

Alt-Hampshire Gazette

Read Globally, Act Locally

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MACKLEMORE WINS CULTURE WAR FOR PALESTINE

EDITORIAL: THE ALT-HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE IS ONE YEAR OLD

Last year, River Valley for Palestine (RVP) and other community organizations tried to persuade the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (DHG) to:

1. Take steps to improve their coverage of Israel's genocide in Gaza, and
2. Publish an editorial taking a strong stand in support of Palestinian journalists under attack by Israel.

The DHG refused. As a result, one year ago, RVP published the first edition of the *Alt-Hampshire Gazette* (Alt-HG), in an effort to bring news and views about Israel's occupation, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and genocide to western Mass.

The silence of the DHG is typical of the eager self-censorship of the Western mainstream media with respect to Israel's genocide and relentless attacks against its neighbors — censorship reinforcing the grotesque impunity with which Israel operates in Gaza and throughout Occupied Palestine and the region. And it has made Western media complicit in the destruction of its own profession.

In recognition of the one-year anniversary of the *Alt-Hampshire Gazette*, we are reprinting here a portion of our first editorial, published on September 23, 2025. **That first editorial was presented as a statement that we wished the DHG would publish.** Unfortunately, to this day, the DHG continues to carry water for the genocidal Israeli entity, for example, by routinely referring to the genocide as "the Israel-Hamas war."

Here is a partial reprint of our first editorial, published in the Alt-HG on 9/23/25, AS IF it were an editorial written by the DHG:

The Daily Hampshire Gazette rarely publishes editorials. We believe, however, that the realities in Gaza demand that our editorial voice be heard.

Media "neutrality" is complicity. We will not be complicit. Though we are a local paper, we bear responsibility for creating conditions that have contributed to a genocide in Gaza and attacks on our journalist brothers and sisters.

As the war in Gaza grinds on, the territory has been turned into an enormous death camp. A feature of Israel's genocide in Gaza has been its targeting of crucial civilian populations: healthcare workers, civil defense workers, government workers, academics, intellectuals, journalists like ourselves.

In its killings of Gaza's journalists (more than 270 as of this date, many of them in targeted assassinations) and its refusal to allow international journalists into Gaza, Israel is killing the messenger. It is targeting the profession of journalism. It is assaulting free speech and freedom of information. It is targeting international law and human rights. It is seeking to normalize censorship, official lies, war

propaganda, and murders of journalists. Its enemy is the truth; its perceived enemies are truth-tellers: Gaza's journalists.

During this time of unprecedented assault on the First Amendment in the United States and against journalists by Israel, the Daily Hampshire Gazette is very clear: We stand with the Palestinian journalists of Gaza. We condemn their murders. They are war crimes — flagrant violations of international law under the Geneva Conventions. They must be independently investigated and prosecuted.

At this critical moment in world history, with the extermination of an entire people gaining momentum, we will not fail this test: We will defend Palestinian journalists and journalism, and in so doing, defend and stand with the civilian population of Gaza in its desperate hour of need. Failing to do so would mean we fail ourselves, our readers, the people of Gaza, and humanity itself. We call on our colleagues throughout Western media — whether local, regional, or national and whether print, television, radio, or social — to do the same.



A Palestinian artist paints a mural of U.S. rapper Macklemore on the wall of a destroyed house in Gaza City to thank him for expressing support for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, 9/17/26. (Abdalkhem Abu Riash/Andalou via Getty Images)

By Jennifer Scarlott

A potential global cultural turning point for Palestine occurred in mid-September with an enormous backlash against award-

winning singer Ed Sheeran after he announced his decision to drop the American rapper Macklemore (Ben Haggerty) as a front artist for his "Loop Tour." Macklemore, long vocal on behalf of Palestinian rights, has released three songs in support of pro-Palestine activism in the last few years: "Hind's Hall," "Hind's Hall 2," and "Fucked Up."

During his performance at Sheeran's first two concerts in New Jersey, Macklemore expressed his support of Palestine to the audience and sang "Hind's Hall." A few days later, Sheeran announced he had dropped Macklemore from his tour. He claimed that he did so under pressure from Boston Patriots football team and stadium owner Robert Kraft and other stadium owners. Kraft is a billionaire mentioned in the Epstein files. The situation escalated into a PR disaster for Sheeran, with his entire tour lineup, including all the front groups and his own band, withdrawing from the tour in solidarity with Macklemore.

To a mostly empty stadium in Philadelphia on September 19, Sheeran attempted to reverse his losses by reading a tearful statement in which he claimed to be a non-political artist who sought never to take sides in "conflicts." During several concerts held in the early stages of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, however, Sheeran was vocal in support of Ukrainian children. Sheeran's Philadelphia remarks have been widely criticized as self-pitying rather than focused on the suffering of the Palestinian people.

Seen as complicit with the Israeli regime, Sheeran is losing supporters who say that there cannot be two sides in a genocide. Meanwhile, support for Macklemore has dramatically increased. He has announced a tour of his own in Dublin, London, and Paris, with 100% of the tour's proceeds to go to humanitarian support for Gaza. Ali Abunimah of *The Electronic Intifada* compared the enormous backlash against Sheeran and Kraft and support for Macklemore as reminiscent of the mid-1980s when a massive groundswell of global artistic opposition to apartheid South Africa helped bring down that regime.

What follows is Macklemore's thoughtful social media response to being cancelled from Ed Sheeran's tour. It was posted on September 14:

"I'm not sure how to start this. So I'm going to speak from the heart and share the truth. Ed Sheeran and his team have made the decision to remove me from The Loop tour."

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Nadia Milleron (MA-1): Medicare for All, Corporate Accountability, End to Genocide



By Zain Salim

It's not hard to prove that Richard Neal is an ardent Zionist. In July 2026 — nearly three years into Israel's genocide of Palestinians — the incumbent U.S. Representative from the 1st Congressional district stated in an official press release that "providing support for Israel's defense systems, such as the Iron Dome, remains an important priority to protect both American and Israeli interests against those who seek Israel's destruction."

A news article featured on Neal's official website quotes him as saying he was "pleased" to see F-35 stealth fighter aircraft at Westfield Air National Guard Base following a decade of bipartisan lobbying by him, Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey, and former Governor Charlie Baker, to bring the F-35s to Westfield. The same article quotes Neal calling himself an "institutionalist" committed to "the regular order, friends, allies."

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In what can only be interpreted as a threat and braggadocio about an unprecedented war crime, wanted genocider Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister, asked the few in attendance in the UN General Assembly on September 24, "Remember the beepers?" Netanyahu was referring to a terrorist attack he committed in Lebanon and Syria in September 2024 that killed over 60 and maimed more than 4,000, including children. (screenshot taken from YouTube video)

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Gaza’s Children: Suffering in Silence

By Jeanne Allen, retired family nurse practitioner

A new health issue is emerging among the children of Gaza: many have simply stopped speaking.

They’ve endured bombings, drone attacks, sniping – the “noisy” genocide. Gaza has the highest rate of childhood amputees in the world. Children in Gaza also suffer from the “quiet” genocide – suffering and death from polio and other diseases, starvation, hypothermia. They are bitten by dogs, rats, and insects as the piles of rubble and garbage grow higher and higher. Many have lost not just parents and siblings but entire extended families. Health facilities have had to create a new term, WCNSF – “Wounded Child No Surviving Family” – to designate survivors who arrive for care unaccompanied. Most have no homes to return to because they have been demolished by years of bombing.

So, many children in Gaza have stopped speaking. Of these, a portion cannot speak because of war-related physical trauma, such as blast trauma from bombs, head injuries, falls from buildings, deliberate gunshots to the head, and neurological damage. Some of these children may resume speaking if their injuries heal.

Others go mute as a result of repeated trauma and loss. “Mutism is absence of verbal expression with conservation of language comprehension,” according to J. Grippo et al (“Mutism in Children,” NIH, 2001), and is usually caused by multiple factors. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) defines mutism as an anxiety disorder. Dr. Iman Farajallah, a Palestinian-American clinical psychologist whose work focuses on complex trauma in war zones, describes “complex continuous trauma” as “prolonged and repeated exposures to multiple traumatic events or experiences and



Traumatized child in Gaza City, 2026. (Andalou via Getty Images)

continuing over an extended period of time.” (“The Invisible Wounds of Palestinian Children,” *Psychiatric Times*, 2024)

The elements of chronic adversity — poverty, war, injury, blockade, starvation, destruction of homes, loss of family members, loss of community — are known to cause lasting psychological trauma, especially in developing minds. Add to those factors repeated

displacement, continued bombings and mass killings, (despite the so-called “ceasefire” in Gaza), and the constant fear of violence and more loss, is it any wonder children are shutting down?

It is estimated that up to 93% of Gazan children are vulnerable to developing mental health issues stemming from their persistent exposure to traumatic events (“A Broken Glass and Its Pieces: The Psychological Impact on Children in Gaza,” Qamar Bazar, Hunter College, 5/27/25). As Sarah Dawood notes, “It’s natural to avoid talking about traumatic events, but when all of life is trauma, what is there to say?” (“Left Speechless,” Index on Censorship, 4/10/25).

Mutism often requires long-term treatment including specialized therapeutic intervention and rehabilitation. A safe and nurturing environment is essential. Art and play therapy are key. Flying kites is particularly culturally appropriate for Gazan children (see Jabr, Hinnawi, Berger, “Healing Through the Skies: Coping with Grief Through a Therapeutic Group Activity for Children in Palestine,” International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies, 12/1/24). However, in August, 2026, the IDF announced it would fire on anyone flying kites in Gaza.

Where are such conditions or therapeutic interventions to be found in a Gaza Strip destroyed by Israeli-U.S. genocide? Before October 2023, when living conditions for all, including children, were already dire in Gaza, there were 22 specialized centers and four hospitals providing mental health and psychosocial treatment and support. Many have since been damaged or destroyed, and the healthcare providers killed or jailed.

Who remains to help the children find their voices? Who will speak for them?

Macklemore Continued...

But before I get into it, I want to say something that should be obvious. In this moment, I think it matters. I am not a victim. Ed Sheeran is not a victim. Pink is not a victim. We have careers, money, opportunities, safety, and audiences around the world. Whatever consequences any of us face for what we say, we get to go home to our families.

The victims are the Palestinian people. The men, women, and children who have been killed, starved, displaced, and forced to live through unimaginable violence. More than 20,000 children have been killed in Gaza alone. People are being killed today, and people will be killed tomorrow. I want to make sure that as I tell this story, we don’t lose sight of that.

Ed is my friend. I’ve known him for 13 years. We’ve shared late nights, studio sessions, and stages. He has this infectious magic about him that I’ve grown to love. I consider him a brother. And because of that, we’ve had some difficult conversations this past week. The type of talks rooted in love and respect for one another that still end in a place of fundamental disagreement. Nothing I’m writing here is out of spite or because I want to tear down his character. But as I told Ed multiple times on the phone, our friendship can’t change my responsibility to tell the truth about what happened.

Last Monday, in the middle of all the media attention surrounding Pink and what I said at MetLife, Ed told me that Robert Kraft called him. We were scheduled to play Gillette Stadium later this month, which is owned by the Kraft Group. Ed told me that Kraft said I would not be allowed to perform in his stadium. Ed also told me that Kraft had rallied some of the other stadium owners and collectively they gave him an ultimatum: if Macklemore stays on the tour, you will not be allowed to play in our venues.

Ed was in a fucked-up position. He knew it. His typical apolitical stance was being challenged in a way it never had been before. He told me that the words “Free Palestine” and the image of the Palestinian flag were hurtful to a lot of people he spoke with. I told him that if those words were more offensive than tens of thousands of Palestinian children being killed by Israel, then there was a fundamental disconnect between where those people stood and where I stood. But he couldn’t get past his public facing, “Don’t take sides.”

And I get why people don’t. Taking a side can cost you. Money, brand deals, sponsorships, festivals, private shows, relationships, and access. I’ve lost all of those things. But there is no neutral position between the oppressor and the oppressed. When one side has the bombs and bottomless financial and military support from America, refusing to take a side doesn’t leave you in the middle.

What I said at MetLife I have been saying on stages around the world for almost three years. So why is it an issue now? Because now I’m sharing a stage with one of the biggest artists in the world, in some of the biggest stadiums in America. At a certain level of exposure, “Free Palestine” becomes too much of a risk. If I kept doing the shows, saying Free Palestine, with Ed implicitly supporting it, the crowd getting loud and showing undeniable support for Palestinian liberation, what artist might speak out next? The stage becomes resistance. Maybe that’s why this time it became so important to silence me.

And one of the most effective ways to enforce that silence has been to weaponize the accusation of antisemitism. Antisemitism is real. And that is exactly why the word matters too much to be used as a shield against criticism of the Israeli state. When criticizing Israel, opposing Zionism, or saying “Free Palestine” get conflated with hatred of Jewish people, it doesn’t protect Jewish people. It protects Israel from accountability.

I hope this isn’t the end of my relationship with Ed. Thirteen years of friendship don’t disappear because of one painful disagreement. I hope we both continue listening, studying what is happening in Palestine, and wrestling with what neutrality means in a moment like this. My door will always be open to continuing that conversation.

When my brother Omar was doing the subtitles for the video I posted from MetLife, I thanked him. He told me there’s a phrase in Arabic: ‘La shukra ala wajeib.’ There is no thanks for a duty.

That stayed with me. Because that’s what this has become for me and millions of others around the world. A duty. Not something deserving of praise or gratitude. Not brave. Human.

Who is winning the internet, who is getting canceled, who gets to play the stadium and who doesn’t, all of it becomes so small when held against what we are actually witnessing in Gaza and the West Bank. An entire people being displaced, starved, and killed while the world debates which words we are allowed to use to describe it, how those words make us feel, and whether our discomfort matters more than the people living through a genocide.

I didn’t need 10 shows from Ed. I needed two. Two chances to stand in front of 90,000 people and say the words that somehow became too dangerous to say: Free Palestine.

But if those words cost me the stage, while turning the conversation back to Palestine, then it was the most successful tour I’ve ever been on.”



Newsbrief: Northampton Divestment Resolution Upheld

By Nick Mottern

On September 8, 2026, Hampshire County Superior Court Judge Charles Groce III dismissed a lawsuit attempting to scuttle a resolution approved by the Northampton City Council that calls for the city to divest from companies involved in Israel’s genocide against the Palestinian people. The resolution was approved unanimously last September.

The ruling was a major victory for the region’s anti-Zionist, pro-Palestinian organizers, residents, and Northampton’s city lawyers, particularly because the lawsuit was supported by the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts, an organization with assets

totaling \$52.7 million, according to the website 990 Scout.

At the center of the judge’s ruling is his finding that the 10 Northampton residents who filed the suit against the city did not have “standing”; that is, they did not prove that the resolution would cost them any money as city taxpayers.

The Northampton victory has given heart to Easthampton divestment organizers who have been successful in advancing a resolution similar to Northampton’s to the city’s finance committee, in anticipation of a vote by the Easthampton City Council.

CONNECTING WITH PALESTINE IN WESTERN MA

- » See the W MA Coalition for Palestine calendar for local standouts & events: <https://tinyurl.com/4zxjetvc>
- » To sign up to receive weekly newsletters detailing action for Palestine, email to: W MA SURJ: westernmasssurj@gmail.com & JVP W MA: westernmass@jewishvoiceforpeace.com
- » Recommended reading & viewing: The Electronic Intifada, Mondoweiss, Drop Site News, Democracy Now!

Nadia Milleron Continued...

But even as Neal was lobbying hard to bring more F-35s to Massachusetts (aircraft used by Israel to commit genocide against the people of Palestine, Lebanon, and Iran), he has been unwilling to assist a constituent’s efforts to prevent civilian aviation accidents.

In 2019, 1st District resident Nadia Milleron, who is now running against him as an independent in this November’s election, lost her daughter in a crash of a Boeing 737 Max. This was the second of two Boeing 737 Max plane crashes that occurred in the span of five months, killing 346 people.

Following the crash, Milleron left no stone unturned in her efforts to hold Boeing accountable for what the U.S. Department of Justice later determined was a criminal conspiracy to defraud the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Though she was ultimately successful in securing the passage of the 2020 Aircraft Certification, Safety, and Accountability Act (ACSAA), Richard Neal — her own U.S. Representative — never found the time to meet with her or otherwise provide assistance while she was advocating for the bill.

It would seem that Neal cares more about protecting corporate profits — whether those of Boeing, or of F-35 manufacturer Lockheed Martin, or, for that matter, the health insurance companies he takes millions in campaign contributions from — than he does about preventing the deaths of ordinary people, be they Milleron’s daughter or civilians in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran.

By contrast, Milleron’s successes in holding Boeing accountable — which also include strengthening an Illinois state law that allows corporations to be held criminally responsible when they knowingly cause deaths — send a clear message to voters: Milleron is competent at and committed to holding corporations accountable for their crimes. Milleron’s campaign website also states that she “supports ending the genocide in Palestine, and equal rights for all people.” And she supports Medicare for All — long opposed by Richard Neal. For these reasons and more, the *Alt-Hampshire Gazette* endorses Nadia Milleron for Congress.

NadiaforCongress.com