

June 26, 2024

Mr. Jacob Tapper
Chief Washington Correspondent
CNN
820 1st St NE, Washington, DC

Ms. Dana Bash
Chief Political Correspondent
CNN
820 1st St NE, Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Tapper and Ms. Bash,

As representatives of national American Muslim organizations, we write to suggest several potential topics of conversation for the 2024 presidential general election debate scheduled for June 27th on CNN.

Given the major international and domestic challenges facing our nation, this debate provides an important opportunity to educate the American people about where President Biden and former President Trump stand on critical issues.

In particular, the Israeli government's ongoing U.S.-backed war in Gaza and the associated rise in conflict here in America should be a significant feature of the discussion. A harrowing report from Save the Children indicates that up to 21,000 children have gone missing amidst the war. Over 37,000 Palestinians have been killed, many of them women and children, many of them killed by U.S.-manufactured and supplied bombs.

Here at home, anti-Muslim bigotry and anti-Palestinian racism have surged. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) received 8,061 bias complaints nationwide in 2023, marking the highest number in our 30-year history. Notably, nearly half of these complaints were recorded in the final three months of last year. Just last week in Texas, we learned that a Palestinian mother and her children were targeted in an alleged hate crime, resulting in an alleged attempt to drown two children in a pool. Numerous other hate crimes have occurred, from the brutal stabbing of six-year-old Wadea outside Chicago to the shooting of three Palestinian college students wearing the keffiyeh in Burlington to the stabbing of a Palestinian Muslim near UT Austin's campus to a hit and run of a CAIR staffer outside a mosque in Minneapolis.

In light of this, we respectfully request that you ensure both candidates address these two major issues, which are important to not only our communities but many other Americans. Specifically, we urge you to ask the candidates:

1. Should the United States use American financial leverage to force the Netanyahu government to adhere to both uphold international law and agree to the Biden administration's proposed ceasefire plan?

2. What actions, if any, will you take to address the reported increase in complaints of anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian, and anti-Semitic incidents occurring across the country?

Additionally, universities have become a battleground for free speech and the safety of students advocating for Palestinian human rights. Disturbingly, over 2,000 student protesters were arrested over the spring semester, most of them for engaging in peaceful acts of civil disobedience, with university administrators often enabling anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia rather than ensuring the safety of all students. These institutions have, in some cases, sought to silence Palestinian, Muslim, Arab, Jewish, and other students advocating against U.S. support for the Israeli government's war crimes in Gaza.

In this context, it is imperative to ask:

3. What role, if any, should the federal government play in protecting both the physical safety and free speech rights of students on American college campuses?

We hope that your moderation will reflect the gravity of these and other issues that are critical to many Americans, including American Muslims. Your role as moderators is pivotal in fostering a comprehensive and fair discussion, and we trust you will handle these topics with the depth and sensitivity they require, without bias. It is critically important to avoid pro-Israel bias |

Thank you for your attention to these requests. We look forward to an informative and illuminating debate.

Sincerely,

American Center for Justice

American Muslim Community Foundation

American Muslims for Palestine (AMP)

Arizona Muslim Police Advisory Board

Baltimore County Muslim Council

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

CAIR Action

Dar al-Hijrah Islamic Center

Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA)

Husaynia Islamic Society of Seattle

Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC)

Imam Council of Metropolitan St. Louis

Islamic Association of North America (IANA)

Islamic Center of Boca Raton, Florida

Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)

Islamic Community Center of Atlanta

ICNA Council for Social Justice

Islamic Society of Carroll County, Westminster MD

Islamophobia Studies Center

Islamic Center of Wheaton (ICW)

Kurdish Community Islamic Center

Masjid Al-Furqan West Cobb Islamic Center

Majlis Ash-Shura: Islamic Leadership Council of NY

Muslim American Public Affairs Council

Muslim American Society

Muslim American Society - Arizona

Muslim American Society - Central Florida

Muslim American Society - Maryland

Muslim American Society - D.C.

Muslim League of Voters of New Jersey

Muslim Ummah of North America (MUNA)

Palestinian American Community Center

Partners for Palestine

The Mosque Cares | Ministry of Imam W. Deen Mohammed

Tunisian United Network

US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO)

Voices for Justice in Palestine

Voices of Muslims