

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF NEW YORK

In the Matter of,

AHMAD AWAD, SOFIA DADAP, SAPPHIRA
LURIE, and JULIE NORRIS,

Petitioners,

-against-

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY,

Respondent,

For a Judgment Pursuant to Article 78
of the Civil Practice Law and Rules.

Index No. _____

**AFFIDAVIT OF SAPPHIRA
LURIE**

STATE OF NEW YORK)
) ss:
COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

Sapphira Lurie, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. I am a senior at Fordham University. I submit this Affidavit in support of Petitioners' request for an Order of Judgment compelling Fordham to recognize Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this Affidavit.

2. At the beginning of the fall semester, around the first week of September 2016, I became interested in starting SJP at Fordham. I was raised in a Jewish Zionist household, and for a long time I did not understand what was happening and what had happened to the indigenous people of Palestine.

3. When I moved to New York City, I began to learn more about the Palestinians by readings books and articles. I learned about the citizenship laws in Israel, designed to divide the

settler population from the native Palestinian population. I read about Israeli militarism, US-Israeli aggression against other states in the Middle East, the illegal occupation and annexation of Palestinian land, and the exchange program between the New York Police Department and the Israeli army.

4. When I told a friend I would like to start SJP at Fordham, she informed me that some fellow students had been trying to get their SJP club approved for nearly a year. Shortly thereafter, I became involved in the club approval process.

5. I attended a meeting on October 27, 2016, with Kayla Wolf, Vice President of Operations for the United Student Government (USG), Ahmad Awad, Sofia Dadap, and other students interested in starting SJP. At the meeting, Wolf told us that Dorothy Wenzel, the Director of the Office of Student Leadership and Community Development, had instructed Wolf to inform the Jewish Student Organization (JSO) that a club supporting Palestinian rights was being formed on campus. Wolf also asked me, Ahmad, and the other students questions like whether Governor Cuomo's Executive Order on boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) prevented the formation of SJP, since SJP, if formed, would support the tactic of BDS to pressure Israel into respecting Palestinian rights. Wolf seemed uncomfortable asking these questions, as if she knew they were inappropriate, but was asking them on behalf of others.

6. USG called a closed voting session on whether to approve the club. They voted to approve us on November 17, 2016.

7. Later that afternoon, I received an email from Dean Eldredge stating that he heard about the vote, that he would "now need to review the request," and that he would "be in touch."

8. On December 9, 2016, I received another email from Dean Eldredge asking to meet with us on December 12, 2016.

9. On December 12, 2016, I, along with another student, met with Dean Eldredge and Dr. Wenzel. At the meeting, Dean Eldredge and Dr. Wenzel asked us questions such as, “What does BDS mean to you?” “Does BDS mean the dissolution of the state of Israel?”, “ Why use the term apartheid?” and “Does SJP support or work with Jewish Voice for Peace, J Street, and Seeds for Peace?”

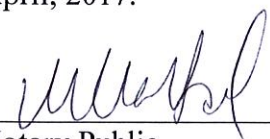
10. We explained that BDS is a non-violent tactic to pressure the Israeli government to respect Palestinian rights, expressed confusion over what he meant by “dissolution of the state of Israel,” and offered several examples of discriminatory laws and practices in Israel that we believed fit within the legal definition of apartheid. We also replied that we would like to work with Jewish Voice for Peace. At the time, we did not know much about J Street and Seeds for Peace, so we replied that we were not planning on working with them.

11. On December 22, 2016, I received Dean Eldredge’s email that he had vetoed approval of the club with just a few hours left in the semester. I read the news while home for Hanukkah in Florida, feeling shocked and helpless, knowing I would have to wait weeks before I could even adequately respond to this total denial of student autonomy, of the deciding power of our student government, and of the right to advocate for basic human rights in Palestine.

12. On January 6, 2017, Dean Eldredge informed me, Ahmad Awad, Sofia Dadap, and other students interested in starting SJP that there was no appeal of his decision.


Sapphira Lurie

Sworn to me this 19th day of
April, 2017.


Notary Public

MARIA C. LaHOOD, ESQ.
Notary Public, State of New York
No. 02LA6161980
Qualified in Kings County
Commission Expires February 26, 2019