



# Initiatives on Palestine

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Emgage Action has been actively advocating for Palestinian rights, highlighting a shift in Muslim American support for President Biden through influential polls, engaging in strategic dialogues with political leaders, and mobilising the community through voter outreach and public forums. Our efforts include direct engagement with figures like President Biden and Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, advocating for resolutions such as the "Ceasefire in Gaza" and the Ceasefire Now Resolution, and collaborating with partners, including the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Through town halls, solidarity prayers, and campaigns, we ensure the voices of the Muslim American community are heard. By organising voter outreach events, policy advocacy, and media appearances, we highlight the need for a ceasefire, address rising Islamophobia, and advocate for balanced public discourse. This comprehensive approach underscores our commitment to peace, justice, and the self-determination of Palestinians, showcasing the power of community mobilisation in shaping U.S. foreign policy and public opinion. Below is an overview of all the actions that Emgage Action's national and State Chapters have taken in regards to the Palestine conflict.

## NATIONAL

### *Administration Engagement*

1. CEO Wa'el Alzayat participated in a meeting with President Biden, alongside representatives from Palestinian, Arab, and Black Muslim communities.
  - a. Key topics included advocating for a ceasefire, humanitarian aid to Gaza, and a credible political process for Palestinian self-determination.
  - b. Concerns about rising anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bigotry in the United States were also discussed
2. In collaboration with Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim groups, discussions were held with the U.S. Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, to address these issues, seeking concrete actions to combat bigotry.
3. Emgage met with Secretary of State Tony Blinken, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, and senior national security officials, emphasising the urgent need for a ceasefire and humanitarian aid delivery to Gaza, alongside partner organisations.

### *Legislation*

1. H.Res. 786 Endorsement
  - a. Supported Ceasefire Now Resolution, which currently has 18 cosponsors

- b. Quote: “It is clear that there is no military solution to this crisis, only a political one that encompasses ending the occupation and recognizing the freedoms and equal rights of Palestinians in their homeland.”
- 2. Reached over 100 Congressional offices via virtual and in-person meetings as well as through letters.
- 3. Advocated for an immediate ceasefire.
- 4. Advocated for the reinstatement of UNRWA funding.
- 5. Opposed Senate Bill 4136:
  - a. Highlighted concerns about the subjective criteria and potential labeling of advocacy organizations as "terrorist" supporters, threatening their tax-exempt status and hindering transparency and free speech.
- 6. Opposed Senate Bill 3141:
  - a. Raised objections to the codification of a specific definition of antisemitism, potentially suppressing legitimate criticism of Israel and advocacy for Palestinian rights.
- 7. Opposed the proposed Columbia Act (not yet introduced):
  - a. Voiced opposition to the restriction of academic freedom, particularly in response to peaceful student protests advocating for Palestinian human rights, which could penalize institutions and violate First Amendment rights.

#### *Calls to Action*

- 1. Columbia SJP attack
  - a. <https://x.com/EmgageAction/status/1750227972789793123?s=20>
- 2. Conditioning aid
  - a. <https://x.com/EmgageAction/status/1747404568466497878?s=20>
- 3. No Hate Marriott
- 4. Ceasefire Now Resolution
  - a. Received over 4000 responses

#### *Additional Action*

- 1. Poll on Muslim American’s voting patterns
  - a. Conducted by National Organising Director, Mohamed Gula.
  - b. Found that only 5.2% of Muslim Americans would vote for President Biden.

## **STATE CHAPTERS**

### **Florida**

#### *Congressional Outreach*

- 1. Met with Representative Maxwell Frost, Representative Darren Soto, Representative Kathy Castor, Representative Sheila McCormick, and Representative Frederica Wilson to ask them to cosponsor the Ceasefire Now Resolution.

#### *State Political Engagement*

- 1. Requested Tampa Mayor Jane Castor to use balanced language concerning the events of October 7th, a request that the City of Tampa honoured.

2. Supported State Representative Angie Nixon who introduced a ceasefire resolution.

#### *Community Engagement*

1. December 15, 2023: Hosted town hall on Gaza crisis and its impact in Central Florida.
  - a. Guest speakers included Dr Vibert Issa White and Alicia Koutsoulieris.
  - b. Discussed how to leverage the power of the Muslim vote to affect U.S. foreign policy.
2. Attended Zakat Foundation dinner for Palestine humanitarian aid efforts in Lake Buena Vista, Florida and collected letters of support for the Ceasefire Now Resolution.
3. Hosted a community discussion on "Bridging Faith & Politics: United Against Hate" on Saturday, February 24th at the 2024 South Florida Muslim Conference.
  - a. Attended by many elected officials: Florida State Rep and Minority Leader Dotie Joseph, Florida State Rep. Angie Nixon, City of Miramar Mayor Wayne M. Messam, City of Lauderhill Commissioner Ray Martin, community leaders, CAIR, ICNA and Muslim Federation officials, Broward Sheriff Office's Colonel Munib Ahmed, Emgage Founder Khurram Wahid, Emgage Florida Outreach Coordinators Zakir Shareef and Tark Aouadi, Islamic Center of Greater Miami President Mian Tahir Ismail, Board Member Dr. Shazad, Imam Dr. Abdul Hamid Samra, Humanity International board member Younus Ismail, Masjid Jamaat Al-Mumineen Imam Mufti Izhar Khan, Islamic Center of Broward Imam Faisal Fattani ICB Board member Imran Bashir, Doctor Zafar Qureshi Director UMC Free Clinic attended the Ceremony with other dignitaries.
  - b. Rep. Dotie Joseph and Rep. Angie Nixon talked about our obligation to human rights around the world and in Palestine as well as how our community can get more involved in politics. We also had a productive conversation with Miramar Mayor Messam, faith leaders, and the community on how we can all be more inclusive of everyone. The panel discussion was moderated by Corey Shearer, CAC board member Afifa Khaliq, and Shaik Shafayat Mohamed from the Darul Uloom Institute.
  - c. Finished with a discussion around next steps and closed with a prayer. The next steps included hosting various protest rallies to advocate for a ceasefire, voting in mass as a community of multiple parties, and using our alliances and partnerships to create a more diverse and consistent civic engagement, attending state, county and municipal meetings to encourage resolutions in support of a ceasefire, and holding many of our elected officials accountable for lack of action on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

#### *Calls to Action*

1. Advocated for Ceasefire in Gaza (HR31c).

### **Michigan**

#### *Administration Engagement*

1. February 8, 2024: Members of the Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities in Michigan met with Samantha Power (U.S. Agency for International Development

Administrator), Jon Finer (Principal Deputy National Security Advisor), Steve Benjamin (White House Public Engagement Director), Jamie Citron (Deputy Public Engagement Director), Tom Perez (Leader of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs), Dan Koh (Perez's Deputy), and Mazen Basrawi (Director for Partnerships and Global Engagement at the National Security Council).

- a. Engage Michigan Senior Advisor Nada Al-Hanooti Quote: “ We are proud of those who participated, especially in light of the pain and trauma they and our collective communities have endured over the past four months. We believe it is essential to speak truth to power and to hold elected and appointed leaders accountable for their decision-making. Engage fully supports participants' demands for a full ceasefire and the delivery of more humanitarian assistance to help those in need, especially children. We also support calls to resume funding for UNRWA while withholding additional financial assistance to the Netanyahu government given their gross violations of human rights and war crimes against the Palestinian people. Finally, Engage supports the participants' demand to address the root causes of the crisis by ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinians.”

#### *Congressional Outreach*

1. Met with Senator Gary Peters, Representative Debbie Dingell, and Representative Elissa Slotkin to advocate for a ceasefire.

#### *State Political Engagement*

1. Prioritised the “No Business with Genocide” package.
2. Released [call to action](#) urging Gov. Whitmer to call for a ceasefire.

#### *Community Engagement*

1. Canvassed, phonebanked, and textbanked, targeting Muslim voters to mobilise the community to vote.
2. Launched a phone bank to encourage the community to vote uncommitted in the presidential primary.
3. Hosted a Michigan Civic Table meeting to address the community's grievances regarding the ongoing conflict in Palestine.
4. Recognised elected officials who had publicly called for a ceasefire at Michigan Gala.
5. Encouraged voters to vote “uncommitted” in the February primary as part of the “Listen to Michigan” campaign.
  - a. We made 46,000 calls and sent 120,000 text messages to ask Michigan voters to vote “uncommitted.”

### **New York Metro**

#### *State Political Engagement*

1. Held multiple meetings with key New York State stakeholders, including with the Governor, the Secretary of State, and Chief of Staff to address the rise in Islamophobia and one sided messaging.
2. Organised a NY Civic Table meeting to discuss grievances and engage Table in ongoing discussion about engagements with elected officials on the state and city level.

#### *Community Engagement*

1. Conducted extensive GOTV and phone banking efforts for District 3 Special Elections.
  - a. Advocated against the candidacy of former IDF soldier and current Republican county legislator Mazi Melesa Pilip.
2. Collaborated with the CUNY policy and procedures review team, headed by Judge Lippman, to integrate Islamophobia formally into CUNY's evaluation framework.
  - a. This initiative aimed to ensure that bigotry and discrimination are effectively addressed and countered following the events of October 7th, establishing a more inclusive and respectful environment within the institution.

#### *Calls to Action*

1. Support Linda Tigani, Chair and Executive Director of the NYC Commission on Racial Equity
2. Call for Ceasefire
3. Call for Ceasefire and Balanced messaging

## **New Jersey**

### *State Political Engagement*

1. Arranged and facilitated meetings for the Princeton Muslim community with State Senator Andrew Zwicker, Assemblyman Roy Frieman, and Assembly candidate Mitchel Drulis to discuss their public statements after October 7th and advocate for a ceasefire.
2. Arranged and facilitated a meeting with Congressman Andy Kim (running for US Senate) with Palestinian leaders from across New Jersey and advocated for a ceasefire. Congressman Kim has now called for a ceasefire, due in part to these efforts.
3. Arranged and facilitated a meeting with Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman's senior staff and constituents, including Palestinian Americans, to advocate for a ceasefire in October. The following week, Congresswoman Coleman called for a ceasefire, being among the first in Congress to do so.
4. Along with a coalition of Muslim parents and students in Princeton, met with the Superintendent of Princeton Public Schools to discuss their Islamophobic messaging in the aftermath of October 7th.
5. Organized a meeting of Muslim higher education professionals and allies with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Higher Education for New Jersey to advocate for freedom of speech and other issues on university campuses.
6. Advocated with the Chief of the Civil Rights Division of the US Attorney's office on Muslim students being bullied in schools and the response of school administrators or lack thereof.
7. Delivered public comments urging the Jersey City Council to support a ceasefire resolution.

## **Pennsylvania**

### *Congressional Outreach*

1. November 15, 2023: Met with Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon and her Chief of Staff

- a. Told that Scanlon will sign on to a letter authored by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and other progressive members calling for a bilateral ceasefire.

#### *State Political Engagement*

1. Met with state and city officials regarding various resolutions, offering them guidance on resolutions.
2. Urged policymakers at all levels to ensure US decisions and statements align with international law.
3. Advocated for de-escalation and an immediate ceasefire.
4. Urged public officials, governmental bodies, schools, and other institutions to offer support to Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim Americans in equal measure as they offered support to Jewish and Israeli Americans.
5. October 26, 2023: Met with Governor Josh Shapiro and members of his Administration to address key concerns regarding the crisis in Gaza and the need for public officials to support Muslim Pennsylvanians in this difficult moment.
  - a. Asks include:
    - i. Increase the diversity in his Administration
    - ii. Hold ongoing dialogue with Pennsylvania Muslims and attending a meet and greet with the Muslim community
    - iii. Speak out against harassment at schools and jobs, iterating support for freedom of speech
    - iv. Release a statement supporting a ceasefire
    - v. Governor Shapiro agreed to all of the above, with the exception of the ceasefire, citing potential implications for American hostages.
6. Joined the leadership team for the Pennsylvania Uncommitted campaign.
7. Working with a Philadelphia Palestinian Americans' organisational leaders to craft ceasefire resolution for City Council, and schedule meetings with City Council members to discuss resolution.

#### *Community Engagement*

1. Hosted About Palestine Iftar, which included an information session with African American Muslim community members about the history of the occupation and more facts regarding the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

### **Texas**

#### *Administration Engagement*

1. January 11, 2024: Co-convened a listening session for community stakeholders and the Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division.
  - a. Focussed on civil rights issues Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities are facing, particularly since October 7.
2. Contacted the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division to discuss victim resources following the hate crime that occurred in Austin on February 4.

#### *Congressional Outreach*

1. October 18, 2024: Met with Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher to discuss the mounting humanitarian crisis in Gaza and increase in anti-Muslim, anti-Arab sentiment that is making our communities feel unsafe locally.
2. January 12, 2024: Met with Senator Ted Cruz's staff to ask for conditions on military aid, request his assistance for Texans with family members trapped in

Gaza, and ask him to support access to humanitarian aid in Gaza that is currently being blocked by Israel.

#### *Community Engagement*

1. January 20, 2024: Conducted voter outreach at the Arab Cultural Center's Palestine Day event.
2. November 3, 2023: Attended a solidarity jummah prayer for Palestine at Houston City Hall on.
3. January 9, 2024: Emgage Texas Chair and Policy Associate spoke at Houston City Council to urge city leaders to improve public safety for Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities and pass a ceasefire resolution.
4. Worked on a coalition response to governor's executive order targeting pro-Palestinian student organizations.

### **Virginia**

#### *Congressional Outreach*

1. Met with Senator Kaine to discuss advocating for the conditioning of aid, aligning with the principles advocated by Senator Van Hollen as well as Representative Beyer and Representative Connolly.
  - a. Representative Beyer and Representative Connolly voted against the latest standalone Israel aid package.
  - b. Representative Connolly also highlighted issues regarding West Bank and settler violence, criticised Israeli cabinet members for calling for ethnic cleansing, and has consistently advocated for an increase in humanitarian aid.
  - c. This was a total of 7 congressional meetings.

#### *State Political Engagement*

1. Conducted 24 state legislative meetings during the legislative session.
2. Opposed SR 1, which expresses support for Israel and condemns Hamas.
3. Opposed SB 604 and HB 758, which propose a prohibition on boycotting Israel.

#### *Community Engagement*

1. Co-sponsored suhoor night with 6,000+ attendees; vendors gave 10% to Palestine.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

### **Social Media**

1. [Commentary on UNRWA funding](#)
2. [Commentary on Ro Khanna support](#)
3. [Uplifting NBC for platforming pali voices](#)
4. [Failure of Biden in TIME](#)
5. [International Court of Justice Ruling](#)
6. [Chicago Mayor calling for a ceasefire](#)
7. [Statement on Columbia protest attack](#)
8. [BDS Legislation in Florida](#)
9. [Conditioning aid](#)
10. [Yemen strikes](#)
11. [San Francisco Backs Gaza Ceasefire](#)

12. [No Hate Marriott Call to Action](#)
13. [Amed Khan interview](#)
14. [Bernie Sanders conditioning aid](#)
15. [How the Uncommitted Vote will influence the next Presidency](#)
16. [Uncommitted Vote success](#)
17. [Nada Al Hanooti on NPR](#)
18. [What the Uncommitted Vote means](#)
19. [Success of the Michigan Uncommitted](#)
20. [RNS covers the Uncommitted Vote](#)
21. [Senator Chris Van Hollen Letter](#)

## MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

### Articles

1. *Michigan Public, NPR:* [“No easy trip home”: How Palestinian-Americans are making sense of their identity right now](#)
2. *Newsweek:* [Yemen Strikes Are Another Nail in Joe Biden's Coffin for Muslim Voters](#)
3. *The Washington Post:* [Israel-Gaza war, LGBTQ rights complicate alliances for U.S. Muslims](#)
4. *The New York Times:* [Biden Navigates Divisions Over Gaza Inside the White House and Beyond](#)
5. *PBS NewsHour:* [Arab and Muslim Americans on how U.S. support for Israel could affect their votes in 2024](#)
6. *Reuters:* [No ceasefire in Gaza, no votes, Muslim Americans tell Biden](#)
7. *CNN:* [Muslim Americans helped Biden win Michigan in 2020. Now, his Israel-Gaza response is throwing their support into question | CNN Politics](#)
8. *Politico:* [Biden won the Michigan primary decisively — but not by enough to calm Democratic angst](#)
9. *Politico:* [Michigan Dems acknowledge Muslim American frustration with Biden, but question Trump as alternative](#)
10. *Religion News Service:* [Michigan’s Muslim voters mobilize to vote ‘uncommitted’ in Democratic primary](#)
11. *NBC:* [Fear and Faith: Palestinians in America](#)
12. *Religion News Service:* [Muslim and Arab Americans feel betrayed by Biden. Can he win back their votes?](#)
13. *Associated Press:* [Muslim leaders reject chance to break bread with Biden as anger over Gaza festers](#)
14. *Associated Press:* [Muslim leaders are ‘out of words’ as they tire of the White House outreach on the war in Gaza](#)

### Media Appearances

1. [Wa’el Alzayat’s CNN interview calling for an immediate ceasefire](#)
2. [Wa’el Alzayat’s BBC UK interview on Michigan “Uncommitted” Campaign](#)
3. [Emgage CEO, Wa’el Alzayat, discusses humanitarian crisis in Gaza on Al-Jazeera](#)
4. [Wa’el Alzayat Speaks to BBC News on the Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza](#)

5. [Wa'el Alzayat interview with PBS NewsHour on Arab and Muslim Americans on Israel support and their votes](#)
6. [Wa'el Alzayat Speaks to BBC News on Michigan Uncommitted Vote](#)
7. [Wa'el Alzayat on Al Jazeera to speak on Michigan Uncommitted Campaign](#)

### **Staff Op-eds**

1. Wa'el Alzayat in *TIME*: [Biden's Israel-Gaza Strategy Is an Illogical Disaster](#)
2. Wa'el Alzayat and Jeremy Konyndyk in *Just Security*: [U.S. Policymakers' Lessons from Yemen for Gaza](#)
3. Hira Khan in *Detroit News*: [How the 'uncommitted' movement will shape foreign policy](#)

### **Press Releases**

1. [Emgage statement on meeting with White House delegation to urge for ceasefire](#)
2. [Emgage Calls for Immediate Ceasefire and Humanitarian Aid Following Tragic Loss of Lives in Northern Gaza Strip](#)
3. [Emgage Action celebrates historic "Uncommitted" vote calling for urgent Gaza policy change](#)
4. [Emgage Action supports Listen to Michigan campaign to advocate for policy change on Gaza ahead of primary](#)
5. [First International Conference to Rebuild Health System of Gaza Sets Out Course For the Future Reconstruction Roadmap](#)
6. [Emgage Action Statement on Attacks in Rafah and Pending Ground Invasion](#)
7. [Emgage CEO Attends Meeting with Deputy National Security Advisor Jonathan Finer](#)
8. [Emgage Action's Response to President Biden's State of the Union Address](#)
9. [Emgage Statement Regarding White House Meeting Invitation](#)

### **Press Conference**

1. Emgage Florida (in partnership with CAIR)
  - a. Provided an alternative perspective on the Gaza crisis and to highlight the importance of a ceasefire.

### **Advertisement**

1. [Emgage Action Texas' Houston Chronicle ad](#)
  - a. Called for a ceasefire and an end to the indiscriminate violence against Palestinians in Gaza.