and welcomed in the workplace:

* Many Palestinian Americans have lost relatives, immediate family, colleagues, or friends in Palestine since much of the country became Israel under Britain’s Balfour Declaration in 1948.
  + When Israel was formed, a tragic event (called the Nakba) resulted in Israel taking control of hundreds of towns and villages, the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian towns and villages, and the death of thousands of Palestinians. Many Palestinian-Americans have families that were displaced or, worse, killed in the Nakba.
* Palestinians in Gaza live in what [Human Rights Watch](https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/14/gaza-israels-open-air-prison-15) and [B’Tselem](https://www.btselem.org/node/214231) and others call the “world's largest open-air prison.” This means that individuals are not allowed to enter or leave Gaza, electricity and water are cut off at a moment’s notice, and Palestinians are subjected to abusive checkpoints when trying to go to work or move about the territory.
  + Some Palestinian Americans have loved ones that they cannot visit due to travel restrictions prohibiting them from getting in and out of Israel.
* In recent years, Israel has expanded its borders against international law, leaving Palestinians with a small percent of the land they were granted by the Balfour Declaration. The Israeli government in recent years has given settlers unprecedented license to steal land from Palestinians. Settlers often abuse local Christian and Muslim Palestinians, openly parade and defile their places of worship, and destroy income-generating crops. Notably, many of these actions have drawn condemnation from the [United Nations](https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15203.doc.htm).
  + Some employees may have experienced loss of family or ancestral property due to settler activity.
* The death toll of the conflict in Palestine-Israel is disproportionately borne by the Palestinians. [Between 2008 and 2021](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/18/mapping-israeli-occupation-gaza-palestine), at least 5,739 Palestinians and 251 Israelis were killed. According to the UN, the conflict has taken the lives of 23 Palestinians for each Israeli. Over the same time, at least 121,438 Palestinians and 5,682 Israelis were injured.
  + It is very plausible that employees may have experienced loss amongst their loved ones in Palestine.

The company’s current one-sided statement and stance in support of Israel with no support of the Palestinian people, their humanity, their lives, and their rights makes me feel that my experience, my identity, my heritage, my family, and my beliefs are not welcome and valued in the workplace and puts Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim employees at risk in the workplace. I would request that a statement supporting and recognizing the issues brought forth by my letter be issued by the company.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Contact Information]