



## ALAA UAW 2325 LABOR FOR PALESTINE

*From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.*

### UAW 2325 Labor for Palestine Demands that the NY State Bar Association Cancel Its Event Hosting the Israel Bar Association and Former IOF and Israeli Government Officials

March 3, 2024, New York, New York - The New York State Bar Association (NYSBA), an association of thousands of lawyers which purports to be “the voice of the legal profession in New York State,”<sup>1</sup> plans to host lawyers from the Israel Bar Association and former Israeli Occupation Forces (“IOF”) members and Israeli government officials on Monday, March 4, at 6:30 pm for what they are calling a panel on Israel’s court system.<sup>2</sup> UAW 2325 Labor for Palestine calls on NYSBA to cancel this event and reverse this decision to host participants in a judicial system that disregards international law by, for example, supporting genocide, and has no regard for the core American principle of equal protection by validating an apartheid system of oppression against Palestinians living within Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (“OPT”).

NYSBA’s planned panel includes as a speaker Avichai Mandelblit, previous Attorney General of Israel, who worked for years in the IOF and in the military court system in Gaza<sup>3</sup> and who defended the IOF’s use of cluster bombs during the July War.<sup>4</sup> It includes Yoram Danziger, a former judge on the Israel Supreme Court, and Henry Greenberg of the law firm Greenberg Traurig, who in an article following October 7 racistly referred to Israel as “the civilized world” in contrast to the OPT<sup>5</sup> and visited Israel in a show of “solidarity.”<sup>6</sup> And it includes Barnea, Jaffa, Lande and Co. partner Hadar Israeli, who has personally endorsed several posts and individuals who were engaged in the endangerment of Columbia students, referred to student activists as “terrorists,” and endorsed false<sup>7</sup> accusations of rape.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://nysba.org/about/#:~:text=The%20New%20York%20State%20Bar.and%20ever%20changing%20legal%20pr ofession.>

<sup>2</sup>

<https://nysba.org/new-york-state-bar-association-to-host-israel-bar-associations-visit-to-n-y-with-bar-leaders-law-school-deans-community-groups/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://mishpacha.com/the-license-to-kill/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/2007-12-25/ty-article/idf-wont-take-legal-action-against-officers-for-firing-cluster-bombs-in-lebanon/0000017f-db4f-d3a5-af7f-fbefeb7a0000>

<sup>5</sup> [https://jewishworldnews.org/news/local/american-jewrys-moment-supporting-israel-in-its-time-of-need/?wallit\\_nosession=1](https://jewishworldnews.org/news/local/american-jewrys-moment-supporting-israel-in-its-time-of-need/?wallit_nosession=1)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/in/henry-greenberg/recent-activity/all/>

<sup>7</sup>

<https://www.palestinechronicle.com/debunked-by-palestine-chronicle-co-author-of-of-nyt-report-on-sexual-assaults-exposed-video/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/in/hadar-israeli-3b310a14a/recent-activity/all/>

The event is put on by Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, whose senior chair Joseph Shenker stated that activists who support Palestine “have no place” at his firm,<sup>9</sup> the Historical Society of the NY Courts, and the Fund for Modern Courts. The visiting Israeli lawyers are sponsored by firms such as Greenberg Traurig, which operates in Israel and raised money and matched its employees’ monetary contributions to groups in Israel following October 7.<sup>10</sup> All firms sponsoring the trip signed on to a letter to law schools aimed at chilling pro-Palestinian speech on campuses.<sup>11</sup>

In promoting this event, the NY State Bar Association has stated, “During the visit, the New York State Bar Association is entering into an agreement of cooperation, known as a Memorandum of Understanding, with the Israel Bar Association. Under the agreement, the New York State Bar Association and the Israel Bar Association pledge to establish closer ties.”<sup>12</sup>

UAW 2325 Labor for Palestine condemns in the strongest terms NYSBA’s decision to put on this event and demands that NYSBA reverse course. Palestinians have, since 2005, called for “boycotts of activities, events and projects which legitimize or otherwise enable Israel’s regime of apartheid, settler colonialism and occupation”:

“Normalization, tatbee’ in Arabic, means dealing with or presenting something that is inherently abnormal, such as oppression and injustice, as if it were normal. Normalization with/of Israel is, then, the idea of making occupation, apartheid, and settler colonialism seem normal and establishing normal relations with the Israeli regime instead of supporting the struggle led by the Indigenous Palestinian people to end the abnormal conditions and structures of oppression.”<sup>13</sup>

With over 30,000 people killed in the last few months of Israel’s genocidal campaign against Palestinians, this call is more urgent than ever.<sup>14</sup> As such, UAW 2325 Labor for Palestine calls for NYSBA to cancel its decision to host Israeli officials and lawyers and calls on all legal professionals to demand that the NYSBA cancel this event. Everything about NYSBA’s panel is dishonest, from the framing to the content. First, NYSBA President Richard Lewis has framed

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<https://abovethelaw.com/2023/10/biglaw-leader-who-took-cover-in-bomb-shelter-during-hamas-attacks-critiques-critical-thinking-skills-of-those-making-controversial-statements-on-israel/>

10

<https://www.law.com/international-edition/2023/10/09/greenberg-tel-aviv-lawyers-sheltering-at-home-amid-violence-in-israel/>

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<https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/2023/11/02/big-law-firms-call-on-top-law-schools-to-condemn-anti-israel-protests-harassment-405-131250/>

<sup>12</sup><https://nysba.org/new-york-state-bar-association-to-host-israel-bar-associations-visit-to-n-y-with-bar-leaders-law-school-deans-community-groups/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://bdsmovement.net/news/bds-movement-anti-normalization-guidelines>

<sup>14</sup><https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/2/29/israels-war-on-gaza-live-mass-killing-of-children-in-slow-motion-ngo>

this event as a response to what he calls “ Hamas’s unprovoked attack.”<sup>15</sup> Yet, Hamas’s actions were not “ unprovoked.” Rather, they were the result of over 75 years of ethnic cleansing and genocide against the Palestinian people including the Nakba and decades of occupation and apartheid.<sup>16</sup> Resistance to this genocide and occupation is protected under international law.<sup>17</sup>

Second, it is particularly insidious for New York’s legal profession to cloak with a veneer of legitimacy and professionalism what is a lawless, genocidal state. At a time when the International Court of Justice (“ ICJ”) has allowed South Africa’s case against Israel for genocide to proceed and yet Israel has defied this body’s order to protect Palestinians,<sup>18</sup> at a time when a United States federal judge has found that it is plausible that Israel is committing genocide,<sup>19</sup> NYSBA has decided to lend its stamp of approval to genocide. Yet, this is not surprising. The law and institutions in the West will not save Gaza or Palestine, because the law itself is a tool of oppression. Still, given our position of privilege, legal workers in the United States have a specific responsibility to resist all efforts by institutions such as the New York Bar Association to normalize or promote Israel’s illegitimate legal system which has given the greenlight to a brutal genocide in clear violation of international law.<sup>20</sup>

While Richard Lewis, President of the New York State Bar Association, argues that “ legal communities in Israel ... face assaults on ... the rule of law,”<sup>21</sup> he fails to acknowledge that the Israeli legal community has itself assaulted the rule by fortifying an apartheid system of oppression against Palestinians both within Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. As legal services workers, we are intimately familiar with the countless ways in which the US legal system oppresses and disempowers communities of color and low-wealth individuals by design. We also acknowledge that US lawmakers have, at times, attempted to disrupt the most overtly racist and discriminatory tendencies of US law, such as through the establishment clause of the

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<sup>15</sup>

<https://nysba.org/new-york-state-bar-association-to-host-israel-bar-associations-visit-to-n-y-with-bar-leaders-law-school-deans-community-groups/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/15/the-nakba-five-palestinian-towns-massacred-75-years-ago>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2017/7/20/palestinians-have-a-legal-right-to-armed-struggle>

<sup>18</sup>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/02/israel-defying-icj-ruling-to-prevent-genocide-by-failing-to-allow-a-dequate-humanitarian-aid-to-reach-gaza/>

This is not the first time Israel has flaunted international law and defied an ICJ ruling. In 2004, the ICJ issued an advisory opinion holding, *inter alia*, that construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was illegal, that Israel should dismantle the wall, and that Israel should pay reparations to those who had faced a consequence of the construction of the wall. <https://press.un.org/en/2005/hr4866.doc.htm>. Israel ignored that opinion.

<sup>19</sup>

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/press-center/press-releases/us-court-concludes-israel-s-assault-gaza-plausible-case-genocide>

<sup>20</sup><https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-icj-court-hearings-gaza-hamas-18680f6ce9d8508d59c006780e23b34>

<sup>6</sup>

<sup>21</sup>

<https://nysba.org/new-york-state-bar-association-to-host-israel-bar-associations-visit-to-n-y-with-bar-leaders-law-school-deans-community-groups/>

1st Amendment to the US Constitution,<sup>22</sup> the due process clause of the 5th<sup>23</sup> and 14th Amendments, and the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.<sup>24</sup> In stark contrast to these sacred principles of US law, Israel's constitution explicitly enshrines the oppression and domination of Palestinians by, *inter alia*, reserving the "right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel [a]s unique to the Jewish people" and calling settlement expansion—which most of the world, including the United States, considers to be illegal under or inconsistent with international law<sup>25</sup>—a "national value" which the state will "encourage and promote."<sup>26</sup> This "nation state law," which Israel's Supreme Court explicitly upheld,<sup>27</sup> is absolutely inconsistent with the virtues championed in the US Constitution.

In fact, over the years, the Israeli judiciary has explicitly enabled the Israeli government and IOF to violate Palestinians' human rights. The Israeli Supreme Court has, for example, "greenlighted the demolition of thousands of Palestinian homes, and approved the destruction of entire villages"; allowed the IOF to "punitively demolish the occupied East Jerusalem home of a child detainee, putting his entire family at risk of displacement"; and upheld "countless administrative detention orders, under which Palestinians can be detained for months or years without charge or trial," "a law which permits the force-feeding of prisoners on hunger strikes," "Israel's unlawful policy of withholding Palestinians' bodies for use as bargaining chips," and "a law which imposes arbitrary, racially-motivated restrictions on Palestinian family unification."<sup>28</sup> As Amnesty International reported, most of the underlying conduct which the Israeli Supreme Court validated constitute war crimes.<sup>29</sup> And while the Israeli judiciary has enabled Jewish supremacy and the domination of Palestinian people, the Israeli bar has done nothing to prevent such grave systemic injustices, such as the arbitrary arrest, indefinite detention, and torture<sup>30</sup> of Palestinian political prisoners.

Accordingly, we are beyond dismayed that the New York State Bar Association, which ostensibly values and promotes the rule of law, would invite lawyers who uphold such an overtly oppressive judicial system to "shar[e] their knowledge and expertise ...."<sup>31</sup> We should all be

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<sup>22</sup> "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion ...." 1st Amendment to the US Constitution.

<sup>23</sup> "No person shall ... be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law ...." 5th Amendment to the US Constitution.

<sup>24</sup> "... nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law." 14th Amendment to the US Constitution.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-presses-with-settlement-plans-despite-us-criticism-2024-02-28/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/final-text-of-jewish-nation-state-bill-set-to-become-law/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.amnesty.ie/israel-judiciary/>

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/11/israel-opt-horrifying-cases-of-torture-and-degrading-treatment-of-palestinian-detainees-amid-spike-in-arbitrary-arrests/>

<sup>31</sup>

<https://nysba.org/new-york-state-bar-association-to-host-israel-bar-associations-visit-to-n-y-with-bar-leaders-law-school-deans-community-groups/>

concerned that through a partnership with the Israeli Bar Association and with the insights gleaned from its practitioner members, our state bar association will further erode the rights of New Yorkers, especially the most historically marginalized among us.

Legal professionals in New York must heed the call of our Palestinian siblings and refuse to be complicit in genocide and apartheid. We must call out this event for what it is—an attempt at normalizing oppression and welcoming people who have engaged in and defended genocide and apartheid through their positions of power, in the Israeli courts, military, and private sector. As such, UAW 2325 Labor for Palestine calls on NYSBA to cancel this event, and we call on all legal professionals in New York and beyond to demand that NYSBA do so.

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Short version: call to action

**\*\*Call to Action: Shut down the NY State Bar Association's Hosting of Genocide\*\***

The New York State Bar Association is planning to host lawyers from the Israel Bar Association at a panel on March 4 about the Israel court system, with speakers who previously worked in the IOF and the military court system in Gaza. The firms sponsoring this event and the visit of the Israeli lawyers are firms which have sought to chill pro-Palestine speech and have ties to Israel. The bar association also plans to deepen its ties to Israel in the midst of this event.

We categorically reject this attempt at normalizing and legitimizing genocide through the stamp of the largest voluntary state bar association in the country. We call on all those who oppose genocide, particularly those who work in the legal profession, to shut down this event by calling and emailing through the scripts below.

**Call script:                      800-582-2452 or 518-463-3742**

Use this script when you call the bar association to advocate against the “Judicial Experience - The Israeli Experience.” *Note, your representative needs to know your full name, phone number, and bar number (insofar as you have one & feel comfortable providing that information) in order to log your call. Otherwise, they cannot verify that you are a dues-paying member.* This is only a boilerplate script-- please feel free to add other information that you feel is relevant.

“My name is [insert full name] and I am calling the New York State Bar Association to urge them to cancel the “Judicial Independence - Israeli Experience” event. My bar number is [insert bar number] and you can reach me at [insert phone number]. I am asking you to cancel this event because of the egregious human rights violations committed by the Israeli government against the Palestinian people, most recently, the massacre of civilians attempting to retrieve aid from relief vehicles. The brazenness to hold an event on Judicial independence amidst a genocide is appalling. [adj]: It is particularly egregious that the bar association is inviting people who worked

in the IOF and military courts in Gaza.] The bar association should cancel this event if it has any desire to maintain its credibility as an institution of law.

Furthermore, I am vehemently against the NYSBA entering into any agreement with the Israeli bar to establish closer ties. I strongly encourage the NYSBA to boycott and divest all ties with Israel.

**Email script:**

[mrc@nysba.org](mailto:mrc@nysba.org)

To whom it may concern:

I, [insert name], am an attorney\* (if applicable) (If attorney, insert bar number here) in good standing with the bar.

Having learned of the “Judicial Independence: The Israeli Experience” event and the NYSBA’s pro bono efforts to support Israel’s continually genocidal actions I am deeply disheartened, particularly to learn that my dues would be directed to such an unethical cause.

The event should be canceled in light of Israel’s repeated and blatant violations of international law and the NYSBA should consider itself compelled to reflect on its misappropriation of member funds for such an outrageous cause.

To even entertain an event with the premise of a panel discussion with “esteemed members of Israel’s judiciary and bar” is laughable when said panel members have been openly racist and genocidal since October 7th. Furthermore, the bar should be ashamed to consider the idea of furthering ties with Israel at a time when social and economic sanctions should be imposed, until there is sufficient evidence that Israel has complied with the interim ICJ ruling and Palestinian life is being prioritized.

Long version: for turning into a press statement

*Context*

The New York State Bar Association, an association of thousands of lawyers which purports to be “the voice of the legal profession in New York State,”<sup>32</sup> “facilitate the administration of justice” and “promote the public good,”<sup>33</sup> is planning on hosting lawyers from the Israel Bar Association on Monday, March 4, at 6:30 pm for what they are marketing as a panel about the court system in Israel. This panel includes as a speaker Avichai Mandelblit, previous Attorney General of Israel, who worked for years in the IOF and in the military court system in Gaza<sup>34</sup> and defended the IOF’s use of cluster bombs during the July War.<sup>35</sup> It also includes a former judge on the

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<sup>32</sup><https://nysba.org/about/#:~:text=The%20New%20York%20State%20Bar.and%20ever%20changing%20I%20egal%20profession.>

<sup>33</sup> <https://nysba.org/app/uploads/2020/02/Bylaws-January-2023-.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> <https://mishpacha.com/the-license-to-kill/>

<sup>35</sup><https://www.haaretz.com/2007-12-25/ty-article/idf-wont-take-legal-action-against-officers-for-firing-cluster-bombs-in-lebanon/0000017f-db4f-d3a5-af7f-fbefeb7a0000>

Israel Supreme Court and Henry Greenberg of Greenberg Traurig, who in an article following October 7th racistly referred to Israel as “the civilized world.”<sup>36</sup> Barnea, Jaffa, Lande and Co. partner Hardar Israeli is also listed on the program, in spite of having personally endorsed several posts and individuals with her personal platform who were engaged in the endangerment of Columbia students, referring to them as “terrorists,” and endorsed false<sup>37</sup> accusations of rape. By her own account, she participated in and contributed to the drafting of a letter to the UN regarding the now debunked article regarding the alleged rapes<sup>38</sup>.

The event is put on in part by Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, whose senior chair Joseph Shenker stated that activists who support Palestine “have no place” at his firm,<sup>39</sup> and the visiting Israeli lawyers are sponsored by firms such as Greenberg Traurig, which operates in Israel and raised money and encouraged its employees to donate money to groups in Israel following October 7. All firms sponsoring the trip signed on to a letter to law schools aimed at chilling pro-Palestinian speech.<sup>40</sup>

The New York State Bar Association currently provides limited resources with respect to how member dues are used and to what extent they may have been misappropriated in providing pro-bono aid to the ongoing genocide in Palestine. To that end, we ask that readers, particularly members of the NYSB take the following actions:

- Use any of the scripts below to notify the bar that you believe the “Judicial Independence: Israeli Experience” event should be canceled.
- Call on the NYSB to employ transparency measures so that members know how their dues are being spent.
- Call on the NYSB and inform them that you feel that they should not take any actions to “further” or “deepen” ties with Israel or the Israeli bar.

### *Why we need to respond*

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<sup>36</sup>[https://jewishworldnews.org/news/local/american-jewrys-moment-supporting-israel-in-its-time-of-need/?wallit\\_nosession=1](https://jewishworldnews.org/news/local/american-jewrys-moment-supporting-israel-in-its-time-of-need/?wallit_nosession=1)

<sup>37</sup>

<https://www.palestinechronicle.com/debunked-by-palestine-chronicle-co-author-of-of-nyt-report-on-sexual-assaults-exposed-video/>

<sup>38</sup>

[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/hadar-israeli-3b310a14a\\_letter-to-un-women-israeli-law-firms-activity-7133713133184987137--9N5?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_desktop](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/hadar-israeli-3b310a14a_letter-to-un-women-israeli-law-firms-activity-7133713133184987137--9N5?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)

<sup>39</sup>

<https://abovethelaw.com/2023/10/biglaw-leader-who-took-cover-in-bomb-shelter-during-hamas-attacks-critiques-critical-thinking-skills-of-those-making-controversial-statements-on-israel/>

<sup>40</sup>

<https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/2023/11/02/big-law-firms-call-on-top-law-schools-to-condemn-anti-israel-protests-harassment-405-131250/>



Amidst the horrific ongoing genocide in Gaza, Palestinian trade unions have put out an urgent call to end all complicity and stop arming Israel.<sup>41</sup>

Palestinians have, since 2005, called for “boycotts of activities, events and projects which legitimize or otherwise enable Israel’s regime of apartheid, settler colonialism and occupation”:  
“Normalization, tatbee’ in Arabic, means dealing with or presenting something that is inherently abnormal, such as oppression and injustice, as if it were normal. Normalization with/of Israel is, then, the idea of making occupation, apartheid, and settler colonialism seem normal and establishing normal relations with the Israeli regime instead of supporting the struggle led by the Indigenous Palestinian people to end the abnormal conditions and structures of oppression.”<sup>42</sup>

With over 30,000 people killed in the last few months of Israel’s campaign against Gaza, this call is more urgent than ever.<sup>43</sup>

Legal workers in the United States have a specific responsibility to resist all efforts by institutions such as the New York Bar Association to normalize or promote Israel’s illegitimate legal system which has given the greenlight to a brutal genocide in clear violation of international law.<sup>44</sup>

In promoting this event, the NY State Bar Association has stated, “During the visit, the New York State Bar Association is entering into an agreement of cooperation, known as a Memorandum of Understanding, with the Israel Bar Association. Under the agreement, the New York State Bar Association and the Israel Bar Association pledge to establish closer ties.”<sup>45</sup>

Legal professionals in New York must heed the call of our Palestinian siblings and refuse to be complicit in genocide. We must call out this event for what it is—an attempt at normalizing oppression and welcoming people who have engaged in and defended genocide through their positions of power, in the Israeli courts, military, and private sector.

**NOTE ABOUT IN PERSON ATTENDANCE:** Although this event is open to the public, it is organized as a professional CLE (Continuing Learning Education) event for legal professionals and requires people to register in order to attend. And though people only need to give a name,

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<sup>41</sup><https://progressive.international/wire/2023-10-16-an-urgent-call-from-palestinian-trade-unions-end-all-complicity-stop-arming-israel/en>

<sup>42</sup> <https://bdsmovement.net/news/bds-movement-anti-normalization-guidelines>

<sup>43</sup><https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/2/29/israels-war-on-gaza-live-mass-killing-of-children-in-slow-motion-ngo>

<sup>44</sup><https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-icj-court-hearings-gaza-hamas-18680f6ce9d8508d59c006780e23b346>

<sup>45</sup><https://nysba.org/new-york-state-bar-association-to-host-israel-bar-associations-visit-to-n-y-with-bar-leaders-law-school-deans-community-groups/>



position and email address to attend, it would be difficult to attend in person anonymously to do any sort of action. Therefore we recommend joining the picket outside!

**To register for online attendance of the event:**

[https://hsnyc.formstack.com/forms/20240304\\_israeli\\_judicial\\_independence\\_registration](https://hsnyc.formstack.com/forms/20240304_israeli_judicial_independence_registration)

All that is required is a Name, position and email address. Feel free to use non-doxable accounts. If attending, please use the chat and question and answer features to ask why they are promoting genocide.

**Call script:**                   **800-582-2452 or 518-463-3742**

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Furthermore, I am vehemently against the NYSBA entering into any agreement with the Israeli bar to establish closer ties. I strongly encourage the NYSBA to boycott and divest all ties with Israel.

**Email script:**                   **[mrc@nysba.org](mailto:mrc@nysba.org)**

To whom it may concern:

I, [insert name], am an attorney\* (if applicable) (If attorney, insert bar number here) in good standing with the bar.

Having learned of the “Judicial Independence: The Israeli Experience” event and the NYSBA’s pro bono efforts to support Israel’s continually genocidal actions I am deeply disheartened, particularly to learn that my dues would be directed to such an unethical cause.

The event should be canceled in light of Israel’s repeated and blatant violations of international law and the NYSBA should consider itself compelled to reflect on its misappropriation of member funds for such an outrageous cause.

To even entertain an event with the premise of a panel discussion with “esteemed members of Israel’s judiciary and bar” is laughable when said panel members have been openly racist and genocidal since October 7th. Furthermore, the bar should be ashamed to consider the idea of furthering ties with Israel at a time when social and economic sanctions should be imposed, until there is sufficient evidence that Israel has complied with the interim ICJ ruling and Palestinian life is being prioritized.