




RECENT NEWS




DNC confronts anti-Israel push from party delegates



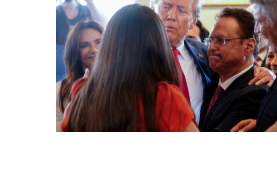
Jewish groups, Canadian politicians outraged over film festi...



Jay Schottenstein has great genes



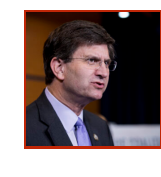
Sarah Huckabee Sanders completes first trip to Israel as Ark...



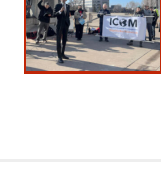
Trump-aligned evangelicals push Republicans to call out anti...

➔

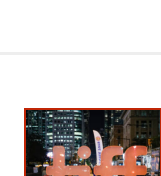
Quick Hits



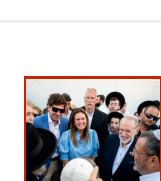
TRIP TALK
Democrats discussed Gaza aid, day-after plans with Israeli leadership, Schneider says



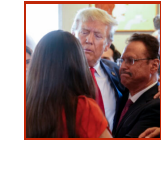
ONLINE ARCHIVE
Omar Fateh's allies defended Oct. 7, denied Israel's right to exist



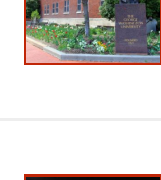
FAMILY FEUD
DNC confronts anti-Israel push from party delegates



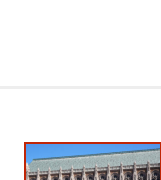
FESTIVAL FIASCO
Jewish groups, Canadian politicians outraged over film festival's cancellation of Oct. 7 documentary



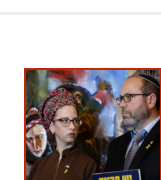
TRIP TALK
Sarah Huckabee Sanders completes first trip to Israel as Arkansas governor




CHRISTIAN CONCERNS
Trump-aligned evangelicals push Republicans to call out antisemitism on the right




EYE ON ACADEMIA
Trump's latest DC target: George Washington University



COMEBACK KING
Sherrod Brown, a pro-Israel progressive, to make bid to return to the Senate against Sen. Husted



CAMPUS BEAT
University of Washington pursues criminal charges for anti-Israel student vandals



DIVERGENT VOICE
Hostage families protest Gaza offensive — but this father says it doesn't go far enough

ONLINE ARCHIVE

Omar Fateh's allies defended Oct. 7, denied Israel's right to exist

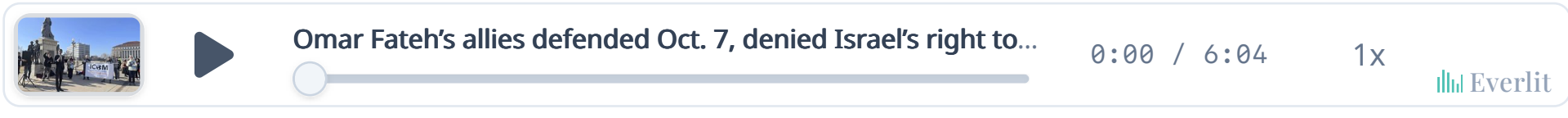
The Minneapolis mayoral candidate's communications manager wrote on social media that Israel 'must be dismantled'



Minnesota Sen. Omar Fateh, of Minneapolis, speaks in support of the North Star Act — which would make Minnesota a 'sanctuary state' for immigrants without permanent legal status — at a rally in front of the state capitol building in St. Paul, Minn., on Monday, Feb. 12, 2024, the first day of Minnesota's legislative session for the year.

By [Matthew Kassel](#) · August 14, 2025

SHARE    



Two political activists closely affiliated with Omar Fateh, a far-left Minnesota state senator who is now running for mayor of Minneapolis, have expressed a range of extreme views on the Hamas terror attacks of Oct. 7, 2023, endorsing the violence as a justified act of resistance and accusing Israel of initiating the war in Gaza, among other inflammatory comments.

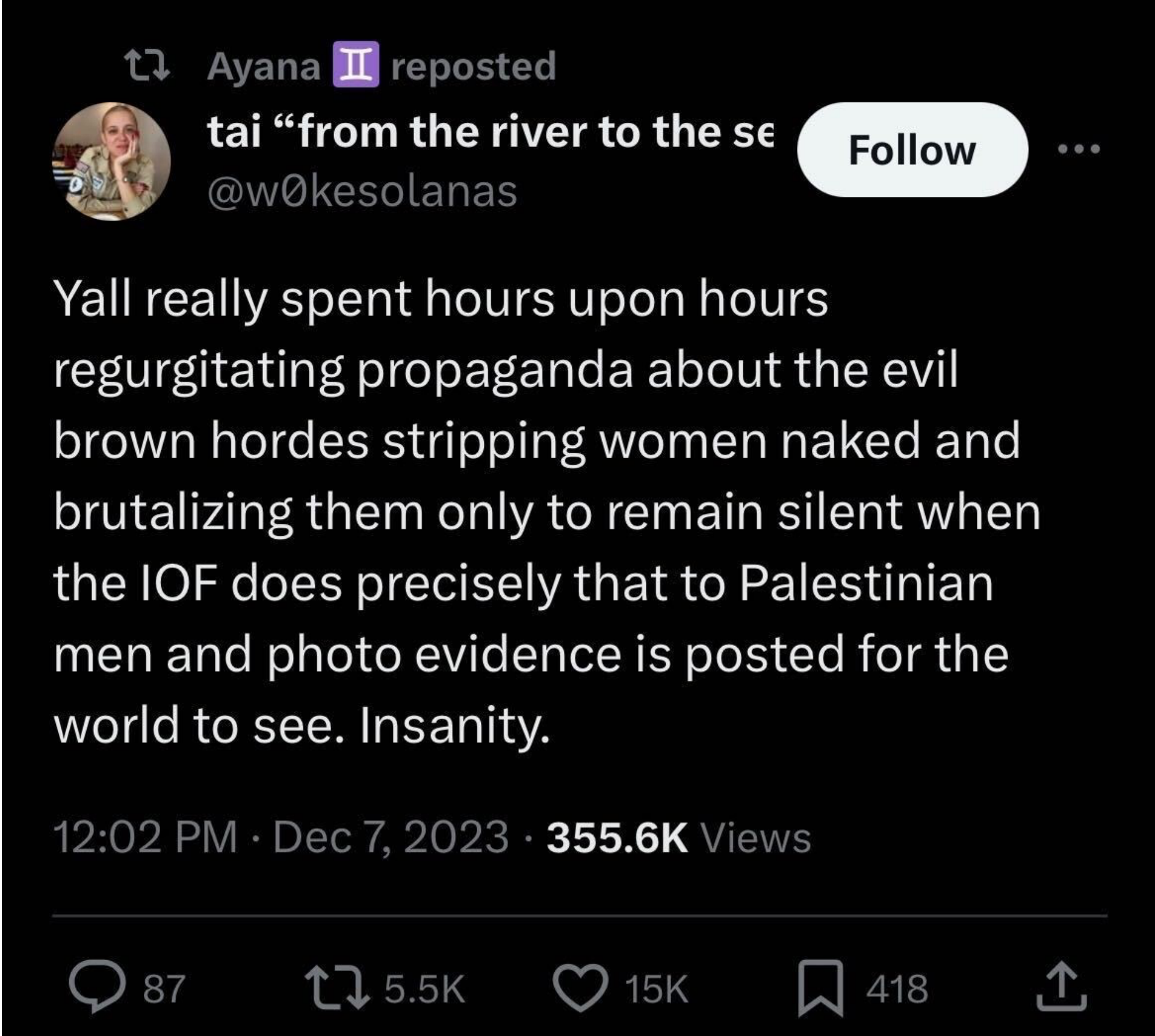
Their rhetoric could fuel concerns among local Jewish leaders who [sounded alarms](#) about Fateh's close alliances with anti-Israel activists after he won the state Democratic Party endorsement last month over Jacob Frey, the incumbent seeking a third and final term. Fateh, a 35-year-old democratic socialist whose campaign has recently drawn comparisons to New York City Democratic mayoral nominee Zohran Mamdani, has likewise been a [staunch critic](#) of Israel, [calling](#) its conduct in Gaza a genocide and [pushing for a ceasefire](#) 10 days after Hamas' attack.

In a mayoral candidate questionnaire solicited by the Twin Cities chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America — which endorsed his bid after facing widespread [criticism](#) over its response to the Oct. 7 attack — Fateh also [backed](#) the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement targeting Israel, according to [portions](#) of the form reviewed by *Jewish Insider*.

He additionally [pledged](#), without explanation, to “refrain from any and all affiliation” with what the DSA questionnaire dismissed as “Zionist lobby groups,” citing AIPAC, J Street, Christians United for Israel and, most notably, the Jewish Community Relations Council, a nonpartisan organization that typically engages with a diverse group of elected officials in both parties. The local JCRC — which represents the Jewish community to Minneapolis government officials — has [voiced reservations](#) about its ability to interact with Fateh if he is elected, in light of his [statements](#) on Israel.

But some of Fateh's campaign staffers have gone significantly further than the state legislator, raising questions over his tolerance for incendiary language on a sensitive issue that has stoked growing [internal tensions](#) in the state party and could possibly inflame an increasingly bitter mayoral race in the lead-up to November.

In a series of now-deleted social media posts, for instance, Fateh's communications manager, [Anya Smith-Kooiman](#) [stated](#) that Israel “does not have a ‘right’ to exist” and “must be dismantled,” while amplifying comments [dismissing](#) widespread reports of sexual violence on Oct. 7 as “propaganda” and hailing the attacks as a form of “resistance” that succeeded where the peace process had failed.



Elsewhere, Smith-Kooiman, who joined Fateh's campaign in December, [according to her LinkedIn page](#), declared a month after the Oct. 7 attacks that she did “not give a flying f**k about Hamas,” [claiming](#) “the root of the problem is a colonial government segregating, ethnically cleaning, murdering Palestinians, stealing their land with impunity and not expecting a resistance group to violently fight back.”

“Colonial and oppressive regimes love to call everyone but themselves a terrorist,” she continued in her November 2023 post to X, now removed from her profile. “Israeli terrorism created Hamas and the cycle will go on and on until Israel, Britain and the U.S. are held accountable for their violence and thievery. Let’s address root causes: imperialism.”

More recently, Smith-Kooiman, in a June [social media](#) post, advocated for the release of what she called “all Palestinian hostages,” equating prisoners held in Israel with the captives who were kidnapped by Hamas on Oct. 7.

In addition to Smith-Kooiman, another activist with ties to Fateh's mayoral bid, David Gilbert-Pederson, has unreservedly praised the Oct. 7 attack, which he has characterized as a heroic feat of defiance against “imperial domination.”



Speaking on a [panel discussion](#) about “connecting movements for collective liberation” in December 2023, Gilbert-Pederson — who has been [listed](#) as a Fateh campaign staffer in filings — celebrated “what happened collectively for the people of Palestine on Oct. 7,” saying it was not his place to cast judgment on the violence.

“We as Americans, people who live in the imperial core, our job is to stand in [unconditional](#) solidarity with those resisting oppression,” Gilbert-Pederson, a [close ally](#) of Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN), [explained](#) in his panel remarks. “Unconditional solidarity does not mean that we get to say, ‘Oh, this tactic you did, we don’t really like that,’ or, ‘We agree with you, but I think that some of your methods are too extreme.’ That’s not what unconditional solidarity means.”

“We live in the core of the empire,” he said, “so it is our job to demand that our government divest from Israel, divest from the colonial project, and start to free the U.S. as well.”

Broadly summarizing his approach, he argued that “all resistance to that kind of imperial domination is justified.”

Fateh's campaign did not respond to a request for comment on Wednesday about Gilbert-Pederson and Smith-Kooiman, both of whom have previously [faced](#) some [scrutiny](#) for their rhetoric on Israel and Oct. 7, or his answers to the DSA's questionnaire.

For his part, Frey, a Jewish Democrat, has been [outspoken against rising antisemitism](#) in the wake of Hamas' attacks. The mayor, 44, has clashed with the City Council over anti-Israel resolutions he has dismissed as one-sided, even as he has condemned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government's handling of the ongoing war in Gaza.