

NOT BACKING DOWN

ISRAEL, FREE SPEECH, & THE BATTLE FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

SATURDAY MAY 4, 2019 | 6:30 PM

FINE ARTS CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

A Panel on the Backlash Against Pro-Palestinian Voices

“Not Backing Down: Israel, Free Speech & the Battle for Palestinian Rights” will address recent attacks on Rep. Ilhan Omar and other progressives who have spoken out against Israel’s 50-year military occupation of Palestinian land and pushed back against the claim that criticizing Israeli government policies is “anti-Semitic.” The panel will feature prominent activists and journalists who have themselves been attacked, smeared, and branded “anti-Semitic” for speaking up on behalf of Palestinian rights.

Panelists include: Legendary rocker **Roger Waters** of Pink Floyd fame, who has been [repeatedly vilified](#) as an “anti-Semite” for his outspoken criticism of the occupation and his staunch support of a cultural boycott of Israel; Palestinian-American political activist **Linda Sarsour**, the co-founder of MPower Change and co-chair of the Women’s March, who was recently [targeted by a private Israeli intelligence firm](#) as part of [a coordinated, U.S.-based campaign](#) to stop her from speaking out against Israeli policies on American college campuses; **Marc Lamont Hill**, a professor and political commentator who has visited the occupied territories with Black Lives Matter and was [fired last year by CNN](#) for remarks he made in support of Palestinian rights; and *Nation* magazine sports editor and author **Dave Zirin**, a frequent contributor to MSNBC and ESPN who has been called a “[self-hating Jew](#)” for his criticisms of Israeli human rights abuses, his [outspoken defense of Ilhan Omar](#), and his support for [NFL players who refused to go on a promotional trip to Israel](#) funded by the Israeli government.

“The vicious smears these four people have been subjected to are part of a systematic effort to change the subject and deflect attention away from the billions of dollars in financial and military aid the U.S. continues to give Israel despite its ongoing violations of international law and Palestinian human rights,” said Sut Jhally, a UMass professor and the Executive Director of the [Media Education Foundation](#), which is organizing the event. “The good news is that more and more people – Palestinians, African-Americans, young progressive Jews and Christians alike – are staring down these intimidation tactics, refusing to be silenced, and speaking up for Palestinian human rights regardless of the consequences. This panel is clear evidence of that.”

The panel will be moderated by **Vijay Prashad**, a journalist and historian who appears regularly on *Democracy Now!* and the *Real News Network* and is the author or editor of over 30 books, including *Letters to Palestine: Writers Respond to War and Occupation*.