



Council on American-Islamic Relations

Greater Los Angeles Area Chapter

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Dear Kevin Merida,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Greater Los Angeles Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-LA) to express our appreciation for the *Los Angeles Times*' recent editorial calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Being the first major U.S. newspaper to take this stance is commendable and reflects the *LA Times*' commitment to addressing critical humanitarian issues.

While we applaud the *LA Times* for its editorial courage and commitment to justice, we write to express our deep concern regarding the reported decision to enact a three-month ban from covering Israel/Gaza on the journalists who signed [an open letter](#) condemning Israel's killing of journalists in Gaza and urging integrity in Western media coverage of Israel's atrocities against Palestinians. This decision appears to disproportionately affect Arab, Muslim, and Palestinian staffers, creating a barrier to their engagement in one of the most significant issues of our time. The broad nature of this ban, extending even to domestic issues such as covering antisemitism and Islamophobia in the U.S., raises serious concerns.

Journalists serve as the vanguard of information dissemination, and their ability to report the truth and engage in open discourse is paramount to a healthy democratic society. We are concerned that limiting the coverage opportunities for journalists who have expressed their views through the open letter may inadvertently stifle the free exchange of ideas and hinder the public's access to a diversity of perspectives.

This decision not only impacts the affected journalists but also impedes the *LA Times*' ability to gather diverse perspectives and insights crucial to responsible news reporting. As the paper has worked diligently to address past lapses in its coverage of communities of color, including Black, Latino, and Asian communities, we believe that the *LA Times* now has the opportunity to avoid similar oversight when it comes to stories relevant to Southern California's Arab, Palestinian, and Muslim communities.

At stake is not only the credibility of the *LA Times* in reporting on the attack on Gaza but also its credibility in serving as a trusted news source for the affected communities. We respectfully request that you reconsider this decision and allow the journalists to contribute their unique insights and experiences without fear of reprisal.

Furthermore, we urge you to commit to an open and inclusive dialogue within the newsroom and with the affected communities. A transparent dialogue will not only help rebuild trust but also ensure that the *LA Times* continues to be a source of reliable and diverse information.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to the *Los Angeles Times* continuing to serve as a beacon of responsible journalism and an inclusive platform for diverse voices.

Hussam Ayloush

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Executive Director, CAIR-LA