CUPE local praises alleged Hamas financiers as 'educators and leaders'

Melanie Bennet - Juno News - 2026-11-05

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CUPE local praises alleged Hamas financiers as 'educators and leaders'

Their latest social includes "solidarity" letter-writing to 15 prisoners, convicted Hamas financiers, firebombers and defendants facing terrorism-related allegations while honouring a PFLP commander.

Melanie Bennet

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a bunch of graffiti on the side of a building

Credit: Unsplash (Ash Hayes)

A McMaster University union local held an event glorifying terrorists, including convicted Hamas financiers, as "our educators and leaders" during a letter-writing event that also honoured a convicted Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine commander responsible for abduction and murder.

CUPE 3906's Palestine Solidarity Working Group's Instagram post shows leaflets calling for the release of Shukri Abu-Baker and Ghassan Elashi. Both received 65-year prison sentences after being convicted of providing material support to Hamas.

The local, part of the union representing academic workers at McMaster University, said students and workers gathered Monday to write letters supporting "political prisoners of the Palestinian Liberation Movement."

"May our prisoners continue to guide us as the compass of our struggle, until full liberation and return," they said.

"From the Zionist prisons of occupied Palestine to the dungeons of the imperial prison system across Turtle Island, our imprisoned comrades remain our educators and leaders," the caption stated, praising prisoners whose "immeasurable courage and principles continue to inspire generations of revolutionaries."

The principled individuals, according to CUPE3906, include Abu-Baker and Elashi. They were leaders of the Holy Land Foundation, a US charity convicted alongside five of its leaders in 2008.

According to the US Justice Department, the foundation provided approximately US$12.4 million in support to Hamas through affiliated organizations.

Pride of place at the event was a display featuring Walid Daqqa, identifying him as a "Martyr Leader."

An Israeli military court convicted Daqqa in 1987 of commanding a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine cell that abducted and killed Israeli soldier Moshe Tamam in 1984. Daqqa denied responsibility. Amnesty International challenged the fairness of his trial, distinguishing his command role from the killing. He died of cancer in custody in April 2024.

The PFLP is a listed terrorist entity in Canada.

Another leaflet promoted Casey Robert Goonan, sentenced in September 2025 to approximately nineteen and a half years for arson involving firebomb attacks at UC Berkeley and an attempted firebombing of an Oakland federal building. Goonan's plea agreement accepted a terrorism sentencing enhancement.

The materials featured Malik Fard Muhammad, sentenced to ten years for possessing unregistered destructive devices following Molotov cocktail attacks during Portland protests. One attack set a police officer's leg on fire. His federal convictions were for explosives offences.

Four other featured prisoners face allegations involving Hamas financing in Italy. These include Mohammad Hannoun, Riyad Albustanji, Raed Dawoud, and Yaser Elasaly.

Italian prosecutors allege the four belonged to the leadership of a Hamas cell that diverted charitable donations to the organization. Prosecutors requested that they be committed for trial, with a preliminary hearing scheduled for November 12. They have not been convicted in the case.

The US Treasury separately sanctioned Hannoun in October 2024, alleging he transferred at least US$4 million to Hamas over ten years. Hannoun denies financing Hamas and says his fundraising supported Palestinians through charitable work.

The leaflets featured Muhammad Umer Khalid and Jon Cink, defendants accused over a Palestine Action break-in at Britain's RAF Brize Norton airbase that damaged two military aircraft. Both pleaded not guilty. Their trial was scheduled for January 2027.

Five other individuals accused of terrorism-related charges for their Palestine Action activism, known as the "Ulm Five", were also featured. They include Zo Hailu, Vi Kovarbasic, Leandra Rollo, Daniel Tatlow-Devally and Crow Tricks.

Their German case concerns alleged trespass, property damage, and membership in a criminal organization following an action at an Elbit Systems facility.

In May, Juno News reported that the newly formed CUPE 3906 Palestine working group shared PFLP propaganda on their Instagram page.

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The local told Juno News that they were "currently in a transition period" at the time following recent elections and that some committees operated with "a degree of autonomy," including maintaining their own social media platforms.

"The Instagram story you referenced was not reviewed, approved, or shared by the Local's executive, nor was it posted on CUPE 3906's official communication channels," the union said.

"We remain committed to ensuring that our communications align with our union values and legal obligations, and we will continue to review our internal processes to support that goal." CUPE 3906 did not directly state whether it approved of the post.

Juno News reached out to ask the union about their Palestine working group's latest promotion of terrorists, but they did not respond.