

DEFAMATION LAWSUIT

Jewish surgeon sues anti-Israel groups for defamation after volunteering in IDF

Dr. Josh Winer's lawsuit comes as the medical field is under scrutiny for rising antisemitism and anti-Israel discrimination

By [Haley Cohen](#) May 6, 2025



Students chant during a pro-Palestinian protest at Emory University on April 25, 2024, in Atlanta, Georgia.

An Atlanta Jewish surgeon who served in the Israeli Defense Forces in the aftermath of the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas terrorist attacks is suing several anti-Israel groups after a medical student made defamatory accusations that the surgeon's service aided and abetted a genocide in Gaza, rendering him unfit to provide medical care.

The statements were circulated by major organizations, including the Council on American-Islamic Relations and National Students for Justice in Palestine.

After Oct. 7, Dr. Josh Winer took leave as a physician and professor at Emory University School of Medicine to serve as a doctor in an IDF reconnaissance unit in Gaza, providing

medical care to wounded soldiers. Upon returning to Emory, Winer “encountered hostility as a supporter of Israel,” he told *Jewish Insider*.

Umaymah Mohammad, an Emory medical student, accused Winer of war crimes and genocide, according to the lawsuit. Her statements were initially made during a [segment](#) of “Democracy Now!,” a daily news program broadcast on the internet, television and radio.

She repeated the statements in [an op-ed](#), a podcast hosted by the International Union of Scientists and at a press conference. CAIR Georgia, CAIR National, Doctors Against Genocide Society, NSJP and Emory Students for Justice in Palestine — which are all named as defendants in the suit alongside Mohammad — published, reiterated and expanded upon Mohammad’s claims. Emory SJP, for instance, created social media posts that claimed Winer was a threat to students and patients of color.

Mohammad is an MD/PhD candidate at Emory’s School of Medicine and Sociology Department. She was an active member of the university’s chapter of SJP — months after Oct. 7, she [sent an email](#) to the entire medical school with the subject: “Palestinian blood stains your hands, Emory University and School of Medicine” — and was suspended from the university in November 2024 for one year as a result of her statements about Winer.

Winer, a surgical oncology professor, told JI that “instead of engaging in respectful discussion, she publicly lied about me with escalating, baseless attacks.”

“For months, Ms. Mohammad and her associates continued targeting me on broader platforms with increasingly personal attacks against my work as a physician and educator. While I champion free speech, it doesn’t extend to deliberate falsehoods that are designed to harm one’s career and amount to character assassination,” Winer said.

The lawsuit argues that the statements constitute defamation because they were made with malice and have caused professional damage to Winer. The defendants have not yet responded to the lawsuit, which was filed in a U.S. district court in Atlanta on April 25.

“Winer went to save people’s lives in Israel and he ended up being defamed, his reputation tarnished, people threatening him and making his life personally and professionally incredibly difficult with threats to his safety,” Winer’s attorney, Esther Panitch, told JI.

The targeting of a Jewish professional is “not unusual” from these groups, both nationally and locally, according to Panitch, a Georgia state representative. “These groups make concerted efforts to defame people who are Zionists and they make no secret that they don’t think Zionists should be able to live our lives and do our jobs,” she said. “It’s just unacceptable in the U.S.”

Panitch also told JI that concerns remain around Mohammad being able to practice medicine after her suspension. “We don’t believe she should,” Panitch said. “She’s a danger. I don’t know how a Zionist person would ever feel comfortable going to her.”

The lawsuit comes as the medical field is increasingly under scrutiny for a rise in anti-Israel and antisemitic activity — leading some Jewish physicians to hide their religious identity. Jewish pediatricians, for instance, have [reported an increase](#) of antisemitic abuse in private online forums for American Academy of Pediatrics members starting soon after Oct. 7.

Earlier this year, the former chief of Brown Medicine’s Division of Kidney Diseases and Hypertension who hired Dr. Rasha Alawieh, a Brown University assistant professor and kidney specialist who was deported to Lebanon after federal agents said she “openly admitted” to supporting Hezbollah, [declined to say](#) in an interview with JI whether he would have hired her had he known about her support for terrorists.