



Dear Chancellor Robinson (Dean Sloan cc'd),

We write to you as representatives of the Human Rights task force at the Association for Middle East Women's Studies (AMEWS) shocked by threats against Dr. Mohja Kahf from a law professor at the University of Arkansas who has published four op-eds against her in the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*. Dr. Kahf is a feminist professor and a poet of national and international stature at the University of Arkansas. We stand in solidarity with Dr. Kahf who has been subjected to attacks which are part of a larger campaign to censor all support of Palestinian civilians, even as they are threatened with ethnic cleansing.

The op eds attack Professor Kahf for 1) being “anti-feminist,” because she objected to a Horowitz Center affiliated speaker on honor killings as a Muslim-specific crime; and 2) for being anti-Semitic. Professor Kahf has a strong record of teaching and building a safe space for her students. A cursory read of her [poetry](#) and syllabi and of her scholarly, personal, and professional career shows an academic deeply committed to uplifting interfaith histories in the Middle East, especially Judaism, and deeply committed to gender justice. Kahf's *Hagar Poems*, feminist engagements with figures of three faith traditions, is praised by Jewish American poets—on the book cover itself. Any look at her novel, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, reveals open-hearted engagement with religious and ethnic diversity, in particular with Judaism, as does her essay for which she won a Pushcart Prize, “The Caul of Inshallah.”

This repeated baiting of a woman faculty of color is not just alarming; it contradicts our profession's basic norms of decency. Such intimidation tactics raise concerns about how well academic freedoms are being protected on the University of Arkansas campuses. As concerned representatives of national and international communities of scholars of Middle East women, we ask that the university support Professor Kahf by denouncing the public harassment she faces.

The highest officials at UA need to remediate a hostile environment, replacing it with one which promotes academic freedom and civility across diverse viewpoints on campus. We insist that your university administration find the quickest and best way to show its support for the academic expertise and ethical integrity of Professor Kahf and her colleagues. Above all, please commend Professor Kahf for her forbearance in the face of such vitriolic and defaming attacks.

Sincerely,

President of AMEWS
Sherine Hafez, *University of California, Riverside*

&

The AMEWS Human Rights Task Force
Hind Ahmed Zaki, *University of Washington*
Miriam Cooke, *Duke University*
Yara Abdelaziz, *University of Toronto-Ontario*