

Nerdeen Kiswani Fights for Palestine From the River to the Sea

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Nerdeen Kiswani is a student at CUNY Law School who, upon seeing a young man wearing a sweatshirt with the logo of the IDF, told him she hated it and was going to set it on fire – and as she spoke, she held her flaming lighter out toward him. Take a look, from 0:12 to 0:20, [here](#).

She didn't, in the end, set him alight, but she certainly was threatening to do him grievous bodily harm. Yet instead of being arrested for that, she has become the one, in these morally topsy-turvical times, we are asked to sympathize with, for the "hatred" and "islamophobia" that has allegedly been directed at her. The bizarro-world story is [here](#).

The City University of New York School of Law condemned antisemitism, but then later backtracked, after a video emerged online recently that appeared to show [it did not

“appear to show”—it did show] one of its students threatening to set on fire a man wearing an Israel Defense Forces sweatshirt.

The video is said to show student Nerdeen Kiswani holding a flaming lighter near the stomach of a Black man wearing a sweatshirt displaying the logo of the Israeli military.

“I hate your shirt,” a female voice is heard saying. “I’m gonna set it on fire. I’m serious!”

The video went viral on social media when the advocacy group Stop Antisemitism posted it on Twitter last week, calling it “horrific.”

“We demand this is immediately looked into and the (sic) Ms. Kiswani face disciplinary actions,” the group said.

The law school initially condemned the incident, saying, “CUNY School of Law stands against hate and antisemitism.”

After an uproar from backers of Kiswani, however, CUNY Law School Dean Mary Lu Bilek subsequently issued a statement to all students withdrawing and apologizing for the initial denunciation, claiming that Kiswani had simply “exercised her First Amendment right to express her opinion.”

Of course. Nothing says “I’m only exercising my right to express my opinion” like extending a lighter’s flame toward someone while saying “I hate your shirt. I’m gonna set it on fire. I’m serious.”

In responding to this situation, we moved too quickly, which led to several mistakes,” Bilek asserted. “I apologize for taking these actions and for the words we used and for the harm they caused.”

She lamented the first statement’s failure to “communicate the school’s position or to support the student” – i.e.

Kiswani.

Why should Kiswani be supported? She was the one doing the threatening; she had the flaming lighter; she's the one who said she was "gonna set it [the sweatshirt] on fire" and "I'm serious." Is this any different from waving a knife at someone and threatening "I'm gonna cut that shirt right off you"? No, it is not.

In that post, the header said that the Law School 'stands against hate and antisemitism,'" Bilek continued. "I know the difference between opposition to Israel's armed forces (or Israel's policies towards Palestine) and antisemitism, and the student's post was clearly expressing the former.

"As a Law School with our values, this mistake is inexcusable," she added.

And the Supreme Value of the CUNY Law School, as long as Mary Lu Bilek is Dean, can be summed up as Don't Rock The Boat, Be Satisfied With Bromides, Get With The Program, From the River to the Sea/Palestine Will Soon Be Free," and so on and so idiotically forth.

She [Dean Bilek] then announced that the university would make sure that it would "have the benefit of the Anti-Bias Response Team from the Race, Privilege, and Diversity Committee to help guide our response and ensure that it is consistent with our obligations, the law, and the Law School's values."

Words fail me. So it is the "Anti-Bias Response Team" from the "Race, Privilege, and Diversity Committee" that will "help guide our response." Dean Bilek has become her own parody.

Someone should do for this kind of thing – the "Anti-Bias Response Team" of the "Race, Privilege, and Diversity

Committee," what Randall Jarrell did when he dissected the "progressive faculty" at a school like Sarah Lawrence (where Jarrell taught, circa 1954). We need a Swift, full of savage indignation, to properly satirize such stuff as ~~dreams~~ nightmares are made on.

"We also will have the hard lesson learned from our mistake in this situation," Bilek concluded. "We pledge to better foreground our support and restorative justice practices in our responses in the future."

The backlash to the university's original condemnation had been intense. Shortly after it was posted, a far-left Jewish group at CUNY, the Jewish Law Students Association, issued a statement saying the exposure of Kiswani's act was "hateful" and "Islamophobic." It also asserted that the school's initial comments "wrongly conflate anti-Zionism with antisemitism."

So it was the "exposure" of Kiswani's behavior, in a 10-second video possibly taken and posted by Kiswani herself, in which she threatens someone "I hate your shirt. I'm gonna set it on fire. I'm serious" – that was "hateful" and "islamophobic." Was anything said about Islam? Was the posting of that video "hateful"? In what way? Would that video still be "hateful" if Kiswani herself, or one of her friends, turned out to have taken and posted it? Does anyone know who did it? Did the video convey an untruth about Nerdeen Kiswani, or did it simply catch her in a most disturbing act, that Dean Mary Lu Bilek thinks is nothing more than expressing an opinion?

A meme with a statement over the hashtag #WeStandWithNerdeen also made the rounds, claiming that the university chose to "cave into racist Zionist pressure" and place Kiswani "at risk."

Nerdeen Kiswani, the one who threatened "I'm gonna set you on

fire” has become, by sleight of word, and moral idiocy, the one who is “at risk.” It’s clear it wasn’t “racist Zionist pressure” that Dean Bilek “ultimately caved into” but, rather, the pressure of people like Kiswani, and her willing collaborators, oozing their anti-Israel venom and expecting to be treated as victims of a vicious Zionist cabal.. The tribe of #WeStandWithNerdeen triumphed.

The message [of #WeStandWithNerdeen] said that CUNY Law had “committed itself to protecting and enabling Zionism.”

Kiswani, it added, was “a valued community activist” who was “being bombarded with vile, Islamophobic, anti-Palestinian violence.”

A sample of this valued community activist, perhaps best known for repeatedly screaming and disrupting meetings of the New York City Council, can be seen [here](#).

There’s also much more about Nerdeen Kiswani [here](#). I’ve selected some piquant details of her very full life :

On January 8, 2017, Kiswani praised, on Facebook, Palestinian celebrations of a vehicular ramming attack that killed four people and injured 17 others on a Jerusalem promenade.

Kiswani encouraged celebrations of the murder writing: “While Palestinians and ‘allies’ in the west scramble to condemn, apologize, explain, hide, rationalize, etc what happened this morning, Palestinians in Palestine are giving out sweets in celebration. I will not hide from this. I will not be ashamed or embarrassed by this. These celebratory actions are what keep the resistance moving forward, they are what keep it alive.”

Kiswani continued: “In a world that’s trying to quell our liberation and self determination, the biggest “F you” to that are Palestinians celebrating actions that 1) remind

settles [sic] that there will never be peace on stolen land 2) remind the world we are still here 3) galvanize other Palestinians to fight. There's your rationalization no apology needed."

On September 8, 2016, Kiswani and other NYC SJP [Students for Justice in Palestine] members repeatedly disrupted a NYC City Council meeting discussing anti-BDS legislation, prompting the organizers to call security personnel to have them removed from the hall.

Towards the end of the meeting, Kiswani stood up and screamed [01:16:04] : "Yes, we want to shut down Zionists, because Zionism is racism... As a Palestinian I can't go back to my country because of you people. F**K Israel and F**K Zionism!"

Kiswani also added [01:17:00]: "That sh*t just pi***ed me off and I'm leaving now because I'm f**king shaking and I'm so f**king disgusting [sic.] I didn't want to be in the room with the f**king Israeli consulate" and the people inside, I hope they disrupt too, because we shouldn't f**king lend credibility to these pieces of sh*t. They need to be shut down. I hope they f**king clear the entire chambers cuz I want people to shut this sh*t down."

On February 10, 2018, Kiswani tweeted: "'I was boutta kill a couple settler colonies But they did it to themselves Everybody suicidal They don't even need my help" – me whenever Israel annkiounces a new policy that backs itself further Into isolation and exposes its crimes to the world ."

On July 29, 2016, Kiswani tweeted: "There is only one solution Intifada Revolution !! It is right, to rebel Israel, Go to hell We don't want no two state We want '48."

On May 16, 2016, Kiswani shared an album from a co-sponsored NYC SJP "Nakba Day March for Resistance and Return." The rally also called for violence – as the "one solution."

Scripted chants were distributed before the rally, where agitators yelled[00:00:18]: “Intifada Intifada” and “5-6-7-8 Smash the Settler Zionist State”, as well as [00:00:41]“we don’t want a two-state [solution]; we want ‘48!” and [00:00:20] “There is only one solution: Intifada revolution” – all calling for the destruction of Israel.

Kiswani posted a video recording of the protest that featured herself and other protesters inciting [00:00:01] against Jews who moved from New York to Israel, shouting [00:00:32]: “settler settler go back home, Palestine is ours alone!” and [00:00:52] “New York City you will learn, refugees will return!”

On October 4, 2015, Kiswani promoted an event on Facebook that called for violence. The event was co-hosted by a number of anti-Israel organizations, including Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, NY4Palestine, Al Awda, American Muslims for Palestine (AMP)and NYC SJP.

The event urged support for a “Day of Rage” called for by “Palestinian forces.” Kiswani also wrote: “Circuits [sic] this image in your listservs on all fb pages and to your sjps! If you can print and do outreach then do so! Change your profile pictures just basically make sure this is seen by everyone!!!”

On October 18, 2015, at an anti-Israel rally in New York City, Kiswani again called for “Intifada.” Standing on top of a podium, reading chants from her phone, Kiswani lead a crowd in chanting [00:00:36]: “1,2,3,4 occupation no more, 5,6,7,8 smash the settler-Zionist state!” followed by [00:01:21] “there is only one solution, Intifada, Revolution!”

Other protesters at the rally sang [00:01:42]: “Falasteen ibladna Wel yahood ichlabna,” which – translated from Arabic – means: “Palestine is our country and the jews are our dogs.”

That's a fitting place to stop: "Palestine is our country and the Jews are our dogs." That captures the essence, the quidditas, the deep and only belief, of Nerween Kiswani.

Nerween Kiswani has a private pantheon of Palestinian terrorists: Rasmeah Odeh, Leila Khaled, Bilad Kayed, Ahmed Saadat, Mohammed Allan, Nouf Infeat, Sawson Ali Mansour, Fadi Aloon, Muhammad Halabi, Hudhaifa Suleiman, and so many more. Some she merely likes, others she idolizes.

On June 11, 2019, Kiswani posted to her Instagram a photo of her posing with Rasmea Odeh, adding: "What an amazing woman with an inspiring revolutionary spirit."

Odeh was a key military operative with the terrorist group the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). In 1969, Odeh masterminded a PFLP bombing that killed two college students in a Jerusalem supermarket. Odeh also attempted to bomb the British consulate.

Odeh confessed, in a highly detailed account, the day following her arrest. In a 2004 documentary, one of Odeh's co-conspirators directly implicated[00:10:53] Odeh as the mastermind.

In 1970, an Israeli court tried and convicted Odeh for her involvement in both bombings and sentenced her to life imprisonment. However, Odeh was released 10 years later, in a prisoner swap and emigrated to the United States.

On November 10, 2014, a Michigan federal jury convicted Odeh for immigration fraud because she failed to disclose her prior conviction and life sentence on her immigration application. On March 12, 2015, she was sentenced to 18 months in prison.

In 2017, after an appeal and a lengthy court battle, Odeh admitted to immigration fraud, was stripped of her U.S. citizenship, deported to Jordan and banned from re-entering

the U.S.

On March 5, 2017, Kiswani posted a photo of a book printed by the terrorist organization Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), entitled "A Strategy for the Liberation of Israel" and added the hashtag "#pflp."

On December 17, 2016, Kiswani posted to her Instagram a photo of her in her room, with pictures of convicted terrorists Leila Khaled and Ahmed Saadat hanging on her wall.

Khaled was a leading member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and participated in the hijacking of TWA Flight 840 in 1969 and El Al Flight 219 in 1970.

Khaled has said that the second intifada failed because it was not violent enough, advocated for the use of children in terror activities and compared Zionists to Nazis....

On August 21, 2015, Kiswani posted a photo on Instagram holding a poster featuring Mohammad Allan, and the hashtag "#freemuhammadallan." Allan is a member of the terrorist organization Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), which "is dedicated to the violent destruction of Israel."

On June 3, 2015, Kiswani shared on Facebook a video and photos of Nouf Infeat – who was shot after stabbing an Israeli soldier – and commented: "Their ongoing tactic and strategy. Turn young Palestinian bodies into a spectacle... This is beyond cruel and sadistic. I hate to watch videos like this, and I hate sharing them, but I hate letting Zionist filth get away with doing this to my people even more."

On May 23, 2016, Kiswani shared a photo on Facebook of Sawsan Ali Mansour – who tried to stab an Israeli soldier at a checkpoint near Jerusalem – with the comment: "she was

executed today at Beit Exa military checkpoint by Zionist occupation soldiers, she was killed because she is Palestinian.”...

On April 15, 2015, Kiswani tweeted that Israel was “Promoting Gendered Violence Against Palestinians.”

On February 25, 2014, Kiswani tweeted “‘BDS is a genocidal movement’ – Anti-BDS proponent. Meanwhile Israel is committing actual genocide against Palestinians.”...

Had enough? Just one last time let’s hear the inimitable voice of Nerdeen Kiswani at a meeting of the NYC City Council:

*That sh*t just pi***ed me off and I’m leaving now because I’m f**king shaking and I’m so f**king disgusting [sic.] I didn’t want to be in the room with the f**king Israeli consulate” and the people inside, I hope they disrupt too, because we shouldn’t f**king lend credibility to these pieces of sh*t. They need to be shut down. I hope they f**king clear the entire chambers cuz I want people to shut this sh*t down.”*

Not exactly Ruth Bader Ginsburg. But what did you expect?

And as a final thought, ask yourself the obvious question: If a non-Muslim male student at CUNY Law School had told a hijabbed girl that “I hate that thing you’re wearing. I’m gonna set it on fire. I’m serious!” while holding out a flaming lighter, what would have happened? All hell would have broken loose. Everybody – Dean Mary Lu Bilek, the Anti-Bias Response Team, the Race, Privilege, and Diversity Committee, the New York chapter of CAIR, would all be on him like a ton of bricks. He’d be expelled in a New York minute.

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