



NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD
Detroit & Michigan Chapter

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Detroit-MI NLG Condemns Detention of NLG Volunteer Attorney at DTW

[DETROIT, MI, April 9, 2025] - The Detroit & Michigan chapter of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) objects in the strongest terms to the detention and harassment of our volunteer attorney, Amir Makled, by Customs and Border Patrol at the Detroit Metro Airport on Sunday, April 6. Attorneys, regardless of whom they represent, must not be subject to intimidation tactics by the government. Our justice system relies upon, and our Constitution requires, that every defendant, regardless of charge, have access to legal counsel. This incident is a blatant attempt by the Trump administration to deter attorneys from representing clients in politically sensitive cases.

Mr. Makled is one of many attorneys from around the state who volunteer their time to the Detroit & Michigan Chapter of the NLG to represent activists facing criminal charges related to protest activity. He currently represents one of 7 individuals charged by state Attorney General Dana Nessel with alleged felonies related to pro-Palestine activities at the University of Michigan in 2024.

Upon returning to the United States from a family vacation, Mr. Makled was held for 90 minutes at the airport. Officers demanded that he turn over his personal telephone and only released him and his phone after he agreed to share his contact list. Officers told him they knew he was an attorney who works on “big cases,” indicating that his detention was likely related to his representation of activists.

The NLG and partner organizations will not back down from our commitment to vigorous representation for those protesting social injustice. We decry the use of law enforcement agencies to attempt to chill dissent and undermine the rights of our members, attorneys, and their clients. We applaud Mr. Makled for safeguarding client information as well as his personal data from government intrusion and intimidation, and demand an end to these tactics from all parts of the government.

Sammie Lewis—the pro-Palestine protester that Amir Makled is defending—said, “I believe that my attorney, Amir Makled, was targeted by federal agents at the DTW airport because of the ways I have been targeted by the state, UM, and their alliance. My legal team, my codefendants, and I will not be intimidated when faced with the threat of police brutality, state repression, and unlawful detainment. Standing up against a genocide will always be right and we will continue to demand Palestinian liberation and that all charges be dropped.”

NLG Volunteer Attorney Amir Makled said “Upon returning from a family vacation, I was detained by Customs and Border Protection, subjected to prolonged questioning, and demanded to surrender access to my phone—without a warrant, probable cause, or any articulated suspicion. This kind of intrusive border search, untethered from individualized suspicion, not only raises serious constitutional concerns under the First and Fourth Amendments, but also risks chilling protected speech and association. When political

expression and advocacy become grounds for surveillance or scrutiny, the harm extends beyond the individual—it threatens the free exercise of dissent in a democratic society”

Sara Habbo, President of the NLG, Detroit & Michigan Chapter, commented, “While this administration is extorting private firms to serve this dishonorable president and to violate the human rights of migrants and citizens alike, Amir Makled is doing the honorable work of protecting the First Amendment. We need more leaders like Amir.”

About National Lawyers Guild, Detroit & Michigan Chapter

The National Lawyers Guild (NLG), [established in 1937](#), is a nationwide association of Lawyers, Legal Workers, Law Students and Jailhouse Lawyers committed to using the law “in the service of the people, to the end that human rights and the rights of ecosystems shall be regarded as more sacred than property interests.” The Detroit & Michigan Chapter provides Legal Observers to monitor government response to protests, educates the public about their civil rights, and coordinates free legal representation to those facing charges related to protest activity.

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