

MY NARRATIVE OF THE ATTACK ON ME BY PAL GLOBAL

This document provides to the members of the Steering Committees of every Network [globalnetworks] a detailed explanation of the current circumstances surrounding my expulsion from the Palestine Global Mental Health Network (Pal Global) and my ongoing defamation by that organization.

Kindly email me at samahjabr@hotmail.com if further documentation of emails, screenshots, fliers, and other materials would be helpful and I will be happy to provide them.

ABOUT THE TALK THAT STARTED PAL GLOBAL'S ATTACK UPON ME:

I had delivered one of my typical anti-occupation presentations on "Colonial Psychiatry" in December 2024 at a conference in Nablus and was then invited by an advocacy group located in Israel (called the "School of Peace") to give that specific presentation to them as well. The "School of Peace" made it clear in its initial email that they have no connection with the State of Israel. I researched the organization's website to find that it includes a statement in defense of the Palestinian scholar Dr. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian who had been attacked by Israel, another statement that deplores Israel's war on Gaza, and a third that supports the several Palestinian human rights organizations that Israel had accused of being terrorist groups, such as Defense of Children International and Addameer. Further, I asked the director of the organization about the position of that group regarding BDS guidelines and he answered positively in writing. Based on this evidence of its support for the people of Palestine and the people's struggle for ending the occupation, I then proceeded to plan my presentation.

PAL GLOBAL'S SILENCING EFFORTS:

On the 27th of December, Mr. A.B, a colleague in mental health, contacted me via WhatsApp to inquire about the lecture, expressing his "astonishment" and attaching an image of the event's announcement which I had not seen before, and which contained inaccuracies. I pointed out the inaccuracies and replied: "What's so strange, A.? I am a graduate of

the Israeli College of Psychoanalysis and provide psychological consultations for the Public Committee Against Torture and the B'Tselem organization. I also give public lectures to Israelis who oppose the occupation and have no connection to Israeli state institutions. This is neither strange, nor new, nor secret.”

On January 2, 2025, A.B. requested a meeting between me and the Pal Global Network to "discuss the activity," suggesting two possible dates. I welcomed the proposal for dialogue, but was surprised that it was A.B. who extended this invitation, since there was never any communication to me that indicated that he had become a member of the Pal Global Steering Committee. I told him I preferred the 6th of January and asked him to arrange the meeting through Zaynab Hinnawi, a colleague who helps me schedule and arrange my meetings; I asked him to have Dr. C.D.—a co-founding member of the Pal Global Steering Committee and the individual identified as the spokesperson for Pal Global—send me the meeting agenda. He responded positively to these requests.

On the 3rd of January, Dr. C.D. sent an email inviting me to what resembled a "hearing," without clarifying the agenda of the meeting and further stating that I could not bring a colleague. I responded immediately, explaining that the meeting's agenda and purpose, as well as the identities of the persons involved, were still unclear to me. Since, to my knowledge, A.B. was not part of the Pal Global Steering Committee, I once again requested a clear agenda and a list of all Pal Global Steering Committee members who would be there.

On January 5th, Dr. C.D. responded, repeating that the meeting's purpose was to discuss my participation in the advertised activity, which she now stated “clearly conflicts with the Network's standards.” She emphasized the importance of “a dialogue before any decisions are made.” Regarding my inquiry about the identities of the Steering Committee members attending, she explained that while specific names hadn't been finalized, up to four members would participate, pending their availability. I responded promptly, requesting clarification on how my participation conflicts with the Network's standards, so that I could address these concerns in writing for

accuracy and proper documentation. I also asked to include the Steering Committee members and relevant parties in the same email to ensure that everyone would be prepared and informed of all aspects of the discussion.

At this point, I must digress to describe that Pal Global demonstrates that history repeats itself:

In previous years, I had repeatedly urged Pal Global to produce a written document detailing its bylaws; a request that was repeatedly dismissed. I had been concerned because, in my view, the absence of bylaws had caused injustice in an episode in which the Pal Global Steering Committee expelled one of itsco--founding members, Dr. E.F., in January 2023. (*Dr. E.F. had been accused of “defaming” some Pal Global members “with no evidence.”*)

I reproduce here in italics the relevant WhatsApp communication between myself and Pal Global that is now two years old:

Good morning everyone, and Eid Mubarak to you all.

A warm welcome to Dr. C.D. in Palestine.

I have been preoccupied with many personal challenges that overwhelm me, leaving me with little capacity for additional battles.

I came across the message addressed to Dr. E.F. and would like to state that I do not agree with it for reasons that are too lengthy to explain. I kindly ask that you refrain from sending it. This does not, in any way, mean that I approve of the alleged actions. However, I believe the matter is highly complex, and there is a lack of clear guidelines, bylaws governing our collective work. We have already discussed this issue extensively in the past, yet the void remains, allowing for many unfortunate breaches.

There is no need for harsh measures or exclusion. Instead, let us focus on clarifying the principles that regulate the network.

The two constructive actions are:

1. Opening a channel for dialogue with Dr. E.F.

2. Strengthening the network with a set of structured regulations for collaborative work.

If defamation meets all its legal conditions, it should be resolved in court. However, if the network lacks pre-established rules stating that any individual accused must be expelled, then the network's judgments become arbitrary and customary, resembling tribal decisions rather than those of an institution or professional body.

I still lack the patience for such conflicts, and my stance on the recent issue with Dr. E.F. is: "Do not forget graciousness between you." Surah AlBaqarah 237

Dr. E.F. has contributed a lot to this network, and I still hope that there are non-exclusionary ways to mend the rift with her."

Unfortunately, my objections to Dr. E.F.'s expulsion were dismissed. Pal Global's expulsion of this colleague has changed the way I view Pal Global, but I kept this impression to myself.

On January 6th, 2025 I received a lengthy and inflammatory email from the Steering Committee of Pal Global. The email accused me of participating in activities perceived as "normalizing" relations with Israel, such as conducting a mental health course for the Israeli Art Therapy Association, which they described as holding "racist positions" without giving any supporting evidence and planning a lecture at "Neve Shalom"—which was derogatorily described without evidence as a "disfigured organization." The Committee expressed "astonishment" at what they saw as a contradiction between my professional contributions and my interactions with Israelis, "especially given the ongoing violence against Palestinians." The email urged me to cancel my planned participation on January 10, 2025, and to cease any similar future activities; they requested a written response to their concerns.

On January the 6th, still under the impression that there would be a meeting, Zaynab Hinnawi called Mr. A.B. on my behalf to learn details, but was informed that no meeting would take place.

On the 7th of January, as requested, I supplied this written response:

Dear colleagues at the Palestinian Global Mental Health Network,

It appears that each of us has our own understanding of normalization and the circumstances under which it occurs. As someone from Jerusalem, I completed a three-year psychotherapy program at the Israeli College of Psychoanalysis. However, I chose to work within Palestinian institutions despite the challenges of crossing checkpoints and significant financial disparities. This decision stems from my belief that I can better serve our cause there, and I did not wish to engage with official Israeli institutions that are complicit in the occupation and practice suppression and silencing.

My interactions with Israelis are highly selective, limited to organizations and activities that align with my convictions and values. These entities explicitly state that they do not represent the State of Israel, recognize Palestinian rights, and work on issues consistent with my ethical compass and the objectives I strive to achieve both within and beyond Palestinian society. These objectives include raising awareness of Palestinian rights and serving them through my profession as a psychiatrist.

My engagements have often intersected with Israeli organizations opposing occupation policies clearly and documenting violations of Palestinian rights, such as B'Tselem, Yesh Din, and Physicians for Human Rights. This collaboration has involved conducting psychological evaluations for torture victims and advocating for the inclusion of Arabic as an official language of instruction within institutions like Yahat, ensuring accessibility for Arab colleagues. Notably, I provided testimony in Israeli courts concerning Palestinian detainees like G., H., I., and J.--striving to uphold justice and human dignity in each case.

I believe that boycotting every institution and individual residing in Israel, even those opposing Israeli policies, is neither politically sound nor wise and contradicts my ethical framework. I do not think that the boycott calls for such blanket actions. I reserve the right to determine whom I trust, regardless of their background. When invited by the School of Peace, they explicitly stated in their initial email that they do not represent the State of Israel. They clearly advocate for ending the occupation, recognize the rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel, support the right of return, and back

Palestinian human rights organizations (as evident in the attached document). Therefore, I see no issue in delivering a lecture titled "Colonial Psychiatry" to them, as I believe it contributes to efforts that challenge the occupation.

Moreover, I always undertake these efforts in a personal capacity and do not represent any institution or entity. I strive in all aspects of my life to balance achieving resistance objectives while avoiding racist and discriminatory practices.

*Dear colleagues, in times when concepts like homeland, resistance, and martyrdom are rapidly shifting from one extreme to another, it is naive to consider normalization and boycott as sacred, unquestionable notions. **It is prudent for us, as Palestinian mental health professionals, to engage in friendly and open dialogue to scrutinize meanings and deconstruct ideologies that may be used unjustly against those who dare to think differently.***

On January 10, I gave my online presentation to the public, hosted by the University of Wuppertal—a European university; some members of the “School for Peace” were in the audience.

Between January 7 and February 21, 2025, I received nothing from Pal Global in response to my messages. Despite Pal Global’s claims of reaching out to me for dialogue, they in fact totally disregarded my responses and concerns, choosing instead to isolate me without fair discussion.

From January 7th to February 21st, I became aware that Pal Global members had been engaging in backbiting, inciting local mental health organizations to sever ties with me, and pressuring international solidarity groups to cancel their planned visits to me in Palestine—all while failing to provide any evidence to support their accusations against me. When I urged those being pressured to insist that Pal Global substantiate their claims, Pal Global instead took further action.

On February 21, 2025, the Steering Committee of Pal Global sent me a harsh and insulting email full of emotional rhetoric and accusing me of promoting normalization.

Simultaneously, Pal Global sent an email blast to the large international listserv [globalnetworks]—the platform for communication among the 116 members of the Steering Committees of the worldwide solidarity Networks, including Pal Global and the international Networks located in over twenty countries. Pal Global announced their decision regarding me, citing irreconcilable differences in principles, without providing any evidence or clarification. They demanded that I be removed from the [globalnetworks] listserv by the listserv administrator, a step which was implemented immediately.

Since as a result I had no way to respond to the Pal Global charges through the listserv (from which I had just been removed), I replied to Pal Global the same day (February 21) through the help of a supportive [globalnetworks] member.

This was my response:

To the Colleagues at the Global Mental Health Network,

It is with profound disappointment that I learn of PalGlobal's recent email, sent to the listserv only after ensuring that I was removed from it. My disappointment is not in their decision itself—since I have never sought to represent PalGlobal or any other entity—but in the destructive precedent it sets. The language of exclusion, the rigidity of ideological policing, and the weaponization of baseless accusations are symptoms of a deep malaise that has plagued Palestinian institutions before, leading to fragmentation, paralysis, and, ultimately, the betrayal of the very struggle we claim to serve.

PalGlobal offers no substantiated reasoning for its decision beyond vague assertions of a "fundamental divergence in principles." Where is the concrete evidence of my alleged acts of "normalization?" Where is the transparent discussion? This is not ethical deliberation; this is fratricide—an

act of internal destruction within our movement at a time when unity, strategy, and solidarity are more essential than ever.

I have also come to learn that PalGlobal has been inciting against me behind my back, working in the shadows to shape a narrative of exclusion rather than engaging in open and honest dialogue. When it became clear that some colleagues were prepared to challenge this maneuver by demanding evidence and transparency, PalGlobal accelerated its smear campaign—publicly denouncing me in a way that could put me at risk—only after making sure I had been silenced on the very platform where I might have responded. This speaks volumes about the lack of due process, ethical integrity, and moral responsibility behind this decision.

By reducing itself to ideological absolutism and litmus tests of purity, PalGlobal is following in the worst traditions of authoritarianism—turning into a self-referential body that dictates who is “acceptable” rather than fostering a pluralistic, strategic, and pragmatic approach to our collective struggle. This decision does not protect the cause; it weakens it. It isolates those who are doing vital work, fractures much-needed solidarity, and deepens internal divisions at a time when Palestinian resistance and resilience require broad alliances and diverse tactics.

If PalGlobal wishes to remain relevant and effective, it must critically examine whether it is becoming an echo chamber of ideological rigidity rather than a force for Palestinian mental health, solidarity, and liberation. My lifelong commitment to my people is unwavering, and no bureaucratic decree will erase it.

In response to Pal Global’s email of February 21 and the decision to remove me from the listserv, many other members of the international Networks’ Steering Committees then asked Pal Global to give evidence for this action. The USA Palestine Mental Health Network’s Steering Committee emailed a formal letter to Pal Global. They explained that they would comply temporarily with the request to remove my name from [globalnetwork], as the USA Network is the logistical administrator of the listserv,

and requested clarification of all allegations against me. The USA Network expressed deep concern over the accusations, which—as they described—contradict everything they knew about my work and principles. They highlighted my pivotal role in founding Pal Global, my extensive contributions to international outreach, and my unwavering stance against occupation and human rights violations. Further, the USA Network demanded transparency and due process; they requested that any criticisms against me be clearly outlined, supported by evidence, and open to discussion. The USA Network emphasized that making judgments without reviewing all relevant facts goes against their core values. They reaffirmed their full support for me and their commitment to continuing their teamwork with me as full examination of the facts was undertaken.

In addition to the letter sent by the USA Network in response to the email from Pal Global on February 21, 2025, the Brazilian Network also expressed deep concern over the situation and extended their full solidarity. They organized an open Zoom meeting the next day to discuss recent developments, during which I detailed the events that had transpired. Representatives from numerous other Networks participated. As an outcome of this meeting, attendees formed a WhatsApp group and collaboratively drafted a letter addressed to Pal Global on February 27, 2025.

This group letter from members of the Steering Committees of many international Networks highlighted the collective shock, uncertainty, and frustration among members of various international chapters that had arisen in response to Pal Global's Steering Committee's decision to remove me from its Network. Their supportive letter emphasized the need for trust and transparency within the movement and called for an immediate and comprehensive explanation from the Pal Global Steering Committee. The letter urged all [globalnetwork] members to review the letter and to sign it if they wished to endorse its content; a link was provided. This letter of international support has now been signed by over 45% of the international members of the [globalnetworks] listserv.

In addition to these group letters requesting evidence from Pal Global to justify its decision to expel and denounce me, there were several individual letters requesting evidence from members of the various international Networks sent to Pal Global through the [globalnetworks] listserv.

On February 27, the Pal Global Steering Committee then sent the [globalnetwork] listserv a long email filled with distortions, false claims, and accusations against me, without providing a single piece of evidence to support their allegations of my supposed "national violations." They framed their decision as a principled one—while giving no substance to justify it. They accused me of engaging in activities that contradict the principles of the BDS movement, yet they failed to present any concrete proof of actions which contradict these well-recognized principles.

The February 27 statement from Pal Global to [globalnetworks] also included a misleading portrayal of the international reaction, attempting to frame the legitimate concerns from the international members of Network Steering Committees as paternalistic interference rather than rightful objections to an unjust and baseless exclusion. Ultimately, their message was an effort to justify their actions under the guise of collective decision-making, while in fact it was a targeted attempt to discredit and to silence me without any transparent or ethical process. Collective decisions can be driven by groupthink, social pressure, or misinformation rather than rational analysis. Majorities have often supported injustices—slavery, colonialism, oppressive laws and the occupation of Palestine—consensus does not guarantee morality or truth. The wisdom of the crowd fails when fear, bias, or manipulation override critical thinking.

Pal Global's email of February 27 calls to mind what we have learned from Milgram's obedience experiments and the Stanford prison experiment: that good, ordinary people, when placed under certain pressures, often comply with authority and carry out acts of punishment without questioning their legitimacy. Pal Global is engaging in this very dynamic—exerting coercive power over the members of the Steering Committees of all the international Networks, using the fear of being labeled "white saviors" to ensure compliance. Just as they have labeled me a "normalizer" for

critically examining their unwritten and ever-changing norms, they now seek to control others through the threat of moral condemnation.

On the 28th of February, I sent the following email to Pal Global and the listserv through a supportive [globalnetworks] member:

Response to Misleading Claims by the Palestine-Global Mental Health Network

Dear Colleagues,

I write to firmly reject the misleading and false claims made in the recent statement by the Palestine-Global Mental Health Network (PGMHN). Their message distorts facts, misrepresents my position, and falsely portrays the nature of our exchanges.

First and foremost, I have never refused to meet with members of the Network. On the contrary, I explicitly requested a clear agenda and specific explanations of how my activities allegedly contradict the Network's principles before any meeting. Rather than engaging in a transparent and structured discussion, the Network chose to issue broad and vague accusations without substantiating their claims.

Furthermore, the Network falsely asserts that the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists, and the local BDS committee approached me with concerns about my participation in certain activities. This is categorically untrue. If Pal Global has any evidence to support these claims, they should present it.

Selective Standards and Unclear Policies

The Network has never clarified its stance regarding its own members who work in Israeli institutions. If it claims to uphold strict standards, why has it failed to address this issue? Why does it scrutinize my long-standing engagements only now, despite the fact that I have been interacting with Israeli anti-occupation institutions since my graduation from medical school?

Moreover, the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists has no jurisdiction over me—I am a member of the Palestinian Medical

Association, not their union. The legitimacy of their supposed intervention in this matter is highly questionable, especially when my medical syndicate, fully aware of my engagements, has raised no concerns.

Baseless and Vague Accusations

PGMHN has resorted to generalized and ambiguous claims, falsely framing my actions as violations of the BDS call. Instead of citing specific incidents or providing concrete evidence, they rely on broad allegations of "engagement with Zionist and Israeli entities" without defining the scope of these claims. Such tactics mirror those used to discredit pro-Palestinian activists worldwide—using unfounded allegations to isolate and silence critical voices.

Additionally, the Network preemptively labels any criticism of its actions as "orientalist" or the work of "white saviors." This tactic is an attempt to shield itself from accountability by dismissing legitimate concerns rather than addressing them. It is a manipulative approach that deflects attention from its opaque and unjust decision-making processes.

Manipulating the Timeline

The Network's statement falsely implies that they promptly responded to my letter. In reality, their response to my letter on January 7 only arrived on February 21—44 days later—on the same day they removed me from the list. Instead of acknowledging this delay, they have misleadingly framed the timeline to suggest that I was the one who failed to engage in dialogue.

It is deeply troubling that an organization claiming to represent Palestinian mental health professionals would engage in such misrepresentation, exclusion, and character assassination. The Palestinian cause deserves honesty, integrity, and transparency—not internal smear campaigns based on false claims and opaque processes.

I urge colleagues and allies to critically examine these accusations and recognize the dangerous precedent they set. The struggle for Palestinian liberation is too important to be derailed by baseless attacks and divisive rhetoric.

P.S. If anyone wishes to examine the actual documentation of my exchanges with PalGlobal, including emails and screenshots of texts, kindly let me know, and I will gladly provide them.

ABOUT BDS:

On December 27, 2024, I reached out to a member of the Steering Committee of Pal Global, Dr. K.L. requesting contact information for someone at the BDS movement. She provided me with Omar Barghouti's number but did not inquire further about the reason for my request. I attempted to contact him at three different occasions leaving him WhatsApp messages but received no response.

I also contacted a former BDS associate from the M. family, who informed me that she had forwarded my number to the relevant local BDS team and that they would reach out to me; however, I did not receive any communication from them either. I also attempted to contact two more people from BDS, with no response.

Subsequently, I connected with Mahmoud Nawajaa and explained the situation to him quickly because he sounded as though he was rushed. In response, he reiterated the BDS guidelines. Upon reviewing the BDS website, I found that the requirements for working with Israeli's include:

1. The Israeli party must recognize the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people as stipulated by international law.
2. The activity should constitute a form of joint struggle against occupation, settler-colonialism, and Israeli apartheid.

I posed these specific conditions to the director of the School for Peace, who responded to me in writing:

"Yes, we are calling to end the occupation, for full equality in '48, and recognize the right of return."

The BDS website also states that Normalization includes activities that:
A) Morally or politically equate the "two sides," that is, the colonizer and the colonized.

- B) Ignore the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and return.
- C) Present the false Zionist narrative of history as an equivalent or parallel to the scientifically established historical narrative.

The BDS website also says that the standards “vary according to the nature of the colonial relationship governing different segments of our people. Accordingly, the criteria for anti-normalization and boycott take these specific circumstances into account, with different standards applied in the territories occupied in 1967 compared to those in 1948. **Jerusalem has its own unique situation, as the conditions of colonialism and apartheid there fall between those in the 1948 territories and those in the 1967 territories.**”

On December 27, 2024, a member of the Steering Committee of the USA Network emailed to Stephanie Westbrook of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), expressing concern over the false accusations against me and seeking urgent assistance from BDS.

Stephanie Westbrook replied on January 11, 2025, stating that I had violated the BDS movement's anti-normalization guidelines and that the criticisms against me were factually correct and warranted.

The member of the USA Network Steering Committee responded to her the same day, seeking clarification on the specific actions that indicated these violations and the facts supporting the criticisms.

On January 28, 2025, Stephanie Westbrook provided a PDF of the BDS movement's anti-normalization guidelines and mentioned that the Israeli organization in the “Valley of Peace” did not meet the required conditions, implying that my engagement was in violation of these guidelines.

The member of the USA Network Steering committee replied to her on the same day, clarifying that I had no communication with the “Valley of Peace” organization (which is an agreement of economic cooperation between the states of Israel, Jordan, and Palestine that has nothing to do with mental health) and that the invitation I received was from the “School for Peace,”

which had publicly recognized Palestinian rights and adhered to BDS conditions. Detailed information was provided dispelling the criticisms against me.

As of now, more than a month has passed without a response from Stephanie Westbrook to that email. **Clearly someone had communicated to BDS false information about my presentation of January 10**, but the source of this false information is unknown.

THE ACTIONS AT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH:

I have been dedicated to my role at the Ministry of Health for 22 years, serving as the Head of the Mental Health Unit for the past seven years. On December 27, 2024, a Friday, I received an informal phone call from the Ministry, asking me to not come back to work. This notification was not formalized, but my salary was stopped, my personal office was ransacked, and I was replaced by another person. No member of Pal Global's Steering Committee called me with concerns about this, but several Pal Global members publicly celebrated the person who replaced me on the social media platforms of the Union of Social Workers and Psychologists.

POSSIBLE UNDERLYING POLITICAL MOTIVES:

In December 2024, the PA besieged the Jenin refugee camp and killed several resistance activists, arrested hundreds of people, and tortured some of them as documented by videos uploaded to social media. In two meetings, one at the Ministry of Health, and another with members of the Union of Social Workers and Psychologists—during which people praised the Jenin operation—I expressed criticism, especially of torture. This took place on the 25th and the 26th of December.

It was on the following day, December 27th, that Pal Global contacted me to express concerns about my plan to give a presentation on “Colonial Psychiatry.” and the Ministry asked me to not come back to work.

This leaves me with the question: who is weaponizing my presentation on “Colonial Psychiatry” to provide a manipulated pretext for dismissing and silencing me?

It is notable that other individuals in key administrative positions in Palestine who have been critical of human rights abuses have been fired recently. Rather than acting as a “normalizer” of relations with Israel, I can state that I am committed to confronting injustice with all my energy—whether the injustice is perpetrated by Israel or by others—as I have attempted to do for many decades.

CONCLUSIONS:

I am deeply concerned at this moment, for many reasons. The most pressing is my concern for my safety, insofar as Palestinian individuals who have been characterized as supportive of Israel are always at risk of grave danger. Beyond this, my financial security is in jeopardy as well as the crushing personal impact of malicious denunciation by supposed colleagues.

Then too, Pal Global’s gratuitous generation of a split among the Network organizations and our need to expend precious energies addressing this split is a deep injury to the honorable work that countless Network activists have supported over many years. The secrecy, distortion, intimidation, and lack of evidence demonstrated by the Steering Committee of Pal Global throughout the past two months in its denunciation of me has undermined the trust that many of the international Networks had placed in them as legitimate leaders.

This is my narrative and its supporting evidence. I ask only for Pal Global to provide proof of its narrative—or to apologize for its attack and to withdraw it. I am eager for reconciliation among all of us, after these processes take place. It is my most earnest hope that the work of all the Networks can then move forward to work in their customary spirit of harmony, solidarity, and commitment to justice.

Samah Jabr MD

East Jerusalem

March 8, 2025

