

Statement on the 2016 USUDC Israel-Palestine Debate

On April 10, 2016 a motion about the Israel-Palestine conflict was set for one of the preliminary debates at the US Universities Debating Championship at Morehouse College. Some tournament participants found this motion offensive, and others reported discomfort in engaging the subject matter. The US Universities Debate Association had no advance knowledge that this topic would be set, and had no legitimate power to stop the motion from being run. It was, in fact, primarily members of the USUDA and other tournament participants who were negatively affected by this debate topic, thus it is the USUDA and those attending the tournament that are among the aggrieved parties in this instance.

The USUDA does not administer the USUDC tournament, nor any other tournament. Its membership reviews and approves of bids to host the annual USUDC and keeps a calendar and results of British Parliamentary debate tournaments. That there would be a motion of this nature was not part of Morehouse College's bid to host. The adjudication team that sets the motions for the USUDC are not selected by the USUDA; they are selected by the host institution. It is the adjudication core's responsibility to ensure the tournament motions are appropriate for academic debate.

We are saddened that this event, which is supposed to be a celebration of our nation's greatest tradition - that of intellectual and respectful engagement with civic controversy - became the subject of controversy itself. We are also saddened that several of our members and colleagues were negatively impacted.

United States Universities Debate Association
April 15, 2016