



December 16, 2024

VIA WEBSITE ONLY

Michael G. Seidel, Section Chief
Record/Information Dissemination Section
Records Management Division
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Department of Justice
200 Constitution Drive
Winchester, VA 22602
<https://efoia.fbi.gov>

RE: FOIA Request pertaining to the FBI's use of the term "State of Palestine" at the FBI National Academy.

Dear Mr. Seidel:

This letter is a request ("Request") in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and the corresponding department/agency implementing regulations.

The Request is made by the American Center for Law and Justice ("ACLJ")¹ on behalf of its supporters.

To summarize, this Request seeks records pertaining to the FBI's use of the term "State of Palestine" at the FBI National Academy.

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to DOJ FOIA regulation 28 C.F.R. §16.3(b), this Background addresses "the date, title or name, author, recipient, subject matter of the record[s]" requested, to the extent known.

¹ The ACLJ is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the defense of constitutional liberties secured by law. The ACLJ regularly monitors governmental activity and works to inform the public of such affairs. The ACLJ and its global affiliated organizations are committed to ensuring governmental accountability and the ongoing viability of freedom and liberty in the United States and around the world.

The FBI National Academy is a 10-week professional course of study for U.S. and international law enforcement managers nominated by their agency heads.²

Leaders and managers of state, local, county, tribal, military, federal, and international law enforcement agencies attend the FBI National Academy. Participation is by invitation-only through a nomination process.³

Nominations must be submitted by a commissioner, superintendent, or police chief; a sheriff or head of county policy agency; or the chief, superintendent, or executive officer of a state police or highway patrol organization.⁴ Additionally, to qualify, nominees must be a regular, full-time officer of a duly-constituted law enforcement agency of a municipality, county, or state.⁵

The program provides coursework in intelligence theory, terrorism and terrorist mindsets, management science, law, behavioral science, law enforcement communication, and forensic science.⁶

Part of the National Academy is the International Partnership Program (IPP). This provides students an opportunity to network on a one-on-one basis with our international partners.⁷ Domestic students who sign up to be an IPP member will be paired with an international student.⁸

One international student who attended was Husam Abu Aisha. According to the FBI National Academy Associates Facebook page, Husam is from “Palestine.”⁹ Furthermore, at the National Academy graduation, Husam was presented with his diploma from FBI Director Chris Wray and was introduced as from “Ramallah, the State of Palestine.”¹⁰ The United States does not officially recognize the “State of Palestine.”¹¹ Additionally, there were no foreign students from Israel in the program.¹²

RECORDS REQUESTED

For purposes of this Request, the term “record” means “any information” that qualifies under 5 U.S.C. § 552(f), and includes, but is not limited to, the original or any full, complete and unedited copy of any log, chart, list, memorandum, note, correspondence, writing of any kind, policy, procedure, guideline, agenda, handout, report, transcript, set of minutes or notes, video, photo, audio recordings, or other material. The term “record” also includes, but is not limited to, all relevant information created, stored, received or delivered in any electronic or digital format, e.g., electronic mail, instant messaging or Facebook Messenger, iMessage, text messages or any

² <https://le.fbi.gov/training#National-Academy>

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *FBI National Academy Brochure.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/FBINAA/posts/-meet-husam-abu-aisha-one-of-our-incredible-international-students-from-palestin/938933731600283/>

¹⁰ <https://x.com/MarinaMedvin/status/1867303207069720918>

¹¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/22/mapping-which-countries-recognise-palestine-in-2024>

¹² <https://x.com/MarinaMedvin/status/1867303207069720918>

other means of communication, and any information generated, sent, received, reviewed, stored or located on a government *or private* account or server, consistent with the holdings of *Competitive Enter. Inst. v. Office of Sci. & Tech. Policy*, 827 F.3d 145 (D.C. Cir. 2016) (rejecting agency argument that emails on private email account were not under agency control, and holding, “If a department head can deprive the citizens of their right to know what his department is up to by the simple expedient of maintaining his departmental emails on an account in another domain, that purpose is hardly served.”).

For purposes of this Request, all terms otherwise used herein have the definitions given by FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552 *et seq.*

For purposes of this Request, and unless otherwise indicated, the timeframe of records requested herein is January 1, 2024, to the date this request is processed.

The ACLJ hereby requests the FBI to produce the following records.

1. The records at the FBI National Academy that contain the words: “State of Palestine,” “Palestine,” or “Ramallah.”
2. All records in possession of the FBI “legal attaché” at the United States Embassy for either Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, Israel that contain the words: “State of Palestine.”
3. The records of the application and approval of “Husam Abu Aisha” of the FBI National Academy Session 292 at FBI Headquarters, the FBI National Academy or the FBI legal attaché referenced above.
4. All records in Director Christopher Wray or his administrative assistants that contain the words: “State of Palestine” or “Ramallah.”
5. All records at FBI Headquarters that contain the words: “State of Palestine.”

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF FEES

The ACLJ requests a waiver of all fees for this request. Disclosure of the requested information to us is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in our commercial interest. The documents requested are to provide transparency on the perceived politicization of the FBI. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

CONCLUSION

If this Request is denied in whole or in part, the ACLJ requests that, within the time requirements imposed by FOIA, you support all denials by reference to specific FOIA exemptions and provide any judicially required explanatory information, including but not limited to, a *Vaughn* Index.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this Request. Please furnish all applicable records and direct any responses to:

Jordan Sekulow, Executive Director
Benjamin P. Sisney, Senior Litigation Counsel
John A. Monaghan, Senior Litigation Counsel
American Center for Law and Justice



Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jordan Sekulow".

Jordan Sekulow
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John A. Monaghan".

John A Monaghan
Senior Litigation Counsel