

## In U.S., a push to disavow Hamas' cause

Some Palestinian Americans worry that rally rhetoric invites antisemitism charges.

By JAWEED KALEEM

Roy Alnashef walked into the crowd around Los Angeles City Hall clutching a poster in each hand.

As a Palestinian American, he was heartened that pro-Palestinian demonstrations across the country were drawing hundreds of thousands of people. But he was also alarmed that some protesters were celebrating Hamas and the militant group's Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel or chanting slogans that many Jews viewed as antisemitic.

So he brought two messages to his first rally in late October.

"This is not a pro-Hamas protest," said one of his homemade signs.

The other read: "Hey Jews. If you were here, you'd be safe. We don't hate you."

Around him, other activists were accusing Israel of being an "apartheid state" whose bombardment of the Gaza Strip was nothing short of "genocide." Some held signs comparing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Adolf Hitler.

Alnashef said he believed those criticisms were accurate.

"But I don't know if those words help right now," he said.

The Palestinian cause has never received as much attention or support in the United States as it has in the last two months: the massive protests, the debates roiling college campuses, the support from Black, Latino and LGBTQ+ groups.

But some in the Palestinian American community, [See Palestinians, A8]



HENRY RACE works at Uptown Christmas Trees in Manhattan. It's a 24-hour operation. "They don't realize how difficult getting a Christmas tree into New York City is," company executive Ciree Nash says.

COLUMN ONE

## Tree lots on sidewalks? It must be Christmas in NYC

They're hawkin' here, they're hawkin' here. Do not crash their turf.

By ALEXANDRA E. PETRI  
REPORTING FROM NEW YORK

The staffers at Uptown Christmas Trees have a saying they live by for one month of the year: Sell the effing tree.

But in order to sell the effing tree, a crew first needs to move the effing trees.

So on one recent bitter December night — the kind that cuts through thick socks and sturdy boots right down into the toes — a pickup truck packed with nearly 1,000 trees from New Hampshire pulled onto Madison Avenue and East 123rd Street alongside Marcus Garvey Park in Harlem.

The yard crew from Uptown Christmas Trees got cracking: Two workers scaled the tree pile like a cliff and began heaving trees to smaller



BOLTON LITTLEFIELD, left, and Jackson Conklin, both from Vermont, unload a delivery of Christmas trees at Uptown.



LUIS SINCO Los Angeles Times

TONGVA MEMBER Tina Calderon and Dustin Murphey, who is Acjachemen, visit a site at Bolsa Chica Mesa where their ancestors lived for thousands of years.

## With stolen land reclaimed, their healing can begin

As far back as 9,000 years ago, the Acjachemen and Tongva people hunted, fished and foraged for nuts and berries at Bolsa Chica Mesa. This is where they gathered herbs for medicines and held prayer ceremonies. Here, on a raised landmass that overlooks the Pacific Ocean, is where they buried their dead.

Today, descendants of those original inhabitants

Acjachemen and Tongva leaders say return of an O.C. site is a step toward protecting their heritage

By TYRONE BEASON

can call a piece of the mesa their own once again.

With the recent transfer of 6.2 acres to the two tribes for conservation and cultural use, Indigenous Californians for the first time have land in Orange County back in their hands, a dedicated space where they can practice traditions that were in place millennia before the construction of Stone

[See Stolen land, A11]

## Trump can only benefit from the Colorado ruling

The move makes him more sympathetic to GOP base and forces rivals to his defense.

MARK Z. BARABAK

Donald Trump received an early Christmas present courtesy of the Colorado Supreme Court.

In a move without precedent, the justices ruled 4-3 on Tuesday that Trump was ineligible for the state's 2024 presidential ballot, owing to his role in the attempted Jan. 6 overthrow of the federal government. (And let's not shrink from a rightful description of the deadly assault on the U.S. Capitol: It was a failed coup.)

Colorado's high court stayed its decision until Jan. 4, or until the U.S. Supreme Court agrees to take up the matter — a move that seems



all but assured and leaves the country, and the 2024 presidential contest, in an odd state of suspension.

The most important effect may be in the short term. Anything that freezes the status quo, which sees Trump well ahead in the Republican nominating fight, works to his benefit.

There are now less than four weeks before Iowa Republicans cast the first votes of 2024 on Jan. 15. With time ticking, Trump rivals can ill-afford a prolonged legal skirmish that consumes what little attention is paid the contest over the coming holiday break.

If Wednesday's news coverage offers a taste, most discussion will focus not on the exertions of Trump's opponents or the Nazi sloganeering of the ex-president but on the country's journey through highly fraught and heretofore uncharted legal terrain.

The broad Republican response was predictable: A headlong rush to once more rally behind the party's serially indicted front-runner.

[See Barabak, A8]

## Malibu's PCH is set for safety fixes

Changes are slated months after a crash killed four Pepperdine students. Will the steps be enough?

By KAREN GARCIA  
AND TERRY CASTLEMAN

On a dangerous stretch of Pacific Coast Highway known to Malibu locals as "Dead Man's Curve," the memory of four Pepperdine University students killed in a horrific crash looms large. After decades of calls to improve the thoroughfare's safety, advocates wonder whether the October collision could finally spur meaningful change.

Less than a mile from the site of the crash — in which prosecutors said the 22-year-old driver was going as fast as 104 mph — local and state transportation officials gathered Monday to discuss safety upgrades to the 21 miles of the highway that wind through Malibu.

A \$4.2-million contract approved last week will allow Caltrans to move forward on a draft list of 30 upgrades, California Transportation Secretary Toms Omishakin said — including enhanced striping in curves, optical speed bars (stripes spaced at gradually decreasing distances to make drivers aware of their speed), speed feedback signs, speed limit markings on the pavement and the replacement of safety corridor signs.

Although there is a process each project will have to undergo, "this is not a 'business as usual' approach," Omishakin said as cars whizzed past.

After several deadly pedestrian crashes that roiled Malibu and sparked calls for change, business as usual won't be enough, transportation activists said. Damian Kevitt, the founder of Streets Are for Everyone, told The Times the "design of PCH through Malibu is simply and clearly deadly."

"It needs to be a transformed from a highway where people can do 60 to 80

[See Malibu, A9]

### Venezuela, U.S. swap prisoners

Close ally of President Maduro is traded for 10 Americans and a fugitive as tensions ease. **WORLD, A3**

### Trump tempts fate in top court

Justices could decide unprecedented cases on his immunity claim and his eligibility for office. **NATION, A6**

### Chief allegedly targeted Bass

LAPD's Moore denies he sought an inquiry into USC scholarship, as two of his detectives claim. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

**Weather**  
Rain; possible flooding.  
L.A. Basin: 64/55. **B6**

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