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8
9 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
10
11 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

12 STANDWITHUS CENTER FOR
13 LEGAL JUSTICE,

14 Plaintiff,

15 v.
16 CODEPINK, PALESTINIAN
YOUTH MOVEMENT, and WESPAC
FOUNDATION,

17 Defendants.

18 Case No.:

19 **COMPLAINT FOR:**

- 1) Threatening and Intimidating
Persons in Violation of 18 U.S.C.
§ 248(a)(2)
- 2) Threatening and Intimidating
Persons in Violation of Cal. Pen.
Code § 423.2
- 3) Threatening and Intimidating
Persons in Violation of 18 U.S.C.
§ 248(a)(2)
- 4) Threatening and Intimidating
Persons in Violation of 18 U.S.C.
§ 248(a)(2)

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GIPSON HOFFMAN & PANCIONE
A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

1 Plaintiff StandWithUs Center for Legal Justice (“Plaintiff” or “SCLJ”)
2 alleges as follows:
3

4 **INTRODUCTION**

5 1. Bear-sprayed worshippers. Jews assaulted, intimidated, and
6 threatened. Bloodied members of the Jewish community whose only
7 transgressions were to attend synagogue. The images that emerged from the
8 antisemitic riot outside Adas Torah synagogue (“Adas Torah”) on June 23, 2024,
9 are outrageous.
10

11 2. Deplorably, those images also are no longer surprising.
12 3. Indeed, they are emblematic of an increasingly common occurrence:
13 organized riots that violently target the American Jewish community.
14

15 4. On June 23, individuals organized by Defendants Code Pink,
16 Palestinian Youth Movement, and WESPAC Foundation (collectively,
17 “Defendant Organizations”) terrorized Jewish congregants outside their house of
18 worship, blocking access to those seeking religious services and trapping others
19 inside.
20

21 5. Outside, Jewish worshippers were bear-sprayed, assaulted,
22 intimidated, and threatened.
23

24 6. This violence forcibly halted multiple daily *minyanim* (prayer
25 services) and Torah study sessions.
26

27 7. Defendant Organizations’ violent riot also prevented congregants
28

from attending an event that, as elaborated on below, not only involved prayer but also sought to educate Jewish congregants about housing opportunities in Israel that would fulfill the religious commandment to “make *Aliyah*,” or immigrate to Israel.

8. The event is referred to henceforth as the *Aliyah Event*.¹

9. Appreciating the repugnance inherent in forcibly preventing the faithful from worship, Congress created a statutory mechanism to punish those who would inflict this harm and to enjoin them from ever doing it again.

10. Specifically, the federal FACE Act, 18 U.S.C. § 248, ensures that worshippers may practice their respective religions free from persecution, interference, and intimidation.

¹ Aliyah comes from the Hebrew word for “rise” or “ascent”:

The term Aliyah, going up to Israel, is used in Genesis in reference to our forefather Jacob's bones being brought from Egypt to what would be the Land of Israel: "And Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all **who had gone up with him** to bury his father, after he had buried his father." Genesis 50:14. The Talmudic sages state that the Land of Israel is higher than all other lands. (Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin, 69a) This is not meant in a topographical sense, for clearly this is not the case. Rather, it means that the Holy Land is the most suitable place to relate and connect to the Almighty, and the primary location to lovingly engage in the observance of G-d's commandments. In other words, to go there is to be elevated, to go up to a higher level.

What is “Aliyah”?, CHABAD.ORG, chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1584066/jewish/What-Is-Aliyah.htm (last visited July 21, 2024); *see also Mitzvah to Live in Israel*, AISH, https://aish.com/mitzvah-to-live-in-israel/#:~:text=The%20mitzvah%20to%20live%20in,Come%22%20(Ketuvot%20111a) (last visited July 21, 2024). As described below, ‘making Aliyah’, and even preparing to make Aliyah, is considered by many Jewish people to be a fulfillment of one of the most important religious commandments in the Torah.

1 11. California has enacted a materially identical statute. *See* Cal. Pen.
2 Code § 423.2.
3

4 12. Having violated both, Defendant Organizations are liable for
5 statutory damages and should be subject to appropriate injunctive relief to prevent
6 them from ever violating the federal or California FACE Acts again.
7

8 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

9 13. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1333, which
10 confer original jurisdiction on federal district courts to hear suits alleging the
11 violation of rights and privileges under acts of Congress.
12

13 14. This action, based on a violation of SCLJ’s rights under the FACE
14 Act, is brought under 18 U.S.C. § 248(c)(1)(A), which provides that “[a]ny person
15 aggrieved by reason of the conduct prohibited by subsection (a) may commence a
16 civil action.”
17

18 15. This Court has supplemental jurisdiction over SCLJ’s California
19 FACE Act claims because these state-law claims are “so related to [the] claims in
20 [this] action within” the Court’s “original jurisdiction that [it] form[s] part of the
21 same case or controversy.” 28 U.S.C. § 1337.
22

23 16. Venue is proper in this district under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, because a
24 substantial part of the events giving rise to SCLJ’s claims occurred in the Pico-
25 Robertson neighborhood of Los Angeles, California, which is in this District.
26
27

PARTIES

17. SCLJ is a tax-exempt membership organization organized under the laws of California.

18. SCLJ's membership is composed of individuals from a host of different communities across the country, including Jewish and/or Israeli individuals who share SCLJ's dedication to combating antisemitism through legal action.

19. SCLJ includes congregants from Adas Torah and members of the Los Angeles Jewish community who registered to go to Adas Torah on June 23, 2024, for organized Jewish activities, and/or who regularly attend religious services there.

20. SCLJ Member #1 is a Jewish resident of Los Angeles who sought to attend the Aliyah Event at the time of the riot.

21. SCLJ Member #2 is a Jewish resident of Los Angeles who sought to attend the Aliyah Event, as well as a religious service, at the time of the riot.

22. SCLJ Member #3 is a Jewish resident of Los Angeles who sought to attend the Aliyah Event, as well as a religious service, at the time of the riot.

23. SCLJ Member #4 is a Jewish resident of Los Angeles who sought to attend the Aliyah Event, as well as a religious service, at the time of the riot.

24. SCLJ Member #5 is a Jewish resident of Los Angeles who sought to attend the Aliyah Event, as well as a religious service, at the time of the riot.

1 25. SCLJ Member #6 is a Jewish resident of Los Angeles, as well as a
2 member of Adas Torah, who was studying Torah at the synagogue at the time of
3 the riot.

5 26. SCLJ Member #7 is a Jewish resident of Los Angeles, as well as a
6 member of Adas Torah, who sought to attend the afternoon prayer services at the
7 time of the riot.

9 27. During the riot, SCLJ members sought “to exercise the First
10 Amendment right of religious freedom at a place of religious worship,” namely
11 Adas Torah, but were forcefully prevented from doing so.

13 28. Specifically, on June 23, 2024, at approximately 1:30 p.m. local time,
14 over two-hundred rioters, organized by Defendant Organizations and joined by
15 their members, blocked SCLJ members’ access to Adas Torah, where a series of
16 religious services and study sessions were taking place, along with the Aliyah
17 Event.

20 29. Defendant CodePink (“CodePink”) is a non-profit entity with Section
21 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status in the United States.

22 30. CodePink describes itself as a “feminist grassroots organization
23 working to end U.S. warfare and imperialism, support peace and human rights
24 initiatives, and redirect resources into healthcare, education, green jobs and other
25

1 life-affirming[] programs.”²

2 31. Contrary to that description, CodePink has long supported terrorists
3 and terrorist entities, including Iran, the largest state-sponsor of terror; Ansar Allah
4 (also known as the “Houthis”),³ which was previously designated a Foreign
5 Terrorist Organization; and Hamas.⁴

6 32. Each of these terrorist entities has called for the annihilation of the
7 Jewish people.

8 33. Members of CodePink have attended a conference in Iran with
9 Holocaust deniers, and they have met with Hamas officials “several times.”⁵

10 34. Defendant WESPAC Foundation (“WESPAC”) is a Section 501(c)(3)
11 organization with its principal place of business in White Plains, New York.

12 35. WESPAC is the fiscal sponsor of Defendant Palestinian Youth
13 Movement (“PYM”).⁶

14 ² *What is CODEPINK?*, CODEPINK, <https://www.codepink.org/about> (last visited July
15 12, 2024).

16 ³ Haley Strac, *Another Defense of Terrorism from Code Pink*, NAT’L REVIEW (Jan. 16,
17 2024), <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/another-defense-of-terrorism-from-code-pink/>.

18 ⁴ CODEPINK Staff, *CODEPINK Women Travel To Gaza TODAY To Witness Damage
19 And Demand A Lifting Of The Blockade; Plan To Meet With Women’s Groups, Hamas Officials*,
20 CODEPINK (Jan. 29, 2009)
21 https://www.codepink.org/official_release_codepink_women_travel_to_gaza_today_to_witness_damage_and_demand_a_lifting_of_the_blockade_plan_to_meet_with_women_s_groups_hamas_asOfficials.

22 ⁵ James Reinl, *Hard-Left Activists Code Pink’s History Of Israel-Bashing Revealed:
23 Anti-War Feminist Group That’s Under Congressional Scrutiny Over Ties To Chinese
24 Communist Party Has A Record Of Links To Iran, Hamas And ‘Antisemitism’*, DAILY MAIL
25 (Dec. 23, 2023, 7:11 AM), <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12797043/Codepink-antisemitic-left-war-congress-Iran-Hamas-Israel.html>.

26 ⁶ *Palestinian Youth Movement Profile*, NGO MONITOR (June 2, 2024), <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/ngos/palestinian-youth->

1 36. PYM is an unincorporated association without a formal principal
2 place of business or publicly identified leadership structure.
3

4 37. PYM regularly justifies terror attacks against Jewish persons and has
5 expressed public support for members of U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist
6 Organizations.
7

8 38. PYM’s latest campaign of terrorizing Jewish people outside Adas
9 Torah mirrors its previous activities.
10

11 39. For instance, PYM recently helped organize a conference, titled the
12 People’s Conference for Palestine (the “Conference”), which involved multiple
13 speakers who are affiliated with Foreign Terrorist Organizations.
14

15 40. One such speaker was Sana Daqqah, the Conference’s keynote
16 speaker and wife of Walid Daqqah, a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
17 terrorist convicted of the kidnapping, torture, and murder of Israeli Moshe
18 Tamam.⁷
19

20 41. One PYM organizer at the Conference, Sarah Abdelshamy, celebrated
21 the terror attacks of October 7, 2023, while speaking on a panel: “In the past eight
22 months, we’ve seen incredible images of victory—from witnessing the families of
23 political prisoners reunite with, and embrace their loved ones for the first time in
24

25
26 movement/#:~:text=WESPAC%20Foundation%20serves%20as%20the,amounts%20disbursed
27 %20for%20PYM%20activities.
28

⁷ Michael Starr, *Rashida Tlaib attends conference honoring terrorists, hosting terrorist speaker*, JERUSALEM POST (May 26, 2024), <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-803703>.

1 years—to scenes of our heroic people breaking down the siege that has suffocated
2 the Gaza Strip for 17 years.”⁸
3

4 42. PYM often collaborates with the organization National Students for
5 Justice in Palestine (“NSJP”—another of WESPAC’s fiscal sponsorships—that is
6 now being sued in the wake of the October 7 attacks in the U.S. District Court for
7 the Eastern District of Virginia for providing material support to Hamas and other
8 Foreign Terrorist Organizations.⁹
9

10 43. Upon information and belief, members of PYM were among those
11 who blocked access to Adas Torah on June 23, 2024.
12

13 44. PYM operates as a fiscal sponsorship of WESPAC, meaning
14 WESPAC collects and disburses donations on PYM’s behalf because PYM lacks
15 tax-exempt status.¹⁰
16

17 45. The IRS requires fiscal sponsors to retain “control and discretion as to
18 the use of the funds and maintain[] records establishing that the funds were used
19 for section 501(c)(3) purposes.”¹¹
20

22
23 ⁸ *Id.*

24 ⁹ See Complaint for Damages and Jury Trial Demand, *Parizer v. AJP Educational*
25 *Foundation Inc.*, No. 1:24cv724 (E.D. Va.).

26 ¹⁰ *Palestinian Youth Movement Profile*, NGO MONITOR (June 2, 2024),
27 <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/ngos/palestinian-youth-movement/#:~:text=WESPAC%20Foundation%20serves%20as%20the,amounts%20disbursed%20for%20PYM%20activities>.

28 ¹¹ 1968 IRB LEXIS 179, *1 (I.R.S. July 1, 1968); see also *National Foundation v. United States*,
13 Cl. Ct. 486, 87-2 USTC para. 9602 (1987).

1 46. Thus, as the fiscal sponsor of PYM, WESPAC is responsible for how
2 PYM uses its funds.
3

4 47. Consequently, WESPAC is responsible for the promotion and
5 funding that resulted in the violent riot that blocked the entrance to Adas Torah.
6

LEGAL STANDARD

7 48. The FACE Act imposes civil and criminal penalties on any person
8 who “by force or threat of force or by physical obstruction, intentionally injures,
9 intimidates or interferes with or attempts to injure, intimidate or interfere with any
10 person lawfully exercising or seeking to exercise the First Amendment right of
11 religious freedom at a place of religious worship.” 18 U.S.C. § 248(a)(2).
12

13 49. The FACE Act also imposes civil and criminal penalties on any person
14 who “intentionally damages or destroys the property of a place of religious
15 worship.” *Id.* § 248(a)(3).
16

17 50. The FACE Act creates a private right of action: “Any person
18 aggrieved by reason of the conduct prohibited by subsection (a) may commence a
19 civil action for the relief set forth in subparagraph (B).” *Id.* § 248(c)(1)(A).
20

21 51. The FACE Act authorizes courts to “award appropriate relief,
22 including temporary, preliminary or permanent injunctive relief and compensatory
23 and punitive damages, as well as the costs of suit and reasonable fees for attorneys
24 and expert witnesses.” *Id.* § 248(c)(1)(B).
25

1 52. “With respect to compensatory damages, the plaintiff may elect, at
2 any time prior to the rendering of final judgment, to recover, in lieu of actual
3 damages, an award of statutory damages in the amount of \$5,000 per violation.” *Id.*
4

5 53. The California FACE Act, Cal. Pen. Code § 423.2, provides a similar
6 cause of action: “Every person who . . . [b]y force, threat of force, or physical
7 obstruction that is a crime of violence, intentionally injures, intimidates, interferes
8 with, or attempts to injure, intimidate, or interfere with a person lawfully
9 exercising or seeking to exercise the First Amendment right of religious freedom at
10 a place of religious worship,” violates the California FACE Act. Cal. Pen. Code
11 § 423.2(b).

12 54. Finally, “[e]very person who . . . [i]ntentionally damages or destroys
13 the property of a place of religious worship,” violates the California FACE Act. *Id.*
14 § 423.2(f).

15 55. Section 423.4 of the California Penal Code provides that “[a] person
16 aggrieved by a violation of” the California FACE Act “may bring a civil action to
17 enjoin the violation, for compensatory and punitive damages, and for the costs of
18 suit and reasonable fees for attorneys and expert witnesses,” so long as the plaintiff
19 is either a person “lawfully exercising or seeking to exercise the First Amendment
20 right of religious freedom in a place of religious worship, or the entity that owns or
21 operates a place of religious worship.” *Id.* § 423.4(a).

56. And “[w]ith respect to compensatory damages, the plaintiff may elect, at any time prior to the rendering of a final judgment, to recover, in lieu of actual damages, an award of statutory damages in the amount of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per exclusively nonviolent violation, and five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per any other violation, for each violation committed.” *Id.*

57. Actual damages may exceed the \$1,000 or \$5,000 statutory-damage amounts contemplated by the federal and state FACE Acts.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

58. On June 23, 2024, more than two-hundred rioters, organized by Defendant Organizations, marched into the predominantly orthodox Jewish neighborhood of Pico-Robertson in Los Angeles's Westside and blocked access to Adas Torah.

59. Many of those rioters were armed with various weapons, including bear-spray.

60. The rioters prevented worshippers (including members of SCLJ) from attending regularly scheduled afternoon prayers at Adas Torah.

61. By stoking such unrest and engaging in physical violence, members of Defendant Organizations made it impossible for members of Adas Torah to practice their religion free from persecution, intimidation, and violence.

62. As discussed below, the riot Defendant Organizations planned to violate both the federal and state FACE Acts.

Adas Torah's Services on June 23, 2024.

63. In the days before June 23, 2024, a real estate company called My Home in Israel, which specializes in assisting American Jews buy homes in Israel, announced the *Aliyah* Event, which was to be held at Adas Torah.¹²

64. This event was scheduled for June 23, 2024.

65. Although outsiders have characterized the Adas Torah event as a “mere” housing or real estate event, it was anything but that.

66. For many in the Orthodox Jewish community, the event—and others like it—which educate people about the realities of making Aliyah, represents a key aspect of an integral part of Jewish religious observance.

67. Many members of the Jewish community believe that their faith includes a religious commandment (“*mitzvah*”) to buy land in their ancestral homeland of Israel and to dwell there.¹³

68. In fact, the Sages of the Talmudic era were clear that the commandment to settle the land, which specifically includes buying a home in Israel (see, e.g., Babylonian Talmud Gittin 8b) “is equivalent to all of the other commandments in the Torah.” (Sifrei, Re’eh, 53).

¹² MY HOME IN ISRAEL, <https://homeinisrael-il.com/> (last visited July 24, 2024).

¹³ See, e.g., Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 110b; Numbers 33:53; Deuteronomy 11:31.; see also *Mitzvah to Live in Israel*, AISH, <a href="https://aish.com/mitzvah-to-live-in-israel/#:~:text=The%20mitzvah%20to%20live%20in,Come%22%20(Ketuvot%20111a) (last visited July 12, 2024).

1 69. Moving to Israel, thereby fulfilling this religious commandment, is
2 known as “making *Aliyah*.”
3

4 70. The preparations to make *Aliyah* (including educating oneself about
5 the options for doing so, and then buying a home) are also considered at least a
6 partial fulfillment of the commandment.¹⁴
7

8 71. The specific commandment to buy a home in Israel is so special that it
9 may even override certain other commandments.¹⁵
10

11 72. Indeed, this commandment merits its own discussions in the Talmudic
12 and rabbinic sources.¹⁶
13

14 73. This is why events like the *Aliyah Event* are often held in synagogues
15 and often include some form of prayer or Torah study—because it is generally
16 understood by the community for which such events are intended that these are *not*
17 just “real estate events” and are, in fact, manifestly religious in nature.
18

19 74. In other words, had Defendant Organizations’ mob allowed the *Aliyah*
20 Event to proceed, attendance by members of the community would have fulfilled
21 an important religious commandment for those seeking to learn more about or to
22 fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Aliyah*.
23

24

25 ¹⁴ See Peninei Halakha, Shabbat 9:12 (citing Ramban (Nachmanides) on Babylonian
26 Talmud Shabbat 130b); Rivash §387; *see also* Artzot Ha’Chaim, p. 2 (discussing how every
step on the way is a separate fulfillment of a commandment).

27 ¹⁵ See Babylonian Talmud, Bava Kamma 80b.

28 ¹⁶ See, *i.e.*, Babylonian Talmud, Gittin 8b, Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law), Orach
Chayim 306:11.

1 75. For most attendees and potential attendees, attendance at this event, or
2 any such *Aliyah* Event, would constitute a lawful exercise of their First
3 Amendment right of religious freedom.
4

5 76. Simultaneously, on the day and time of the *Aliyah* Event, Adas Torah
6 was also hosting multiple afternoon prayer services, or *minyanim*, as well as Torah
7 study sessions.
8

9 77. These prayer services are held every day.
10

11 78. Around thirty to forty people, including members of SCLJ, regularly
12 attend the 1:30 pm *minyanim*.
13

Defendant Organizations Call Rioters to Assemble Outside Adas Torah.
14

15 79. Upon learning of the *Aliyah* Event, Defendant Organizations called on
16 their members to assemble outside Adas Torah based on the lie that Adas Torah
17 was hosting an event that encouraged its congregants to “steal” Palestinian land.
18

19 80. Upon information and belief, these dishonest social media posts were
20 designed to generate the most possible outrage.
21

22 81. For instance, on June 20, 2023, the People’s City Council–Los
23 Angeles, a Los Angeles-based “[a]bolitionist, anti-capitalist & anti-imperialist
24 collective,” posted on X a statement reading: “OUR LAND IS NOT FOR SALE!
25 This Sunday, 6/23, a real estate event will be marketing homes in ‘anglo
26
27
28

neighborhoods' in effort to further occupy Palestine[.] Racist settler expansionists
arent [sic] welcome in LA! Join us @ 12 PM- 9040 W Pico Blvd."¹⁷

82. Other organizations, including Defendant Organizations, followed suit.

83. On Friday, June 21, 2024, CodePink's Los Angeles and Southeast Los Angeles chapters issued a collaborative post¹⁸ on Instagram claiming that "A MEGA ZIONIST REAL ESTATE EVENT IS IN LA THIS WEEK!"¹⁹

84. The post featured multiple slides, including a slide that urged: “HELP US ADVOCATE THE STOP OF HOMES BEING SOLD ON STOLEN PALESTINIAN LAND!”²⁰

85. The call to assemble included the dates and addresses of two events—one in North Hollywood on June 20 and the second at Adas Torah on June 23.²¹

¹⁷ @PplsCityCouncil, X (June 20, 2024, 7:26 PM),
https://x.com/PplsCityCouncil/status/1803932341875937685?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcam_p%5Eweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1803932341875937685%7Ctwgr%5Ee52cce6315c004ed398fb50753fe57fb520d5c2%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fforward.com%2Ffast-forward%2F626491%2Fla-synagogue-adas-torah-protest-palestinians-israel%2F.

¹⁸ A collaborative post is one that both accounts agree to have appear on their respective profiles. See HUBSPOT, *How to Collab Post on Instagram as a Brand or Creator [Steps + Tips]*, <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/instagram-collab-post> (last visited July 5, 2024).

¹⁹ CODEPINK Southeast Los Angeles (@codepinksela) & CODEPINK Los Angeles (@codepinkla), INSTAGRAM, https://www.instagram.com/p/C8c6f8dyplb/?img_index=1 (last visited July 3, 2024).

20 *Id*

21 *Id*

1 86. The dates and addresses were placed inside inverted red triangles.²²
2
3 *See Exhibit A.*
4

5 87. Since October 7, 2023, Hamas and its supporters on social media have
6 used inverted red triangles as a symbol for Hamas and to celebrate its use of
7 violence against Jews and Israelis.
8

9 88. In other words, the inverted red triangle acts as a target designator to
10 identify Jews and Jewish targets for extermination.²³
11

12 89. Also, on June 21, 2024, PYM posted a slide on its Instagram, calling
13 for members to show up at “12 PM SHARP” and declaring “OUR LAND IS NOT
14 FOR SALE.”²⁴
15

16 90. The slide continues: “STAND AGAINST SETTLER EXPANSION
17 AT SUNDAY’S REAL ESTATE EVENT SELLING HOMES TO BUILD
18 ‘ANGLO NEIGHBORHOODS’ IN PALESTINE.”²⁵
19

20 91. The caption beneath the slide states: “Racist settler expansionists are
21 not welcome in Los Angeles! This blatant example of land theft is operating in our
22 own backyard. The Nakba^[26] is ongoing and must be confronted!”
23

24 ²² *Id.*
25

26 ²³ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/inverted-red-triangle>

27 ²⁴ PYM LA-OC-IE (@pymlaocie) & Palestinian Youth Movement
28 (@palestinianyouthmovement), INSTAGRAM,
29 <https://www.instagram.com/p/C8dActZyjiI/?igsh=d3o3eWw3OTZrZjhk> (last visited July 3,
30 2024).

31 ²⁵ *Id.*
32

33 ²⁶ PYM LA-OC-IE (@pymlaocie) & Palestinian Youth Movement

92. It concludes: "FROM THE BELLY OF THE BEAST[.] NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE."²⁷

93. Upon information and belief, the phrase "BELLY OF THE BEAST" refers to a synagogue, a place where Jews congregate to pray.

Defendant Organizations Riot Outside Adas Torah.

94. On Sunday, June 23, 2024, organized by Defendant Organizations and others, more than two-hundred rioters (upon information and belief) descended to the streets surrounding Adas Torah.

95. Chaos and violence ensued right after.

96. Specifically, the rioters drawn to Adas Torah by Defendant Organizations' calls for action donned masks and signs; threw punches at synagogue members and Jews who had arrived to provide support for their fellow worshippers; and engaged in other acts of violence.

97. Some rioters were wearing Hamas's green headbands, chanting "Intifada," and calling for indiscriminate violence against Jewish people.²⁸

(@palestinianyouthmovement), INSTAGRAM, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C8dActZyjI/?igsh=d3o3eWw3OTZrZjhk> (last visited July 3, 2024). *Nakba* refers to the defeat of the Arab armies in the 1948 war for Israel's independence after the Arab armies invaded Israel. See *Nakba*, Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/nakba> (last visited July 12, 2024).

27 *Id.*

²⁸ Summer Lin et al., *More Details Emerge On Protest Outside L.A. Synagogue*, YAHOO! NEWS (June 27, 2024, 6:00 AM), <https://au.news.yahoo.com/very-traumatic-medic-describes-things-100038626.html>.

98. Some rioters arrived wearing ski goggles in preparation for the violence.²⁹

99. Footage of the violence quickly spread through social media.³⁰

100. Scenes of blood on the streets, use of bear-spray, and the brandishing of make-shift weapons (including, among other things, a skateboard), permeated cyberspace and were reported by dozens of news outlets.

101. About sixty police officers were called to the scene to stop the violent rioters, while many people were treated for their injuries.

102. While the riot was raging, worshippers, many of whom are members of SCLJ, were attempting to enter Adas Torah to attend one or several of the following: an afternoon prayer session or *minyan*, a Torah study session, and the *Aliyah* Event.

103. SCLJ Member #1 was one of the worshippers who was prevented by the mob from exercising his constitutionally and statutorily protected free-exercise rights to attend the *Aliyah* Event.

104. SCLJ Member #1 had preregistered to attend the *Aliyah* Event.

²⁹ Michael Starr, *Anti-Israel Protestors Beat, Bear Mace Jews, Journalists At LA Synagogue*, JERUSALEM POST (June 24, 2024, 2:13 AM), <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-807411>.

³⁰ CODEPINK Southeast Los Angeles Chapter (@codepinksela), INSTAGRAM, https://www.instagram.com/reel/C8khglxyMw4/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRl0DBiNWF1ZA== (last visited July 3, 2024).

1 105. SCLJ Member #1 managed to enter Adas Torah through an alleyway
2 behind the building, where an armed security guard admitted him into the building.
3

4 106. SCLJ Member #1 learned of this secret entrance through a WhatsApp
5 group, though not all attendees of the June 23 events were on the group.
6

7 107. SCLJ Member #2 was one of the worshippers who was initially
8 prevented by the mob from exercising her constitutionally and statutorily protected
9 free-exercise rights to attend both the *Aliyah* Event and an afternoon prayer
10 service.
11

12 108. SCLJ Member #2 had preregistered to attend the *Aliyah* Event.
13

14 109. SCLJ Member #2 managed to enter Adas Torah through an alleyway
15 behind the building, where an armed security guard admitted her into the building.
16

17 110. SCLJ Member #2 learned of this secret entrance through a WhatsApp
18 group, though not all attendees of the June 23 events were on the group.
19

20 111. SCLJ Member #2 did not find a prayer service available for her to
21 join.
22

23 112. SCLJ Member #3 was one of the worshippers who was initially
24 prevented by the mob from exercising her constitutionally and statutorily protected
25 free-exercise rights to attend both the *Aliyah* Event and an afternoon prayer
26 service.
27

28 113. SCLJ Member #3 had intended to attend the *Aliyah* Event with her
mother.
29

1 114. SCLJ Member #3 managed to enter Adas Torah synagogue through an
2 alleyway behind the building, where an armed security guard admitted her into the
3 building.
4

5 115. SCLJ Member #3 learned of this secret entrance through a WhatsApp
6 group, though not all attendees of the June 23 events were on the group.
7

8 116. SCLJ Member #3 did not find a prayer service available for her to
9 join.
10

11 117. SCLJ Member #4 was one of the worshippers who was initially
12 prevented by the mob from exercising his constitutionally and statutorily protected
13 free-exercise rights to attend the *Aliyah* Event and participate in an afternoon
14 prayer service.
15

16 118. SCLJ Member #4 managed to enter Adas Torah through an alleyway
17 behind the building, where an armed security guard admitted him into the building.
18

19 119. SCLJ Member #4 learned of this secret entrance through a WhatsApp
20 group, though not all attendees of the June 23 events were on the group.
21

22 120. SCLJ Member #4 did not find a prayer service available for him to
23 join.
24

25 121. SCLJ Member #5 was one of the worshippers who initially was
26 prevented by the mob from exercising his constitutionally and statutorily protected
27 free-exercise rights to attend the *Aliyah* Event and participate in an afternoon
28 prayer service.
29

1 122. SCLJ Member #5 had preregistered to attend the *Aliyah* Event.

2 123. SCLJ Member #5 managed to enter Adas Torah through an alleyway
3 behind the building, where an armed security guard admitted him into the building.

4 124. SCLJ Member #5 learned of this secret entrance through a WhatsApp
5 group, though not all attendees of the June 23 events were on the group.

6 125. SCLJ Member #5 did not find a prayer service available for him to
7 join.

8 126. SCLJ Member #6 had attended morning prayer services at the Adas
9 Torah synagogue and remained inside the building.

10 127. When the riot began, SCLJ Member #6 was attempting to study Torah
11 but had trouble doing so because of the violent commotion outside the building, as
12 rioters blocked access to and from the synagogue, as well as blocked the sidewalks.

13 128. SCLJ Member #7 was one of the worshippers who was prevented
14 entirely by the mob from exercising his constitutionally and statutorily protected
15 free-exercise rights to participate in an afternoon prayer service, the prayer service
16 he regularly attends at Adas Torah.

17 129. SCLJ Member #7 was not a member of the aforementioned WhatsApp
18 group containing some attendees of Adas Torah, so he was unaware of the secret
19 entrance to Adas Torah.

20 130. Therefore, SCLJ Member #7 was unable to attend an afternoon prayer
21 service at Adas Torah.

1 131. Though all three events continued at Adas Torah on July 23, 2024,
2 upon information and belief, many regular members who either attend *minyan* or
3 study Torah at Adas Torah in the afternoon were entirely unable to do so, much like
4 SCLJ Member #7.

5 132. Of those SCLJ Members who eventually were able to attend events at
6 Adas Torah, their initial attempts to attend the events were obstructed by rioters.
7

8 133. Furthermore, those SCLJ Members had to expose themselves to
9 possible physical danger to attend their respective events.
10

11 134. On information and belief, the reason why the members who were
12 able to enter the synagogue were nonetheless unable to find an available prayer
13 service is because the prayer services were interrupted and obstructed by the mob.
14

15 135. The violence—and Defendant Organizations' interference with
16 worshippers' attempts to exercise their rights to worship at Adas Torah—was
17 reported in real time.
18

19 136. *The Wall Street Journal* published an article titled: "Pro-Palestinian
20 Protesters Block Access to Los Angeles Synagogue in Violent Clash."³¹
21

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27 ³¹ Alyssa Lukpat, *Pro-Palestinian Protesters Block Access to Los Angeles Synagogue in*
28 *Violent Clash*, WALL ST. J. (June 24, 2024, 5:48 PM), <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/pro-palestinian-protesters-block-access-to-los-angeles-synagogue-in-violent-clash-7d48098f>.

1 137. KTLA 5 news station also reported that “[a]ccording to video posted
2 to the Citizen app, pro-Palestinian protesters blocked the entrance to a
3 synagogue.”³²
4

5 138. The next day, *The Jerusalem Post* published an article, titled, “Anti-
6 Israel protesters beat, bear mace Jews, journalists at LA synagogue.”³³
7

8 139. Meanwhile, Defendant Organizations crafted their own narrative
9 surrounding the riot, denying that their rioters were violent and rejecting the notion
10 that any congregants were blocked from accessing the synagogue.
11

12 140. On the day of the riot, CodePink’s Southeast Los Angeles chapter
13 posted on its Instagram account a video from the riot, confirming its presence
14 outside the synagogue.³⁴
15

16 141. The same day, CodePink’s Southeast Los Angeles chapter, in
17 collaboration with the CodePink’s Los Angeles chapter and CodePink’s national
18 organization, posted more footage from the riot, including another slide featuring a
19 giant inverted red triangle with the address of Adas Torah inside it.³⁵
20

22 ³² Austin Turner & Josh DuBose, *Pro-Palestinian And Pro-Israeli Demonstrators Clash*
23 *Outside Synagogue In Los Angeles*, KTLA 5, (June 23, 2024, 2:34 PM),
24 <https://ktla.com/news/local-news/protesters-allegedly-block-entrance-to-synagogue-in-los-angeles/>.

25 ³³ Michael Starr & Jerusalem Post Staff, *Anti-Israel protesters beat, bear mace Jews, journalists at LA synagogue*, JERUSALEM POST (June 24, 2024).

26 ³⁴ CODEPINK Southeast Los Angeles Chapter (@codepinksela), INSTAGRAM,
27 https://www.instagram.com/reel/C8khgIxyMw4/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA== (last visited July 3, 2024).

28 ³⁵ CODEPINK Southeast Los Angeles Chapter (@codepinksela) & CODEPINK Alert
29 (@codepinkalert), INSTAGRAM,
30 https://www.instagram.com/p/C8lLvLIJu9h/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBi

1 142. The photograph was captioned, in part: “Our comrades witnessed
2 nothing out of the ordinary: madness, chaos, agitation, provoking and the use of
3 physical force by the zi0nist [sic] community and LAPD.”³⁶
4

5 143. In a public statement issued on June 24, 2024, CodePink
6 acknowledged that its organizers and members attended the riot that blocked the
7 entrance to the synagogue: “While our comrades were physically assaulted,
8 pepper/bear sprayed, and attacked as they walked back to their cars, LAPD did
9 nothing to keep us safe but rather pushed and used their combat toys to add to
10 injury.”³⁷
11

12 144. The statement continued: “[S]hame on LA for allowing the hosting of
13 these types of events that promote illegal sales of Palestinian territory and
14 homes!”³⁸
15

16 145. Indeed, CodePink’s website states: “CODEPINK recognizes
17 Palestinians as the rightful owners and caretakers of Palestine, their indigenous
18 homeland,” and “[w]e support Palestinians’ right to resist the violent Israeli
19 occupation of Palestine.”³⁹
20

21
22
23
24 NWFlZA%3D%3D&img_index=2 (last visited July 3, 2024).
25

³⁶ *Id.*

26 ³⁷ CODEPINK Los Angeles Chapter (@codepinkla) & CODEPINK Southeast Los
27 Angeles Chapter (@codepinksela), INSTAGRAM,
28 https://www.instagram.com/p/C8nHwetSMQR/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA%3D%3D&img_index=1 (last visited July 3, 2024).

³⁸ *Id.*

29 ³⁹ CODEPINK- JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE, <https://www.codepink.org/palestine> (last visited
30 26

1 146. CodePink's website further emphasizes that "[w]e must express our
2 outrage."⁴⁰
3

4 147. On Monday, June 24, 2024, CodePink's national organization, in
5 collaboration with CodePink's Southeast Los Angeles chapter, posted on its
6 Instagram a slide stating that "there was a peaceful protest against the illegal sale
7 of stolen land in Palestine in a synagogue. Zionists attacked peaceful protestors,
8 stole their phones, and LAPD watched on and helped."⁴¹
9

10 148. Beneath the slide was a longer caption stating that "[n]o religious
11 services were scheduled at the time of the real estate sale Contrary to what the
12 media is falsely reporting, the entrance was never blocked by anyone."⁴²
13

14 149. Both statements by CodePink are false: there were religious services
15 scheduled at Adas Torah the time of the riot instigated by CodePink, the *Aliyah*
16 Event itself was also religious in nature, and the rioters organized by Defendant
17 Organizations did block the entrance to Adas Torah.
18

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24
25 July 3, 2024).

26 ⁴⁰ *Id.*
27 ⁴¹ CODEPINK Alert (@codepinkalert) & CODEPINK Southeast Los Angeles Chapter
28 (@codepinksela), INSTAGRAM,
29 https://www.instagram.com/p/C8nDkh3y06J/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFIZA== (last visited July 3, 2024).
30 ⁴² *Id.*

150. Despite their demonstrable falsity, similar statements were posted on the Instagram accounts of CodePink's Los Angeles and Southeast Los Angeles chapters.⁴³

151. On Tuesday, June 25, 2024, CodePink's Southeast Los Angeles chapter posted a video of a press conference with multiple speakers.

152. The first speaker—whose name is not provided—stated that the “Adas Torah synagogue is complicit in war crimes through its hosting of this event.”⁴⁴

153. She added: “The attendees of this illegal sale event and the LAPD unleashed violence on protesters for daring to challenge the illegal sale of Palestinian land.”⁴⁵

154. She finishes by assuring that: “[w]e will continue to challenge the sale of stolen Palestinian land in North American cities, no matter where these events take place.”⁴⁶

155. The next day, CodePink's Southeast Los Angeles chapter posted a single slide stating: "FUCK ISRAEL."⁴⁷

⁴³ CODEPINK Southeast Los Angeles Chapter (@codepinksela), INSTAGRAM, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C8nHwetSMQR/?igsh=OWRmNXN3NW80Yzli>, (last visited July 5, 2024).

⁴⁴ CODEPINK Southeast Los Angeles Chapter (@codepinksela), INSTAGRAM, <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C8p9LjVSX72/?igsh=ZjRlZHhmY2N2eTI4> (last visited July 5, 2024).

45 *Id.*

46 *Id.*

⁴⁷ CODEPINK Southeast Los Angeles Chapter (@codepinksela), INSTAGRAM, https://www.instagram.com/p/C8sWnHZy_R9/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIO

Defendant Organizations' Riot is Universally Censured.

156. The riot outside of Adas Torah synagogue has been roundly condemned across the political spectrum.

157. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass released a statement on the day of the riot: “Today’s violence in the Pico-Robertson neighborhood was abhorrent, and blocking access to a place of worship is unacceptable . . . I want to be clear that Los Angeles will not be a harbor for antisemitism and violence. Those responsible for either will be found and held accountable.”⁴⁸

158. Similarly, President Joe Biden denounced the violent rioters the day-of: “I’m appalled by the scenes outside of Adas Torah synagogue in Los Angeles. Intimidating Jewish congregants is dangerous, unconscionable, antisemitic, and un-American. Americans have a right to peaceful protest. But blocking access to a house of worship—and engaging in violence—is never acceptable.”⁴⁹

159. And California Governor Gavin Newsom stated that “[t]he violent clashes outside Adas Torah in Los Angeles are appalling. There is no excuse for targeting a house of worship. Such antisemitic hatred has no place in California.”⁵⁰

DBiNWFlZA== (last visited July 3, 2024).

⁴⁸ @MayorOfLA, X (June 24, 2024, 1:27 AM), <https://x.com/MayorOfLA/status/1805110392806642141>.

⁴⁹ @POTUS, X (June 24, 2024, 10:56 AM), https://x.com/POTUS/status/1805253626551497103?ref_src=twsrctwsrc%5Etfw.

⁵⁰ @CAgovernor, X (June 24, 2024, 1:16 AM), <https://x.com/CAgovernor/status/1805107636368810029>.

1 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **Threatening and Intimidating Persons in Violation of 18 U.S.C. § 248(a)(2)**
3 **(SCLJ v. Defendant Organizations)**

4 **(Interference with Daily *Minyanim* and Torah Study Sessions)**

5 160. Plaintiff repeats, realleges, and incorporates by reference the
6 allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 159 of this Complaint.

7 161. The FACE Act imposes civil and criminal penalties on any person
8 who “by force or threat of force or by physical obstruction, intentionally injures,
9 intimidates or interferes with or attempts to injure, intimidate or interfere with any
10 person lawfully exercising or seeking to exercise the First Amendment right of
11 religious freedom at a place of religious worship.” 18 U.S.C. § 248(a)(2).

12 162. The FACE Act permits an action to be brought “by [any] person
13 lawfully exercising or seeking to exercise the First Amendment right of religious
14 freedom at a place of religious worship or by the entity that owns or operates such
15 place of religious worship.” *Id* § 248(c)(1)(A).

16 163. Adas Torah is a place of religious worship for purposes of the FACE
17 Act. *Id.* § 248(a)(2).

18 164. The daily *minyanim* and Torah study sessions described above
19 indisputably involve the “exercise [of] the First Amendment right of religious
20 freedom at a place of religious worship.” *Id.*

21 165. On June 23, 2024, members of SCLJ were “seeking to exercise the
22 First Amendment right of religious freedom at a place of religious worship,”

1 namely Adas Torah, but members of Defendant Organizations either forcefully
2 prevented them from doing so or attempted to forcefully prevent them from doing
3 so. *See id.*

5 166. Defendant Organizations, “[b]y force,” “threat of force, or physical
6 obstruction,” “intentionally injure[d], intimidate[d], interfere[d] with,” and
7 “attempt[ed] to injure, intimidate, [and] interfere with” the worship services being
8 held at Adas Torah on June 23, 2024.

10 167. Each of Defendant Organizations helped plan, organize, advertise, and
11 fund the violent mob that threatened and intimidated the individuals lawfully
12 exercising or seeking to exercise their First Amendment right of religious freedom
13 at Adas Torah.

16 168. The mob organized by Defendant Organizations—at a minimum,
17 through their social media blitz—also employed nonviolent tactics to prevent
18 members of SCLJ from exercising their First Amendment right of religious
19 freedom at Adas Torah synagogue.

21 169. Members of Defendant Organizations participated in the violence that
22 prevented congregants from accessing Adas Torah.

24 170. Other rioters were encouraged by Defendant Organizations to take
25 part in the violence that prevented congregants from accessing Adas Torah.

27 171. Defendant Organizations’ actions violated the FACE Act.

28 172. Defendant Organizations’ actions harmed members of SCLJ.

173. On behalf of its members who attempted to attend the *minyanim* and Torah study sessions, SCLJ seeks from Defendant Organizations, jointly and severally, \$5,000 per violation committed by Defendant Organizations' members or actual damages, whichever is greater.

174. As a result, SCLJ estimates statutory damages on behalf of these members under the FACE ACT total at least \$1,000,000.

175. SCLJ also seeks temporary, preliminary, and permanent injunctive relief; punitive damages; and the costs of this suit and reasonable fees for attorneys and expert witnesses.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

Threatening and Intimidating Persons in Violation of Cal. Pen. Code § 423.2 (SCLJ v. Defendant Organizations)

(Interference with Daily *Minyanim* and Daily Torah Study Sessions)

176. Plaintiff repeats, realleges, and incorporates by reference the allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 159 of this Complaint.

177. The California FACE Act, Cal. Pen. Code § 423.2, provides that “[e]very person who . . . [b]y force, threat of force, or physical obstruction that is a crime of violence, intentionally injures, intimidates, interferes with, or attempts to injure, intimidate, or interfere with a person lawfully exercising or seeking to exercise the First Amendment right of religious freedom at a place of religious worship,” can be held civilly liable. Cal. Pen. Code § 423.2(b).

1 178. Section 423.4 provides that “[a] person aggrieved by a violation of”
2 the California FACE Act “may bring a civil action to enjoin the violation, for
3 compensatory and punitive damages, and for the costs of suit and reasonable fees
4 for attorneys and expert witnesses,” so long as the plaintiff is either a person
5 “lawfully exercising or seeking to exercise the First Amendment right of religious
6 freedom in a place of religious worship, or the entity that owns or operates a place
7 of religious worship.” *Id.* § 423.4(a).

10 179. And “[w]ith respect to compensatory damages, the plaintiff may elect,
11 at any time prior to the rendering of a final judgment, to recover, in lieu of actual
12 damages, an award of statutory damages in the amount of one thousand dollars
13 (\$1,000) per exclusively nonviolent violation, and five thousand dollars (\$5,000)
14 per any other violation, for each violation committed.” *Id.*

17 180. Finally, “[e]very person who . . . [i]ntentionally damages or destroys
18 the property of a place of religious worship,” can be held civilly liable. *Id.*
19 § 423.2(f).

21 181. Adas Torah is a place of religious worship for purposes of the
22 California FACE Act. *Id.* § 423.2(b).

24 182. The daily *minyanim* and Torah study sessions described above
25 indisputably involve the “exercise [of] the First Amendment right of religious
26 freedom at a place of religious worship.” *Id.*

1 183. On June 23, 2024, members of SCLJ were “seeking to exercise the
2 First Amendment right of religious freedom at a place of religious worship,”
3 namely Adas Torah, but members of Defendant Organizations either forcefully
4 prevented them from doing so or attempted to forcefully prevent them from doing
5 so. *See id.*

6
7 184. Defendant Organizations, “[b]y force, threat of force, or physical
8 obstruction,” “intentional[ly] injure[d], intimidate[d], interfere[d] with,” and
9 “attempt[ed] to injure, intimidate, or interfere with” the worship services being
10 held at Adas Torah on June 23, 2024. *See id.* § 423.2(b).

11
12 185. Each of Defendant Organizations helped plan, organize, advertise, and
13 fund the violent mob that threatened and intimidated the individuals lawfully
14 exercising or seeking to exercise their First Amendment right of religious freedom
15 at Adas Torah.

16
17 186. The mob organized by Defendant Organizations also employed
18 nonviolent tactics—at a minimum, through their social media blitz—to prevent
19 members of SCLJ from exercising their First Amendment right of religious
20 freedom at Adas Torah.

21
22 187. Members of each of Defendant Organizations, upon receiving
23 encouragement from Defendant Organizations, participated in the violence that
24 prevented congregants from accessing Adas Torah.

25
26 188. Defendant Organizations’ actions violated the California FACE Act.

1 189. Defendant Organizations' actions harmed members of SCLJ.

2 190. On behalf of its members who attempted to attend the *minyanim* and
3 Torah study sessions, SCLJ seeks from Defendant Organizations, jointly and
4 severally, \$5,000 per violation committed by Defendant Organizations' members
5 and \$1,000 per nonviolent violation committed by Defendant Organizations'
6 members or actual damages, whichever is greater.

7 191. As a result, SCLJ estimates statutory damages on behalf of these
8 members under the California FACE Act total at least \$1,000,000.

9 192. SCLJ also seeks temporary, preliminary, or permanent injunctive
10 relief; punitive damages; and the costs of this suit and reasonable fees for attorneys
11 and expert witnesses.

12 **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

13 **Threatening and Intimidating Persons in Violation of 18 U.S.C. § 248(a)(2)**

14 **(SCLJ v. Defendant Organizations)**

15 **(Interference with *Aliyah* Event)**

16 193. Plaintiff repeats, realleges, and incorporates by reference the
17 allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 159 of this Complaint.

18 194. The FACE Act subjects to civil and criminal penalties any person who
19 “by force or threat of force or by physical obstruction, intentionally injures,
20 intimidates or interferes with or attempts to injure, intimidate or interfere with any
21 person lawfully exercising or seeking to exercise the First Amendment right of
22 religious freedom at a place of religious worship.” 18 U.S.C. § 248(a)(2).

1 195. The FACE Act permits an action to be brought under
2 Section 248(a)(2) “by a person lawfully exercising or seeking to exercise the First
3 Amendment right of religious freedom at a place of religious worship or by the
4 entity that owns or operates such place of religious worship.” *Id* § 248(c)(1)(A).

5
6 196. Adas Torah is an entity that “owns or operates” a place of worship for
7 purposes of the FACE Act. *Id.* § 248(c)(1)(A).

8
9 197. Many in the Jewish community, including members of SCLJ, believe
10 that their faith includes a *mitzvah* to buy land in Israel and dwell there.⁵¹

11
12 198. The *Aliyah* Event was scheduled to provide an opportunity for the
13 Adas Torah congregants to satisfy this *mitzvah*.

14
15 199. The *Aliyah* Event was an inherently religious activity for many Jewish
16 people, including, for example, members of SCLJ.

17
18 200. For these reasons, attendance at the *Aliyah* Event constitutes the
19 “exercise [of] the First Amendment right of religious freedom at a place of
20 religious worship.” *Id.*

21
22 201. Therefore, on June 23, 2024, members of SCLJ were “seeking to
23 exercise the First Amendment right of religious freedom at a place of religious
24 worship,” namely Adas Torah, but members of Defendant Organizations either
25
26
27

28 ⁵¹ See *supra* note 14; see also *supra* ¶¶ 66-74.

1 forcefully prevented them from doing so or attempted to forcefully prevent them
2 from doing so. *See id.*

3
4 202. Defendant Organizations, “[b]y force,” “threat of force, or physical
5 obstruction,” “intentionally injure[d], intimidate[d], interfere[d] with,” and
6 “attempt[ed] to injure, intimidate, or interfere with” the worship services being
7 held at Adas Torah on June 23, 2024. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 248(a)(2).

8
9 203. Each of Defendant Organizations helped plan, organize, advertise, and
10 fund the violent mob that threatened and intimidated the individuals lawfully
11 exercising or seeking to exercise the First Amendment right of religious freedom at
12 Adas Torah.

13
14 204. The mob organized by Defendant Organizations also employed
15 nonviolent tactics—at a minimum, through their social media blitz—to prevent
16 members of SCLJ from exercising their First Amendment right of religious
17 freedom at Adas Torah.

18
19 205. Members of each of Defendant Organizations, upon receiving
20 encouragement from Defendant Organizations, participated in the violence that
21 prevented congregants from accessing Adas Torah.

22
23 206. Defendant Organizations’ actions violated the FACE Act.

24
25 207. Defendant Organizations’ actions harmed members of SCLJ.

26
27 208. On behalf of its members who attempted to attend the housing event,
28 SCLJ seeks from Defendant Organizations, jointly and severally, \$5,000 per

1 violation committed by Defendant Organizations' members or actual damages,
2 whichever is greater.
3

4 209. As a result, SCLJ estimates statutory damages on behalf of these
5 SCLJ members under the FACE ACT total at least \$1,000,000.

6 210. SCLJ also seeks temporary, preliminary, or permanent injunctive
7 relief; punitive damages; and the costs of this suit and reasonable fees for attorneys
8 and expert witnesses.
9

10 **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**
11

12 **Threatening and Intimidating Persons in Violation of 18 U.S.C. § 248(a)(2)**
13 **(SCLJ v. Defendant Organizations)**
14 **(Interference with *Aliyah* Event)**

15 211. Plaintiff repeats, realleges, and incorporates by reference the
16 allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 159 of this Complaint.

17 212. The California FACE Act, Cal. Pen. Code § 423.2, provides that
18 “[e]very person who . . . [b]y force, threat of force, or physical obstruction that is a
19 crime of violence, intentionally injures, intimidates, interferes with, or attempts to
20 injure, intimidate, or interfere with a person lawfully exercising or seeking to
21 exercise the First Amendment right of religious freedom at a place of religious
22 worship,” can be held civilly liable. Cal. Pen. Code § 423.2(b).

23 213. Section 423.4 provides that “[a] person aggrieved by a violation of”
24 the California FACE Act “may bring a civil action to enjoin the violation, for
25 compensatory and punitive damages, and for the costs of suit and reasonable fees

1 for attorneys and expert witnesses,” so long as the plaintiff is either a person
2 “lawfully exercising or seeking to exercise the First Amendment right of religious
3 freedom in a place of religious worship, or the entity that owns or operates a place
4 of religious worship.” *Id.* § 423.4(a).

6 214. And “[w]ith respect to compensatory damages, the plaintiff may elect,
7 at any time prior to the rendering of a final judgment, to recover, in lieu of actual
8 damages, an award of statutory damages in the amount of one thousand dollars
9 (\$1,000) per exclusively nonviolent violation, and five thousand dollars (\$5,000)
10 per any other violation, for each violation committed.” *Id.*

13 215. Finally, “[e]very person who . . . [i]ntentionally damages or destroys
14 the property of a place of religious worship,” can be held civilly liable. *Id.*
15
16 § 423.2(f).

17 216. Adas Torah is a place of religious worship for purposes of the
18 California FACE Act. *Id.* § 423.2(b).

20 217. Many in the Jewish community, including members of SCLJ, believe
21 that their faith includes a *mitzvah* to buy land in Israel and dwell there.⁵²

22 218. The *Aliyah* Event was scheduled to provide an opportunity for the
23 Adas Torah congregants to satisfy this *mitzvah*.

28
29 _____
30 ⁵² *Id.*

1 219. The *Aliyah* Event was an inherently religious activity for many Jewish
2 people, including, for example, members of SCLJ.
3

4 220. For these reasons, attendance at the *Aliyah* Event constitutes the
5 “exercise [of] the First Amendment right of religious freedom at a place of
6 religious worship.” *Id.*
7

8 221. Therefore, on June 23, 2024, members of SCLJ were “seeking to
9 exercise the First Amendment right of religious freedom at a place of religious
10 worship,” namely Adas Torah, but rioters either forcefully prevented them from
11 doing so or attempted to forcefully prevent them from doing so. *See id.*
12

13 222. Defendant Organizations, “[b]y force, threat of force, or physical
14 obstruction,” “intentional[ly] injure[d], intimidate[d], interfere[d] with,” and
15 “attempt[ed] to injure, intimidate, or interfere with” the worship services being
16 held at Adas Torah synagogue on June 23, 2024. *See id.* § 423.2(b).
17

18 223. Each of Defendant Organizations helped plan, organize, advertise, and
19 fund the violent mob that threatened and intimidated the individuals lawfully
20 exercising or seeking to exercise their First Amendment right of religious freedom
21 at Adas Torah.
22

23 224. The mob organized by Defendant Organizations also employed
24 nonviolent tactics—at a minimum, through their social media blitz—to prevent
25 members of SCLJ from exercising their First Amendment right of religious
26 freedom at Adas Torah.
27

1 225. Members of each of Defendant Organizations, upon receiving
2 encouragement from Defendant Organizations, participated in the violence that
3 prevented congregants from accessing Adas Torah.
4

5 226. Defendant Organizations' actions violated the California FACE Act.
6

7 227. Defendant Organizations' actions harmed SCLJ.
8

9 228. On behalf of its members who attempted to attend the housing event,
10 SCLJ seeks from Defendant Organizations, jointly and severally, \$5,000 per
11 violation committed by Defendant Organizations' members and \$1,000 per
12 nonviolent violation committed by Defendant Organizations' members or actual
13 damages, whichever is greater.
14

15 229. As a result, SCLJ estimates statutory damages on behalf of these
16 members under the California FACE Act total at least \$1,000,000.
17

18 230. SCLJ also seeks temporary, preliminary, or permanent injunctive
19 relief; punitive damages; and the costs of suit and reasonable fees for attorneys and
20 expert witnesses.
21

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

22 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that this Court enter
23 judgment in its favor and against Defendant Organizations, as follows:
24

25 1. Enter judgment against Defendant Organizations, jointly and
26 severally, in the amount of the following: \$5,000 for each violation of the FACE
27 ACT; \$5,000 for each violent violation of the California FACE Act; and \$1,000 for
28

each nonviolent of the California FACE Act by each member of Defendant Organizations or actual damages, whichever is greater;

2. Award SCLJ an appropriate punitive-damages award;
3. Award SCLJ its reasonable costs and expenses, including attorney fees, incurred in this action as authorized by 18 U.S.C. § 248(c)(1)(B) and Cal Pen Code § 423.2;

4. Enjoin Defendant Organizations and their members from going within one-hundred feet of Adas Torah; and

5. Award such other relief as the Court deems equitable and just.

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Pursuant to Rule 38(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff respectfully demands a trial by jury of all issues triable by jury.

GIPSON HOFFMAN & PANCIONE
A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

1 Respectfully submitted this 24th day of July, 2024.
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6 GIPSON HOFFMAN PANCIONE
7 A Professional Corporation
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