



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# HEIGHTENED ANTISEMITISM IN CANADA AND HOW TO CONFRONT IT

Report of the Standing Committee on Justice  
and Human Rights

Lena Metlege Diab, Chair

DECEMBER 2024  
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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**Lena Metlege Diab  
Chair**

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### **Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons**

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

has the honour to present its

## **TWENTY-SEVENTH REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied antisemitism and additional measures that could be taken to address the valid fears that are being expressed by Canada's Jewish community and has agreed to report the following:





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# LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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*As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.*

## **Recommendation 1**

**That the Government of Canada, respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, the provinces and territories, affirm the need for university administrations to prioritize a safe campus environment for Jewish students, faculty and staff.**

**In particular, university administrations must:**

- **Clearly communicate and enforce campus rules, standards, and policies: Make clear to students what it means to be a member of the campus community, and ensure students, faculty, and staff are aware of school policies. This must include a clear understanding that encampments are not permitted and what the rules are for protests and demonstrations, including that hateful speech, and speech that incites and justifies violence, will not be tolerated.**
- **Support Jewish students and faculty: Prevent discrimination, unequivocally denounce antisemitism, ensure inclusivity, and provide antisemitism education and training from Jewish organizations who recognize the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance(IHRA) definition of antisemitism to the administration, faculty members, security personnel, students' associations and the heads of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) offices. Ensure the academic freedom of all faculty is upheld by opposing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) and academic boycotts of Israel.**
- **Ensure campus safety: Enforce university codes of conduct, maintain clear reporting avenues for antisemitic incidents with commitment to response, ensure campus security and staff are trained to address violations of campus rules, and reaffirm rejection of BDS and academic boycotts of Israel.**

- **Reaffirm faculty responsibilities: Students have a right to learn in a non-discriminatory learning environment. Communicate and enforce policies regarding “abuse of podium” actions and ensure that faculty members treat all students equally.**
- **Prepare for October 7: Anticipate and mitigate disruptions on the anniversary of the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023.**

**The Government of Canada should ensure that the above issues are on the agenda of the next Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety. .... 43**

**Recommendation 2**

**That the Government of Canada convene a national review committee, comprised of federal, provincial and municipal representatives, university administrators, faculty members, and students, to understand the impact of increased antisemitism across campuses, and to develop non-binding recommendations to ensure a healthier campus environment. .... 44**

**Recommendation 3**

**That the Government of Canada provide funding for the further collection of quantitative and qualitative data regarding Jewish experiences of antisemitism on university campuses across the country. .... 45**

**Recommendation 4**

**That the Government of Canada ensure that all of its Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) programs include the Jewish community, all EDI officers are champions of Jewish inclusion and that antisemitism training approved by the Special Envoy on Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism be provided to all government departments. .... 45**

**Recommendation 5**

**That the full diversity of the Jewish identity be acknowledged within Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) frameworks, including Jewish peoplehood, ethnicity, nationality, multi-denominational religion, cultural diversity, and language, as well as Zionist and Indigenous aspects of Jewish identity. This includes the recognition of Zionism as the self-determination of Jewish people in their ancestral homeland of Israel..... 45**

**Recommendation 6**

**That the Government of Canada work with the provinces and territories to ensure that Holocaust education in public schools and other institutions includes explanations of modern-day antisemitism and integrates a Jewish community-centered lens..... 45**

**Recommendation 7**

**That the Government of Canada, respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, the provinces and territories, support the further adoption and implementation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism by governments and institutions across the country, including by:**

- encouraging university administrations to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and to implement the definition using the IHRA handbook provided by the Government of Canada as a resource;**
- encouraging university administrations to appoint special advisors on antisemitism trusted by Jewish organizations who recognize the IHRA definition of antisemitism; and**
- encouraging the integration of the IHRA definition of antisemitism into Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training for all sectors, including universities, law enforcement and prosecution services. .... 45**

**Recommendation 8**

**That the Government of Canada, in line with its commitment to build strong communities and celebrate multiculturalism, and respecting the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories, provide funding to develop a five-year program to enhance the literacy of post-secondary students regarding the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. .... 46**

**Recommendation 9**

**That, building on the efforts of the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Government of Canada take additional measures to ensure that recipients of government funding:**

- **comply with Canada's anti-discrimination and anti-hate laws;**
- **respect the values underlying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Human Rights Act; and**
- **do not advocate intolerance, discrimination, prejudice, racism or hate.**

**Such measures should include enhancements to vetting processes, and provisions allowing the Government of Canada to terminate a funding agreement immediately and reclaim all funds paid out to date should the recipient be found not to meet the above conditions..... 46**

**Recommendation 10**

**That the federal Parliament consider creating a new intimidation offence under the *Criminal Code* to more clearly and directly protect entrance to and exit from community buildings such as schools, places of worship and community centers, in addition to existing offences that may apply in situations where such buildings are being blocked. .... 46**

**Recommendation 11**

**That the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada engage with their provincial and territorial counterparts to encourage the establishment of Crown prosecution positions dedicated to hate crimes prosecutions. .... 46**

**Recommendation 12**

**That the Minister of Public Safety and the Attorney General of Canada meet with their provincial and territorial counterparts to discuss how policing can be enhanced to deal with demonstrations where the line is crossed into criminal behaviour, including national guidelines given to police by agreement of all jurisdictions. .... 47**

**Recommendation 13**

**That the Government of Canada provide additional funding, support and training for police hate crimes units and prosecutors and assistance to local police to establish hate crimes units or bolster them. .... 47**

**Recommendation 14**

**That the Government of Canada move to create a national anti-hate fund to support initiatives at the provincial, territorial, and municipal level, which may include enhanced approaches to crime prevention and programs to reduce antisemitism. .... 47**

**Recommendation 15**

**That the Government of Canada consider removing the requirement to obtain the consent of the provincial Attorney General in order to prosecute certain hate crimes. .... 47**

**Recommendation 16**

**That the Government of Canada take steps to ban the display of symbols of terrorist organizations that are listed under the *Criminal Code*. .... 47**

**Recommendation 17**

**That the Government of Canada work with police forces across the country to develop a standardized definition of “hate crime” and “hate incident.” .... 47**

**Recommendation 18**

**That Statistics Canada work with police services across the country to improve and standardize data collection on hate crimes. .... 47**

**Recommendation 19**

**That the Government of Canada reiterate that, under section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which states that “[e]veryone has the following fundamental freedoms: freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association,” Canadians have the right to be Zionists, and that it is unacceptable in Canadian society to target Zionists or to deny them fair and equitable access to public spaces for the sole reason that they are Zionists..... 48**





# HEIGHTENED ANTISEMITISM IN CANADA AND HOW TO CONFRONT IT

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## CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

**“Across the country, Jewish students who used to wear Jewish symbols, like the Magen David, now hide them as they walk past protests, including my friends who used to wear kippot, who now instead wear baseball caps going to class. This is not because we are any less proud to be Jewish, but because our universities have allowed an environment where being openly Jewish could be a threat to our safety.**

**We've had to have our Jewish pride be inside of us because we are scared of being physically harmed by other students on our campuses.”**

Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students

**“[W]hen our Jewish citizens are targeted, it threatens the democratic ideals of equality and justice for all Canadians. We pride ourselves on being a diverse and inclusive multicultural society. In this moment, we are being put to the test. It is not an overreach to say that our shared humanity is at stake.”**

Deborah Lyons,  
Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism

Antisemitism in Canada has reached a crisis point. Jewish schools, community centers, and synagogues are being targeted by gunshots and Molotov cocktails. Swastikas are openly displayed, while mezuzahs are torn from the doorways of Jewish residences. Chants glorifying terrorist violence against Jews are heard on streets and campuses, without consequence. Jewish students are afraid to go to class.



This crisis has emerged within a broader context of rising hate towards several minority groups, set against the backdrop of resurgent geopolitical tensions, the growing force of extremism online, and other polarizing forces. The common threads linking these bigotries cannot be ignored. And yet, antisemitism in Canada today is a distinct and especially pernicious form of hate—one that calls for its own, carefully tailored response.

On 21 March 2024, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights (the committee) adopted a motion to undertake two independent studies “in view of the alarming escalation of antisemitism and Islamophobia in Canada.”<sup>1</sup>

In May 2024, the committee held three meetings on the issue of antisemitism, with a focus on university campuses. It heard from 23 witnesses, including Jewish university students, Jewish national organizations, police, and university presidents.<sup>2</sup> The committee also received a large volume of written submissions, including 78 briefs. The committee wishes to express its gratitude to all those who participated in the study, and to commend, in particular, the courage shown by the students who appeared before the committee to share their personal experiences of antisemitism on campus.

According to Statistics Canada’s 2021 census, Canadians who identify as Jewish by religion count 335,295.<sup>3</sup> With the inclusion of those who identify as Jewish by ethnicity, the Jewish population has been estimated at 404,015, representing approximately 1% of the population.<sup>4</sup>

## CHAPTER 2—WHAT WE HEARD

### 2.1. The Current Context

#### 2.1.1. The Surge in Antisemitism Since 7 October 2023

While antisemitism has a long history in Canada, it has reached new heights since Hamas’ attack on Israelis on 7 October 2023 (October 7), during which approximately

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1 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights (JUST), *Minutes of Proceedings*, 21 March 2024.

2 Appendices A and B of this report provide a list of witnesses who appeared before the committee and a list of briefs, respectively.

3 Statistics Canada, “[Religion by gender and age: Canada, provinces and territories](#),” 21 June 2023.

4 Robert Brym, “[Visible, Indigenous, and Gender Minorities among Canadian Jews, 2021](#),” *Canadian Jewish Studies*, Vol. 36, 2023, p. 22. See also: “[Jewish Populations are growing in every major Canadian city—except Toronto](#),” *The Canadian Jewish News*.

1200 Israelis were killed and over 200 taken hostage.<sup>5</sup> As Mark Sandler put it, “[o]n October 7, life completely changed for Canadian Jews.”<sup>6</sup> In 2023, B’nai Brith Canada—a leading Jewish human rights organization that has been publishing an annual audit of antisemitic incidents for over 40 years—recorded 5,791 incidents of antisemitism, the highest number in the history of the audit.<sup>7</sup> Across Canada, this represents a 109.1% increase from 2022, when 2,769 incidents were recorded.<sup>8</sup> The increase in violent incidents was particularly sharp, at 208%, with a clear spike beginning in October 2023.<sup>9</sup> The following graph shows the breakdown by region.

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5 United Nations Human Rights Council, [\*Detailed findings on attacks carried out on and after 7 October 2023 in Israel\*](#), 10 June 2024, para 21; House of Commons Library (U.K.), [\*Israel-Hamas conflict: UK response October 2023 to July 2024\*](#), 11 September 2024, p. 9; Human Rights Watch, [\*“I Can’t Erase All the Blood from My Mind”: Palestinian Armed Groups’ October 7 Assault on Israel\*](#), July 2024, p. 2.

6 JUST, [\*Brief\*](#), 27 May 2024, p. 1 (Mark J. Sandler).

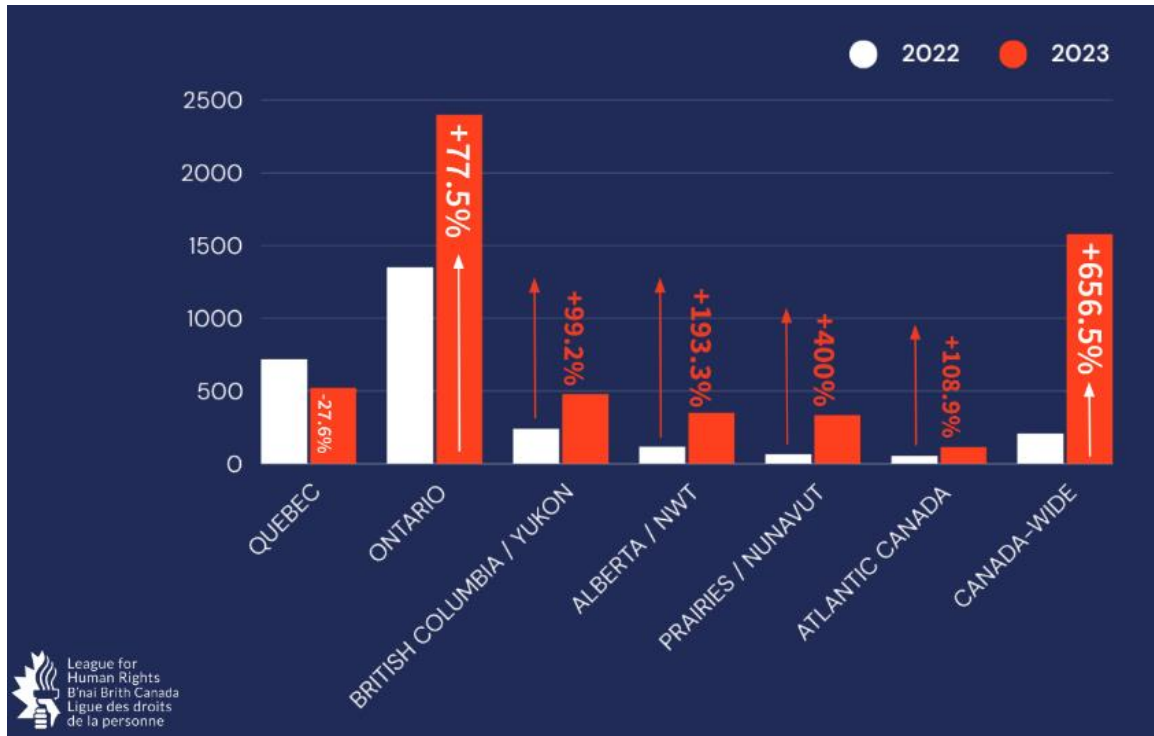
7 B’nai Brith Canada League for Human Rights, [\*Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2023\*](#), 2024, p. 4. As noted in the annual audit report, the data reflects the number of incidents reported to, and monitored by, B’nai Brith Canada through various sources, including its anti-hate hotline.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 21.



Figure 1—Antisemitic Incidents, 2022–2023



Source: B'nai Brith Canada, [Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2023](#), p. 23.

Other data presented to the committee corroborate the surge in antisemitism since October 7. For example, Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) referred to statistics indicating that Toronto has seen a 93% rise in hate crimes since October 7, the majority of which have targeted the Jewish community, while in Vancouver, reports of antisemitism have risen by 62%, with most incidents occurring after October 7.<sup>10</sup> In Ottawa, hate-related crimes and incidents rose by 20% in 2023, with Jews as the target in 27% of cases despite representing only 1.4% of the population.<sup>11</sup> The statistical evidence accords with the firsthand observations of those who appeared before the committee or provided

10 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs). See also, Toronto Police Service, “Chief Myron Demkiw provides an update on Hate Crimes and Auto Thefts in Toronto,” News Release, 18 March 2024; Vancouver Police Department, “[Israel-Hamas war fuels increase in hate crimes, protests in 2023](#),” News Release, 16 January 2024.

11 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs). See also, “[Ottawa sees 20% rise in hate incidents over past year](#),” *CBC News*, 15 January 2024.

written submissions, many of whom described a sharp escalation in antisemitism since the start of the war.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.1.2. The Climate on Campus

Many witnesses noted that the rise in antisemitism has been particularly acute on university campuses. “At ground zero of this problem are our nation’s universities, which have served as fertile grounds for the mobilization and recruitment of antisemitic hate groups,” observed Jamie Kirzner-Roberts, Senior Director, Policy and Advocacy, Simon Wiesenthal Center Canada.<sup>13</sup> “Although antisemitism has always been present in Canada, including at universities, and Jews have consistently represented the community most frequently victimized by hate crimes, I’ve seen the situation get exponentially worse since October 7,” stated Nati Pressmann, founder of the Canadian Union of Jewish Students.<sup>14</sup> “Our universities should be places of learning, critical thinking and respectful dialogue. Instead, they have become home to unsanctioned protests featuring antisemitic rhetoric.”<sup>15</sup>

The committee heard from several Jewish students and faculty members who described a toxic culture of antisemitism on campus, fueled by the inaction of university administrators (see section 2.5 of this report (Responses from Authorities)).<sup>16</sup> As a result, they recounted feeling threatened, excluded, and unsafe on campus. Similar observations were made about the current environment at public schools in briefs submitted to the committee.<sup>17</sup> In the words of Rachel Cook, a law student at the

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12 See, for example, JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual; Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen’s, Hillel Ontario); JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual; Kiran Bisla, Acting Detective Sergeant, Toronto Police Service).

13 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Jaime Kirzner-Roberts, Senior Director, Policy and Advocacy, Simon Wiesenthal Center Canada). See also, JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual).

14 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

15 Ibid.

16 See, for example, JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Rachel Cook, Student, As an Individual; Nati Pressman, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students; Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual; Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual); JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Ted Rosenberg, Doctor, As an Individual; Cary Kogan, Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics); JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (McGill Jewish Law Students Association).

17 See, for example, JUST, [Brief](#), 4 June 2024 (Jewish Educators and Families Association of Canada); JUST, [Brief](#), 26 May 2024 (Ottawa Against Antisemitism and End Jew Hatred); JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Jewish Parents of Ottawa Students Association).



University of Alberta (UAlberta), Canadian institutions “have allowed a cultural environment of antisemitism to thrive.”<sup>18</sup>

As several witnesses noted, antisemitism in Canada, and at Canadian universities in particular, is nothing new.<sup>19</sup> “[T]his country was saturated in antisemitism right up until the 1960s,” conceded Gabriel Miller, President and Chief Executive Officer of Universities Canada.<sup>20</sup> Yos Tarshish, Director of Hillel Queen’s, Hillel Ontario, explained that some Canadian universities imposed systemic barriers to entry for Jewish students via quota systems from as early as the 1920s into the 1960s.<sup>21</sup>

In his testimony, Professor Deep Saini, President and Vice-Chancellor of McGill University (McGill), acknowledged McGill’s former quota system, in effect until the 1960s, as “part of our history that we are absolutely not proud of.”<sup>22</sup> Professor Meric Gertler, President of the University of Toronto (U of T), informed the committee that the university’s Temerty Faculty of Medicine had recently apologized for imposing quotas on Jewish medical students from the 1940s to the 1960s, and had sponsored research to “shed light on this shameful historical practice.”<sup>23</sup> As Mr. Tarshish explained, a recent report on antisemitism in the Temerty faculty uncovered “really deep-seated biases that show how prejudice infiltrates even the most prestigious of academic institutions.”<sup>24</sup>

Some witnesses also touched on the more recent history of antisemitism on campus, pointing, for example, to the riot that took place at Concordia University (Concordia) in 2002 when then former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was invited to speak,<sup>25</sup> and the mob attack on Jewish students at York University in 2009.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, the evidence was clear that the situation has greatly deteriorated since October 7.

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18 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Rachel Cook, Student, As an Individual).

19 See, for example, JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students); JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Cary Kogan, Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

20 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Gabriel Miller, President and Chief Executive Officer, Universities Canada).

21 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen's, Hillel Ontario).

22 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Deep Saini, President and Vice-Chancellor, McGill University).

23 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Meric Gertler, President, University of Toronto). According to Dr. Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor of Concordia University, and Dr. Benoit-Antoine Bacon, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of British Columbia, those institutions did not impose formal quotas on Jewish students.

24 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen's, Hillel Ontario).

25 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual). See also, JUST, [Brief](#), 23 June 2024 (Hillel Concordia).

26 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen's, Hillel Ontario).

“While antisemitism is indeed an ancient hatred, its current resurgence on Canadian campuses is not merely a recurrence, but an intensification,” remarked Mr. Tarshish.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.2. Defining Antisemitism

### 2.2.1. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Definition

In 2019, Canada adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance<sup>28</sup> (IHRA)’s working definition of antisemitism as part of its anti-racism strategy.<sup>29</sup> The core text of the definition states:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.<sup>30</sup>

The definition goes on to provide examples of conduct that may be considered antisemitic, including certain forms of conduct in relation to the state of Israel. It “holds that denying Jews a right to self-determination in their homeland (anti-Zionism) is antisemitic.”<sup>31</sup>

There was broad support for this definition among those who participated in the study. Indeed, many of the most forceful recommendations made to the committee related to the further adoption and implementation of the IHRA definition of antisemitism by governments and institutions across the country, particularly at the university level.

To understand the importance of the IHRA definition, however, it is first necessary to consider the significance of anti-Zionism to the current understanding of antisemitism. This is addressed in the next section, followed by a more in-depth discussion of the IHRA definition.

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27 Ibid.

28 The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an international institution devoted to Holocaust education, remembrance and research.

29 Canadian Heritage, *Building a Foundation for Change: Canada’s Anti-Racism Strategy 2019–2022*, p. 22. The strategy was recently renewed. For more information, see *Changing Systems, Transforming Lives: Canada’s Anti-Racism Strategy 2024–2028*.

30 International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, *Working definition of antisemitism*. It is this part of the definition that is directly quoted in the 2019–2022 anti-racism strategy as well as in the 2024–2028 anti-racism strategy.

31 JUST, *Brief*, 24 May 2024 (Chabad Concordia).



## 2.2.2. Anti-Zionism as the New Antisemitism

As the war in the Middle East inflames political tensions worldwide, and particularly on university campuses, the relationship between anti-Israel or anti-Zionist sentiments and antisemitism has become a central issue.

To understand the link between anti-Zionism and antisemitism, it is critical to begin with a clear understanding of what Zionism actually means. In her testimony, Nicole Nashen, a law student at McGill, offered the following helpful definition: “Zionism should not be controversial. It is simply the belief in Jewish self-determination in our indigenous homeland, and it does not preclude the existence of a Palestinian state too.”<sup>32</sup> Nor, as several witnesses pointed out, does Zionism preclude criticism of Israel’s policies and conduct.<sup>33</sup> In Ms. Nashen’s words: “The right to peaceful protest is a fundamental tenet of democracy, and criticizing the policies and actions of the Israeli government is not inherently antisemitic.”<sup>34</sup> Rather, it is when Israel’s very existence is challenged that the line between legitimate criticism and antisemitism is crossed. As Mr. Sandler explained:

[I]f someone wants to criticize Israel's policies, its practices, the conduct of its government and so on and so forth, that's contemplated by the IHRA definition as not being antisemitic. A democracy should welcome that.

I can tell you as a member of the Jewish community that I've been sharply critical of the Israeli government where it's appropriate. The difference is when one says that all Zionists are racist, all Zionists are evil, and Israel should be wiped off the map. That transcends protected speech, and now we're in the realm of hate speech.<sup>35</sup>

Dr. Cary Kogan, a professor at the University of Ottawa and member of the Network of Engaged Canadian Academics, articulated the boundary this way:

Many on campuses say they're not antisemitic but merely anti-Zionist. You will even hear that a small minority of Jewish students and faculty share this view.

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32 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual). See also, JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (James A. Diamond, Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies, University of Waterloo, As an Individual); JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual).

33 See, for example, JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual); JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (James A. Diamond, Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies, University of Waterloo, As an Individual; Ted Rosenberg, Doctor, As an Individual; Cary Kogan, Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

34 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual).

35 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual).



Do not be fooled. Political criticism of Israel is absolutely acceptable and appropriate. Spend time in Israel and you will hear similar criticisms. A willingness to engage in criticism is core to Jewish values. However, this is not what we're seeing. Rather, calls for the violent erasure of the only Jewish state in the world and of the long history of Jewish people in this place and claims that Israel is uniquely evil or categorically unfit to determine its own destiny are racist.<sup>36</sup>

Ms. Nashen's powerful testimony about her own family history illustrates the connection between such anti-Zionist claims and antisemitism:

My grandfather was born in a refugee camp outside of Yemen in the British protectorate of Aden because Jews were being persecuted, and my grandmother was born in Morocco when Jews were being persecuted, and Israel was the only country that took them in. I would not be alive today if it were not for the State of Israel. When I see a sign on my campus saying "No Zionists allowed", that means no Jews allowed. That is terrifying.<sup>37</sup>

Some briefs also pointed to the historical link between anti-Zionism and the persecution of Jews in places such as the former Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup>

Dr. Ted Rosenberg and Ms. Nashen referred to the "three Ds" of antisemitism—"Demonization, delegitimization and double standards"—as useful indicators distinguishing mere criticism of Israel from anti-Zionist hate.<sup>39</sup>

The IHRA definition of antisemitism states the following with respect to Israel:

Manifestations [of antisemitism] might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.<sup>40</sup>

It then lists a number of examples of conduct that may, "taking into account the overall context," be considered antisemitic, including "claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor;" "[d]rawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that

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36 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Cary Kogan, Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

37 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual).

38 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (UOttawa Students Against Antisemitism); JUST, [Brief](#), 6 June 2024 (Scott Adler, Carl Ehrlich, Joshua Fogel, Lindsey Gutt, Sarah Horowitz, David Koffman, Eytan Lasry, Sarah Rugheimer, Ahouva Shulman, Kalman Weise and Laura Wiseman).

39 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Ted Rosenberg, Doctor, As an Individual); JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual).

40 International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, [Working definition of antisemitism](#).



of the Nazis,” and “[h]olding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of the state of Israel.”<sup>41</sup>

Several participants called for this definition to be broadly adopted by all sectors of Canadian society, including universities and all levels of government.<sup>42</sup> In her testimony, Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, emphasized the need to ensure that the IHRA definition is not only more broadly adopted by Canadian institutions, but also better understood and implemented. She highlighted the government’s forthcoming IRHA handbook as an important tool in this regard.<sup>43</sup>

To enhance implementation, Richard Robertson, Director of Research and Advocacy, B’nai Brith Canada, recommended amending federal research funding agreements to ensure that all federally funded research activities are conducted in consultation with the IHRA definition. Mr. Robertson also called for government funding to develop a five-year program aimed at enhancing the IHRA literacy of post-secondary students.<sup>44</sup>

Not everyone supported the IHRA definition. For example, in their briefs, Independent Jewish Voices Canada and the Jewish Faculty Network argued that the definition has been used to suppress legitimate criticism of Israel, and that it erases the identity of anti-Zionist Jews (whom they represent).<sup>45</sup>

While these organizations worried about the conflation of Jewish identity with Zionism, many others pointed out that a large majority of Jews are in fact Zionists. As noted by Dr. Kogan, a survey conducted in 2024 by Professor Robert Brym found that 91% of Canadian Jews believe that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state.<sup>46</sup> “For many

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41 Ibid.

42 See, for example, JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark J. Sandler); JUST, [Brief](#), 28 May 2024 (Canadian Women Against Antisemitism); JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Lawyers Combating Antisemitism); JUST, [Brief](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann).

43 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual).

44 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Robertson, Director, Research and Advocacy, B’nai Brith Canada).

45 JUST, [Brief](#), May 2024 (Jewish Faculty Network); Independent Jewish Voices Canada put forward the [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#) as an alternative definition that expressly excludes opposition to Zionism. JUST, [Brief](#), 9 May 2024 (Independent Jewish Voices Canada). See also, JUST, [Brief](#), 22 May 2024 (Independent Jewish Voices Concordia).

46 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Cary Kogan, Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics). Robert Brym, “[Jews and Israel 2024 Survey: Ten Further Insights](#),” *Canadian Jewish Studies*, Volume 37, 30 May 2024.

Jews, Zionism is completely linked to our Jewish identity, to Judaism,” stated Ms. Pressmann.<sup>47</sup>

In the words of Ms. Nashen:

Judaism is more than just a religion. We are also a nation, an ethnic group and a community. Our identity is a package deal that cannot be dismembered through western standards. [...] Campus protesters have simply replaced the word “Jew” with “Zionist” in order to make our exclusion and intimidation more palatable.<sup>48</sup>

Building on this view, Dr. James A Diamond, Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of Waterloo, offered the following insight:

[A]ntisemitism has always operated under different guises—whether it was anti-Judaism, for instance, in its beginnings; whether it was racism, anti-race, which antisemitism really culminated in during the Second World War during the Holocaust; or whether it was economics. [...] The way I see it, what's happening in the academy and what's happening with these encampments is that antisemitism has now taken the form of anti-Israel, anti-Zionism, and it's been legitimized that way.<sup>49</sup>

As Ms. Pressmann explained, “[a]ntisemitism has always been a conspiracy myth. It puts the Jew in the position of what is considered evil in society.” Jews today are thus “put as the oppressor, which is what is considered evil in our society.”<sup>50</sup>

While recognizing that the views of the Jewish community are not monolithic, the committee heard persuasive evidence and analysis suggesting that anti-Zionism is but a more recent form of antisemitism.<sup>51</sup> It agrees, furthermore, that the IHRA definition is “the best definition on antisemitism available as it captures the shifting nature of this unique and pervasive form of hatred.”<sup>52</sup>

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47 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

48 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual).

49 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (James A. Diamond, Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies, University of Waterloo, As an Individual). See also, JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual); JUST, [Brief](#), 24 May 2024 (Chabad Concordia).

50 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

51 See, for example, JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (James A. Diamond, Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies, University of Waterloo, As an Individual); JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual).

52 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Secure Canada).



## 2.3. Recent Manifestations of Antisemitism

Throughout the study, the committee heard deeply disturbing evidence detailing recent antisemitic incidents in Canada. While a comprehensive review of such incidents is beyond the scope of this report, the committee feels that hearing the experiences of those most directly affected by antisemitism is critical to grasping the full extent of the problem. What follows, therefore, is a description of some of the most concerning examples of antisemitism heard throughout the study.

### 2.3.1. Physical Violence, Threats, Harassment and Vandalism

Perhaps the most alarming evidence of antisemitism heard by the committee related to physical violence, threats, harassment and vandalism directed towards Jewish institutions and individuals. While some of these occurrences predated October 7, many more took place in the weeks and months after Hamas' attack. As Mr. Marceau recounted, in Montreal, Jewish schools were targeted by gunshots and Molotov cocktails were thrown at Jewish synagogues and community centres, while in Toronto, Jewish schools were targeted by bomb threats.<sup>53</sup> In Ottawa, the committee heard about a bomb plot allegedly targeting the Jewish community which led to the arrest of two minors in the fall of 2023.<sup>54</sup>

Mr. Marceau and Mr. Sandler recommended the creation of safe access legislation (otherwise known as "bubble legislation") at both the provincial and federal level to protect Jewish schools, synagogues, and community buildings, similar to what has been passed in the health care field.<sup>55</sup>

In the university context, Ms. Pressmann told the committee that over five mezuzahs had been torn down in one of the residence buildings at Queen's University (Queen's).<sup>56</sup> According to Mr. Tarshish, rocks were thrown through the window of a student who hosted a Jewish event at Western University.<sup>57</sup> In yet another example, a Jewish

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53 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs). Shortly after Mr. Marceau testified before the committee, shots were fired at a Jewish girls' elementary school in Toronto: Adam Carter, "[Rally held outside Toronto Jewish school after shooting](#)," *CBC News*, 27 May 2024.

54 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Jewish Parents of Ottawa Students Association); JUST, [Brief](#), May 2024 (Hillel Ottawa).

55 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark J. Sandler); JUST, [Brief](#), 14 June 2024 (Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs).

56 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students). A mezuzah is an encased parchment scroll inscribed with a Jewish prayer and affixed to the doorpost of Jewish homes.

57 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen's, Hillel Ontario).

student's mural that called for peace after October 7 was defaced with threats, including “I'm going to kill you.”<sup>58</sup>

The committee also heard evidence of Jewish students being directly attacked based on their identity. In one notable example, a professor from Concordia came to McGill and screamed at Jewish students, “Go back to Poland, sharmuta.”<sup>59</sup> The experiences of Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) student Laura Barkel—relayed via a brief—stood out as especially troubling.

At the first anti-Israel protest following October 7th, a fellow TMU student identified me as a Jew, grabbed my arm, yanked me back, and launched into an outburst of vile antisemitic slurs. He said to me, “It's too bad Hitler didn't finish his job, or you and your family would all be dead”.

The week following, without any provocation, a woman approached me, spat in my face and yelled “Get out of here, you dirty Jew”, wielded her book as a weapon, struck me on the cheek, and forcefully pushed me off the sidewalk.<sup>60</sup>

According to Ms. Barkel, after reporting the incident, she did not receive any follow up from student support services, and the perpetrator remained on campus. She went on:

After speaking out, I became circulated online as the devil behind TMU's pro-Israel community. Online harassment from peers and classmates has become disturbingly common, with death threats, graphic images, and derogatory comments flooding my social media and email inboxes daily.<sup>61</sup>

There was also evidence of violent clashes between student groups on some university campuses. For example, several witnesses described an altercation that occurred between Jewish students attempting to raise awareness of the Israeli hostage crisis and pro-Palestinian activists on 8 November 2023 at Concordia.<sup>62</sup> According to Michael Eshayek, a second year student at Concordia who was present that day, Jewish students were “harassed, threatened and physically accosted” and were subjected to shouts of

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58 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deidre Butler, Associate Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

59 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen's, Hillel Ontario). As Mr. Tarshish explained in his testimony, sharmuta “is an Arabic derogatory curse-word.”

60 JUST, [Brief](#), 17 June 2024 (Laura Barkel).

61 Ibid.

62 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual; Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual); JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor, Concordia University); JUST, [Brief](#), 24 May 2024 (Chana Leah Natanblut); JUST, [Brief](#), 13 June 2024 (Hillel Concordia).



“Go back to Poland” and “Kike,” among other slurs. Mr. Eshayek himself was threatened: “You'd better get off campus or you will not get to see tomorrow.”<sup>63</sup>

In another incident recounted by Mr. Eshayek,

Jewish students in the Hillel club-room, which is the only Jewish club-room on campus, were harassed by masked individuals who were banging on the walls and chanting, “All Zionists are racists. All Zionists are terrorists. Again, Jewish students were trapped and traumatized.”<sup>64</sup>

Further hostile encounters occurred at the protest encampments that sprung up on campuses across the country in the spring of 2024. Upon visiting the protest encampment at McGill, Mr. Eshayek was approached and told to “Go back to Europe,” to which he responded that his family was from Iraq. He was then told, “So go back to Iraq,” despite the fact that Jews have long been expelled from Iraq and other Arab countries.<sup>65</sup> Mr. Eshayek recounted coming home from the encampment to find

a full three-minute video about me, and pictures of me and videos of me on Instagram with more than 100,000 views, which had been posted by the pro-Palestinian, pro-Hamas students saying that I'm dangerous, that I'm an ex-IDF soldier and that if you see me on the street to call the police. I'm an international student, so they told people to file complaints against me with the immigration system so it would not renew my study permit or my student visa.<sup>66</sup>

Dr. Diamond described his encounter with the protest encampment at the U of T as follows:

A large group of what can only be described as masked thugs blocked my movement and maniacally and menacingly screamed obscenities at me such as “go back to your country”; “you will never get by me”; followed by a string of vulgar expletives unworthy of repeating.<sup>67</sup>

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63 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual).

64 Ibid. This incident was also mentioned by Graham Carr (see JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024) and Hillel Concordia (see JUST, [Brief](#), 13 June 2024).

65 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual).

66 [Ibid.](#)

67 Excerpt from an email sent to University of Toronto by Dr. Diamond. JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024.

“It was humiliating,” he told the committee.<sup>68</sup>

Such accounts of violence and intimidation were not limited to university campuses. In a brief submitted jointly by Ottawa Against Antisemitism and End Jew Hatred, Lisa Levitan relayed the horrific violence occurring in public schools, including students being shoved into lockers, spat on, threatened with a knife, called a “dirty Jew,” and told, after being pushed to the muddy floor, to “taste what their Grandparents tasted” in the Holocaust.<sup>69</sup>

### 2.3.2. Expressions of Hate

As the evidence indicates, those perpetuating physical violence and threats against the Jewish community have been emboldened by a climate in which antisemitic rhetoric has been allowed to proliferate, often under the pretext of freedom of expression.<sup>70</sup>

This is not to question the importance of upholding the freedom of expression of students and other members of the public, which, as was broadly affirmed by the participants in this study, is beyond dispute. It is about ensuring a safe and respectful environment on campus. In the words of Dr. Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor of Concordia:

Canadian universities embody academic freedom, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. They should be places of civil and evidence-informed reflection and debate. They also need to be places where people—above all, our students—feel safe and where everyone can participate in campus life without fear of intimidation and harassment.<sup>71</sup>

Many of those who testified or submitted briefs felt that in the current context, free speech is too often crossing the line into hate speech. As Hillel Concordia put it in their brief: “When protest or protected free speech leads to violence and physical intimidation of students, then things have gone way too far for an institution in a

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68 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (James A. Diamond, Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies, University of Waterloo, As an Individual). On the other hand, some Jewish students who have participated in the protest encampments asserted that they have been “verbally harassed, physically assaulted, and shunned because of our political beliefs and activism.” See JUST, [Brief](#), 22 May 2024 (Independent Jewish Voices Concordia).

69 JUST, [Brief](#), 26 May 2024 (Ottawa Against Antisemitism and End Jew Hatred). For another example of public school violence, see JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Neil G. Oberman, Attorney, As an Individual).

70 JUST, [Brief](#), 7 June 2024 (Leah Ross and David Matas).

71 Just, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor, Concordia University). See also JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Deep Saini, President and Vice Chancellor, McGill University). Professor Saini noted that “freedom of expression must be exercised with respect.”



democratic country to accept.”<sup>72</sup> Mr. Sandler went further, pointing to “the confusion, and often deliberate obfuscation, of the distinction between protected speech and hate speech, so as to immunize those who engage in hate speech or hate activities from accountability.”<sup>73</sup> Having heard countless examples of antisemitic symbols, signs, statements and chants being displayed or voiced with impunity, especially on campus, the committee shares these concerns.

In some cases, these expressions of hate have overtly targeted Jews. For example, the committee heard of swastikas being displayed on campuses,<sup>74</sup> calls of “death to the Jews” being heard in front of a Jewish school in Montreal,<sup>75</sup> and students praising the Holocaust.<sup>76</sup>

At other times, as discussed in the previous section, expressions of antisemitic hate have come coded in the more politically palatable form of anti-Zionism, such as signs saying “No Zionists Allowed” and chants of “All Zionists are racists. All Zionists are terrorists.”<sup>77</sup> Indeed, every student who appeared before the committee affirmed having heard the claim that the state of Israel is a racist endeavour<sup>78</sup>—an antisemitic statement according to the IHRA definition.

### 2.3.2.1. Glorification of Terrorism and Genocide

Some of the most painful moments for the students who appeared before the committee came when their peers expressed support for Hamas in the wake of its brutal attack on Israeli civilians. Even before Israel responded to the attack, Ms. Pressmann told the committee, students at Queen’s shared online posts “that celebrated the killings and

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72 JUST, [Brief](#), 13 June 2024 (Hillel Concordia).

73 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual). See also JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (John Rosen).

74 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Rachel Cook, Student, As an Individual); JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deidre Butler, Associate Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics); JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Queens Coalition Against Antisemitism).

75 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs).

76 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students); JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual).

77 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual); JUST, [Brief](#), 24 May 2024 (Chabad Concordia); JUST, [Brief](#), 13 June 2024 (Startup Nation McGill).

78 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual; Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students; Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual; Rachel Cook, Student, As an Individual).



purported to justify Hamas's barbarity as resistance in decolonization.”<sup>79</sup> “I will never forget hearing, on October 8, the chant, ‘There are no civilians,’” remarked Ms. Cook.<sup>80</sup>

Mr. Eshayek recounted how, on 8 October 2023, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights Concordia posted online that “the resistance” in Gaza had led a “heroic attack against the occupation.”<sup>81</sup> The committee heard that this group has faced no repercussions, despite repeated instances of antisemitism on campus.<sup>82</sup>

Nor has such rhetoric been limited to university campuses. For example, Mr. Marceau recounted:

On Parliament Hill, the very heart of Canadian democracy, on April 18, we heard praises for October 7, such as [...] “Oct. 7 is proof that we are almost free. Long live Oct. 7, long live the resistance, long live the intefadeh, long live every form of resistance.”<sup>83</sup>

As Ms. Pressmann explained, many people hear such calls not only as glorifying October 7, but also as condoning a longer history of terrorist violence against Jews, and implicitly calling for its continuation:

We frequently hear, “There is only one solution! Intifada revolution!” For Jews, the Intifada was a series of suicide bombings that claimed the lives of up to 1,400 Israelis. Israelis like me, and the children of Israelis, grew up learning how to stay away from unattended baggage in case it was a bomb.<sup>84</sup>

In some cases, the incitement to violence has been more explicit. One of the most disturbing examples of hate speech discussed before the committee involved the controversial Imam Adil Charkaoui, who, during a speech at a Montreal protest on 28 October 2023, declared in Arabic: “Allah, take care of these Zionist aggressors. Allah, deal with the enemies of the people of Gaza. Allah, identify them all, then exterminate them. And spare none of them.”<sup>85</sup> Mr. Marceau told the committee he was

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79 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

80 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Rachel Cook, Student, As an Individual).

81 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual).

82 JUST, [Brief](#), 13 June 2024 (Hillel Concordia).

83 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs).

84 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

85 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs).



“flabbergasted” by the decision not to prosecute Mr. Charkaoui for a hate speech offence in this case.<sup>86</sup>

It was in this context that the students described their horror at campus protest chants such as “resistance is justified,” “globalize the intifada,” and “from the river to the sea,” Palestine shall be free. With regard to the latter slogan, Ms. Pressmann explained: “To me, it means the annihilation of the State of Israel and a complete denial of historical fact about Jews belonging to the State of Israel.”<sup>87</sup> In the words of Mr. Eshayek, “[t]hese chants are threatening and a call for the genocide of the Jewish people over and over again.”<sup>88</sup>

When asked whether such chants are antisemitic, the presidents of McGill, U of T and the University of British Columbia (UBC) affirmed that they can be considered antisemitic in the current campus context.<sup>89</sup> The president of Concordia stated that “they're reprehensible and intimidating when chanted on campuses.”<sup>90</sup>

### 2.3.2.2. Intersections with Gender and Sexuality

For many, attempts to cast doubt on reports of sexual assault against Israeli women during the Hamas attack have added insult to injury.<sup>91</sup> According to Ms. Pressmann, student groups at Queen’s, McMaster University and the UAlberta all shared posts accusing Israel of fabricating these reports. She noted that her friends and fellow members of the Canadian Union of Jewish Students were subjected to these posts while their own young female family members were still in Hamas captivity.<sup>92</sup>

In their brief, Canadian Women Against Antisemitism discussed these denials as part of a broader trend whereby antisemitism directed against women intersects with sexual violence and misogyny.<sup>93</sup> “[P]aradoxically, we have seen at many of these protests and encampments that there is both a denial of the sexual violence that occurred on Oct. 7

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86 [Ibid.](#)

87 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

88 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual).

89 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Deep Saini, President and Vice-Chancellor, McGill University; Meric Gertler, President, University of Toronto; Benoit-Antoine Bacon, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of British Columbia).

90 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor, Concordia University).

91 See, for example, JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Rachel Cook, Student, As an Individual; Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

92 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

93 JUST, [Brief](#), 28 May 2024 (Canadian Women Against Antisemitism).

and calls for it to be repeated,” they observed.<sup>94</sup> Their brief recounts several alarming examples of hate speech that pairs antisemitism with misogyny, including “a grade 6 girl who was told that she should get raped by Hitler, that all Jews should die and that she should be the next to die.”<sup>95</sup>

Canadian Women Against Antisemitism also described how sexual assault centres in Canada have sometimes failed to stand up for Israeli survivors of sexual violence, leading to further trauma and a lack of safe space for Jewish women in this country.<sup>96</sup>

Ms. Pressman described a similar sense of exclusion as a queer Jew, noting that the queer club on campus posts images supporting October 7. As a result, she told the committee, “I don’t feel safe in queer spaces.”<sup>97</sup> Dr. Deidre Butler, Associate Professor and member of the Network of Engaged Canadian Academics, elaborated on this point:

What's happened is that [Jewish LGBTQ+ students are] excluded from progressive spaces. You're forced into a loyalty test of declaring you're not a Zionist and that you repudiate the State of Israel. We know these are the students who are facing real challenges in terms of their social integration and mental health. [...] Their exclusion from those spaces is particularly painful and egregious.<sup>98</sup>

### 2.3.3. Disavowal of Jewish Symbols, Events and Organizations

At the same time as Jews are being excluded from progressive spaces, several witnesses described campus policies and campaigns seeking to remove, block or disavow Jewish symbols, events and organizations. For example, Ms. Cook recounted being denied her request to include a menorah in the annual holiday decorations at the UAlberta faculty of law. Rather than adding the menorah, the administration decided to remove the Christmas trees.<sup>99</sup>

Others spoke of events being blocked or cancelled. For example, Mr. Eshayek recounted how, at McGill, an event featuring Israeli reservists was moved to a Jewish community building where protestors gathered to block access to the building, leaving attendees

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94 Ibid., p. 2.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

98 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deidre Butler, Associate Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

99 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Rachel Cook, Student, As an Individual).



trapped inside for hours.<sup>100</sup> In another incident, protestors blocked access to a classroom where an Israeli scholar was invited to speak about the importance of Arab representation in the Israeli Knesset.<sup>101</sup>

Ms. Pressmann told the committee that there was no commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day at Queen's this year because, "[w]e were told it wasn't safe for us," despite taking "every precaution possible that they told us to take."<sup>102</sup> In other cases, the committee heard that Jewish student groups were asked to pay for their own security when hosting certain events.<sup>103</sup> In his testimony, Dr. Carr acknowledged that certain events, both pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian, had been cancelled at Concordia due to concerns they would lead to "a climate of intimidation."<sup>104</sup>

The committee also heard evidence about campaigns to defund or remove Jewish organizations such as Hillel from campus.<sup>105</sup> In one example provided by Mr. Tarshish, a York University union provided materials to its members which included a recommendation that Hillel be barred from campus. To Mr. Tarshish, such efforts to disqualify Jewish student groups represent "the most pernicious form of antisemitism that we're seeing on campuses." In his words: "The mask has slipped. We have gone from, 'We need a ceasefire' to, 'Hillel must be removed from campus, because Hillel is a Zionist cultural institution.'"<sup>106</sup>

#### **2.3.4. Politicization of the Academy and Professional Discrimination**

As many witnesses and briefs pointed out, hate and exclusion on campus have been spurred on by anti-Zionist dogma within the academy.<sup>107</sup> For example, the committee heard about professors who have made statements, signed letters and participated in

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100 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual).

101 Ibid. The Knesset is the Israeli Parliament.

102 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

103 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual); JUST, [Brief](#), May 2024 (Hillel Ottawa).

104 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor, Concordia University).

105 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen's, Hillel Ontario; Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual); JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Network of Engaged Canadian Academics); JUST, [Brief](#), 12 June 2024 (Jewish Academic Alliance of BC); JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Uottawa Students Against Antisemitism).

106 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen's, Hillel Ontario).

107 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Allied Voices for Israel).

protests justifying or even praising Hamas' terrorist attack on Israel.<sup>108</sup> Equally worrying were accounts of anti-Zionist indoctrination within the classroom. There was evidence of professors singling out Jewish students,<sup>109</sup> using course materials rife with misinformation about Jews and Israel,<sup>110</sup> awarding marks for student participation in pro-Palestinian demonstrations,<sup>111</sup> and "intentionally using their classrooms to traffic in antisemitic tropes about Israel, Jews, and Israelis often in courses that are unrelated to the topic of the Middle East."<sup>112</sup>

"We see radicalized faculty members who seek to indoctrinate students rather than engage in a discussion where controversial topics are discussed," remarked Mr. Sandler. As he and others emphasized, such approaches run counter to the importance of critical thinking and respectful dialogue among students.<sup>113</sup> To preserve student dialogue on campus, Mr. Sandler relayed how he built on the efforts of the Muslim and Jewish law associations at the University of Ottawa (UOttawa) to establish the National Respective Dialogue Initiative.<sup>114</sup> Over 2500 members of the legal community have signed an open letter supporting this initiative.<sup>115</sup>

In addition to the actions of individual professors, the committee heard about unions and academic departments making or signing onto anti-Israel statements, such as the one put forward by the Palestinian Feminist Collective, which accuses Israel of being entirely responsible for the war in the Middle East.<sup>116</sup> The committee heard that local 3903 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), a union of teaching

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108 See, for example, JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (McGill Jewish Law Students Association Executive Team); JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Allied Voices for Israel); JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual).

109 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual); Jaime Kirzner-Roberts, Senior Director, Policy and Advocacy, Simon Wiesenthal Center Canada).

110 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deidre Butler, Associate Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

111 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

112 Ibid., pp. 1–2.

113 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual). See also, JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (James A. Diamond, Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies, University of Waterloo, As an Individual); JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen's, Hillel Ontario).

114 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual).

115 Ibid.; Mark Sandler, [An Open Letter From Canada's Law Community](#), 31 October 2023.

116 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Network of Engaged Canadian Academics); JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Matthew Light).



assistants at York University, provided its members with a toolkit on how to raise the issue of Palestine in the classroom.<sup>117</sup>

According to Dr. Butler, such position-taking erodes viewpoint diversity and academic freedom, which is “supposed to encourage the exploration of challenging ideas without fear of reprisal.”<sup>118</sup> Concerns were also expressed about the negative impact of demands to boycott and divest from Israeli institutions on academic freedom.<sup>119</sup> When asked if they oppose the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement on campus, the presidents of U of T, UBC, and Concordia all answered yes.<sup>120</sup> Professor Saini of McGill said that he personally finds it “offensive,” but that it is up to the university’s governing bodies to make policy decisions on the issue.<sup>121</sup>

To promote viewpoint diversity and academic freedom, the Network of Engaged Canadian Academics recommended adopting and enforcing political neutrality at the department level, funding ten Canada Research Chairs dedicated to research on Jewish identity and antisemitism (defined to include anti-Zionism), and convening a national committee on academic freedom.<sup>122</sup>

Some witnesses shone a light on the discrimination Jewish faculty are facing in the current campus environment. Dr. Butler spoke of a national student group calling for anonymous tips to “identify faculty members, instructors and courses that include ‘Zionist narratives’ so they can ‘keep our campus safe from Zionist perspectives.’”<sup>123</sup> Dr. Rosenberg told the committee that he had resigned from his position as an assistant professor of medicine in January 2024 because UBC, like many other institutions across the country, had “allowed naked Jew hatred to creep in, which has now become

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117 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen's, Hillel Ontario). CUPE 3903 Palestine Solidarity Working Group, [A Toolkit on Teaching Palestine](#).

118 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deidre Butler, Associate Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics). See also her [Brief](#).

119 Ibid; See also, JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (James A. Diamond, Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies, University of Waterloo, As an Individual; Cary Kogan, Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

120 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Meric Gertler, President, University of Toronto; Benoit-Antoine Bacon, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of British Columbia; Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor, Concordia University).

121 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Deep Saini, President and Vice-Chancellor, McGill University).

122 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

123 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deidre Butler, Associate Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

systemic.”<sup>124</sup> According to the Jewish Medical Association of British Columbia, he is not the only one.<sup>125</sup>

Dr. Diamond affirmed that Jewish academics have indeed faced discrimination due to the current climate on campus, including “termination of scientific collaborations, cancellation of conference invitations, refusal to consider scholarly submissions to journals, rejections of promotion evaluations and withdrawals of offers for academic appointments, among many other instances.”<sup>126</sup>

### 2.3.5. Online Hate, Extremism and Foreign Actors

The committee is particularly concerned by the allegation that antisemitism on campus and beyond is being supported by extremist and foreign actors. According to Sheryl Saperia, Chief Executive Officer of Secure Canada, “[t]here is a wide acceptance that the protests from the beginning were much too organized and much too well-funded to be these organic, spontaneous, local demonstrations.”<sup>127</sup> She noted that the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism & Policy has documented billions of dollars in foreign funding to American institutions, much of it from authoritarian regimes.<sup>128</sup>

The committee also heard about the presence of “outside agitators” at the encampments and other demonstrations on campus.<sup>129</sup> For example, Dr. Carr noted that the two individuals who were arrested at Concordia following the altercation on 8 November 2023 were from outside the university community.<sup>130</sup> It was in this context that the committee heard calls for greater transparency with respect to the sources of university funding, as well as the funding supporting campus protests.<sup>131</sup>

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124 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Ted Rosenberg, Doctor, As an Individual).

125 JUST, [Brief](#), 11 June 2024 (Jewish Medical Association of British Columbia).

126 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (James A. Diamond, Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies, University of Waterloo, As an Individual). See also JUST, [Brief](#), 6 June 2024 (Scott Adler et al.); JUST, [Brief](#), 11 June 2024 (Jewish Medical Association of British Columbia).

127 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Sheryl Saperia, Chief Executive Officer, Secure Canada).

128 Ibid. See also JUST, [Brief](#), 7 June 2024 (Temple Sinai Congregation of Toronto).

129 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual).

130 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor, Concordia University).

131 JUST, [Brief](#), 4 June 2024 (Human Rights Action Group); JUST, [Brief](#), 9 May 2024 (Sophie Kraft).



Some witnesses also advocated for a tougher stance towards extremist organizations who are “operating with impunity” in Canada,<sup>132</sup> as well as non-profit and charitable organizations with ties to such groups.<sup>133</sup> The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, which was repeatedly identified as problematic, was listed as a terrorist entity under the *Criminal Code* on 19 June 2024.<sup>134</sup> Some said the same should be done for the Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network.<sup>135</sup> The Samidoun network was listed as a terrorist entity on 15 October 2024. Robert Johnson, Deputy Chief of Police for the Toronto Police Service told the committee that the list of banned organizations “should be updated as many new groups have surfaced since October 7.”<sup>136</sup> Mr. Marceau also suggested banning the display of symbols of listed terrorist organizations.<sup>137</sup>

The committee also heard that social media is being used as a tool to coordinate and promote antisemitic campaigns, underscoring the need to combat online hate.<sup>138</sup> As Mr. Sandler explained: “We see the misuse of social media by circulating misinformation, antisemitic tropes and historical distortions. This misuse is orchestrated in many instances by extremists and foreign governments.”<sup>139</sup> Conversely, the committee heard that antisemitism “is a key entry point for radicalizing, joining extremist groups and mobilizing to violence,”<sup>140</sup> and that “hate crimes can be precursors to violent extremism.”<sup>141</sup>

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132 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual). See also JUST, [Brief](#), 7 June 2024 (Temple Sinai Congregation of Toronto).

133 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Secure Canada).

134 Public Safety Canada, “[Government of Canada lists the IRGC as a terrorist entity](#),” News Release, 19 June 2024.

135 See, for example, JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Sheryl Saperia, Chief Executive Officer, Secure Canada); JUST, [Brief](#), 14 June 2024 (Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs); JUST, [Brief](#), 7 June 2024 (Temple Sinai Congregation of Toronto); JUST, [Brief](#), May 2024 (Hillel Ottawa).

136 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Robert Johnson, Deputy Chief of Police, Toronto Police Service).

137 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs).

138 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deidre Butler, Associate Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics; Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs).

139 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual).

140 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Sheryl Saperia, Chief Executive Officer, Secure Canada).

141 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Kiran Bisla, Acting Detective Sergeant, Toronto Police Service).



To address online hate targeting the Jewish community, Deputy Chief Robert Johnson and CIJA expressed their support for the passage of Bill C-63 (Online Harms Act) which is currently before the House of Commons.<sup>142</sup>

## 2.4. The Legal and Policy Framework

Canada has several existing legal tools to combat discrimination and hate, including antisemitism. Sections 318 and 319 of the *Criminal Code* set out certain offences for hate propaganda targeting an “identifiable group,” which includes a section of the public distinguished by race, religion, or national or ethnic origin.<sup>143</sup>

Section 318(1) makes it an offence to advocate or promote genocide, defined as certain acts committed with the intent to destroy all or part of an identifiable group. Under section 318(3), proceedings for this offence can only be instituted with the consent of the Attorney General.

Section 319(1) makes it an offence to publicly incite hatred against an identifiable group in a way that is likely to lead to a breach of the peace.

Section 319(2) makes it an offence to wilfully promote hatred against an identifiable group, except in private conversation, while section 319(2.1) sets out a specific offence for wilfully promoting antisemitism by “condoning, denying or downplaying” the Holocaust.<sup>144</sup> The consent of the Attorney General is required for the latter two offences (s. 319(6)). A person charged with either of these offences may avail themselves of certain defences, including that “in good faith, the person expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text” (s. 319(3)(b)).

The *Criminal Code* also sets out an offence for committing mischief related to certain forms of property that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, religion, or national or ethnic origin, among other factors (s. 430(4.1)). In addition, evidence that

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142 JUST, *Evidence*, 27 May 2024 (Robert Johnson, Deputy Chief of Police, Toronto Police Service); JUST, *Brief*, 14 June 2024 (Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs). [Bill C-63, An Act to enact the Online Harms Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Human Rights Act and An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts](#), 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> Session.

143 *Criminal Code*, R.S.C. 1985, C-46.

144 The offence of wilfully promoting antisemitism was added to the *Criminal Code* in 2022 by the *Budget Implementation Act, 2022, No. 1*.



an offence was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate is an aggravating factor upon sentencing under section 718.2(a)(i).

Sections 2(a) and 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Canadian Rights and Freedoms* (the Charter) provide constitutional protection against government violations of freedom of religion and equality rights, respectively. On the other hand, laws against hate speech risk infringing section 2(b) of the Charter, which protects freedom of expression.<sup>145</sup>

In addition to the above laws, non-governmental organizations such as universities often have their own policies against hate speech and discrimination. However, as discussed in the next section, the committee heard evidence that these policies do not always adequately address antisemitism as a distinct form of hate on campus.

## 2.5. Responses from Authorities

The evidence underscored the failure of university administrators, police, and other authorities to respond effectively to the rising tide of antisemitism in Canada. Many felt that this inaction has led to the normalization of antisemitism, emboldening bad actors and allowing hate to flourish, particularly in public schools and on university campuses.<sup>146</sup>

### 2.5.1. Universities

The evidence about universities was particularly disconcerting. Ms. Kirzner-Roberts described the situation this way:

With respect to university administrations, we have seen, unfortunately, for the most part that they have leaned into political cowardice. We have seen an abject failure to hold accountable students, faculty and staff who have perpetrated the most ugly of hatreds, who have glorified the most ugly of terrorist acts. We have seen an effect on our campuses of a failure to make the strategic decisions to ensure that campuses remain safe for Jewish students, a failure of university leadership.<sup>147</sup>

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145 [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), Part I of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (U.K.), 1982, c. 11.

146 See, for example, JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Rachel Cook, Student, As an Individual; Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual; Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students); JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Allied Voices for Israel); JUST, [Brief](#), 5 June 2024 (Ottawa Against Antisemitism and End Jew Hatred); JUST, [Brief](#), 4 June 2024 (Jewish Educators and Families Association of Canada).

147 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Jaime Kirzner-Roberts, Senior Director, Policy and Advocacy, Simon Wiesenthal Center Canada).

The resounding message from those who testified or submitted briefs was that universities are failing to enforce their own policies to protect Jewish students on campus. As just one example, Mr. Eshayek told the committee that, at Concordia, protestors have not faced repercussions for covering their faces with masks, despite this being contrary to the university's campus safety policy. Nor has the university taken disciplinary measures against known instigators of antisemitism on campus.<sup>148</sup> In Ms. Lyons' words: "What we have seen is a reluctance to implement their own codes of conduct even when they relate to safety issues. The tools exist, and post-secondary institutions have a duty to act."<sup>149</sup>

Ms. Pressmann and Ms. Nashen underscored the need for universities to take action to protect Jewish students even when the conduct in question does not rise to the level of a hate crime under the *Criminal Code*.<sup>150</sup> "The threshold for action should not be hate speech but rather speech that creates a toxic environment," stated the Network of Engaged Canadian Academics, in their brief.<sup>151</sup>

The committee heard that too often, students and faculty who have raised concerns about antisemitic conduct have been left without appropriate recourse or support, if not ignored or dismissed entirely.<sup>152</sup> "When [students] try to use university support and try to use university staff to support them, they're not helped at all and they're pointed in the wrong direction multiple times," explained Ms. Pressmann.<sup>153</sup> She emphasized that universities "need to be very clear about how antisemitic incidents should be dealt with so that we're not put in the situation where, for months, we're being tossed around to different departments."<sup>154</sup>

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148 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual).

149 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual). See also, JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs); JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual).

150 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual; Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

151 JUST, [Brief](#), 23 May 2024 (Network of Engaged Canadian Academics), p. 1.

152 See, for example, JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual; Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students); JUST, [Brief](#), 9 May 2024 (Sophie Kraft); JUST, [Brief](#), 31 May 2024 (David Weitzner); JUST, [Brief](#), 5 June 2024 (Miriam Kestecher); JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (UOttawa Students Against Antisemitism).

153 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

154 Ibid.



In other cases, concerns about antisemitism have been downplayed or simply dismissed by those in power. For example, Dr. Butler recounted an incident in which a student complained that his lab partner had called him a “dirty Jew,” only to be told by his professor to stop complaining.<sup>155</sup> According to Dr. Rosenberg, the Dean of UBC refused to meet with him and over 280 other physicians who had written to express their concerns about a toxic antisemitic environment on campus. “Our concerns were illegitimate [according to the Dean],” he stated.<sup>156</sup>

In addition to facilitating a toxic culture for Jews on campus, the committee heard that inaction on the part of universities has discouraged students from reporting antisemitic incidents.<sup>157</sup> In their brief, Canadian Women Against Antisemitism recommended that all universities appoint a dedicated professional to handle hate-related complaints.<sup>158</sup> UOttawa Students Against Antisemitism added that universities should provide culturally sensitive mental health supports to Jewish students.<sup>159</sup>

The university representatives who appeared before the committee were not insensitive to these concerns. Dr. Carr informed the committee of various actions that have been taken at Concordia, including the launch, in April 2024, of “a task force against racism and identity-based violence” to “develop actionable recommendations to improve policies, training and complaint processes.”<sup>160</sup> However, Mr. Eshayek expressed his opinion that one of the task force’s three appointed co-chairs holds anti-Zionist views and opposes the IHRA definition of antisemitism, calling into question the initiative’s potential effectiveness in combatting antisemitism.<sup>161</sup>

Like Dr. Carr, Professor Saini enumerated several actions taken against antisemitism at McGill, including an initiative against Islamophobia and antisemitism that led to the implementation of 21 action items, the creation of a Jewish student affairs liaison, and specialized support services for Jewish students. Professor Saini also told the committee

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155 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deidre Butler, Associate Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

156 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Ted Rosenberg, Doctor, As an Individual).

157 Ibid.; JUST, [Brief](#), 4 June 2024 (Association des Médecins Juifs du Québec).

158 JUST, [Brief](#), 28 May 2024 (Canadian Women Against Antisemitism).

159 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (UOttawa Students Against Antisemitism).

160 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor, Concordia University).

161 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Michael Eshayek, Student, As an Individual).

that McGill has pursued court injunctions and requested police assistance to address unacceptable conduct occurring at protest encampments.<sup>162</sup>

Dr. Benoit-Antoine Bacon, President and Vice-Chancellor of UBC, described enhancements to campus security measures and consultations with Jewish student and community groups to better understand their concerns. He also highlighted working with student groups to preserve space for respectful dialogue and debate.<sup>163</sup>

In addition to initiatives described in the next section, Professor Gertler told the committee that the U of T is actively implementing the recommendations stemming from its 2020 working group on antisemitism, and that it has appointed its first assistant director for faith and anti-racism, announced a new lab for the study of global antisemitism and started “a new university-wide initiative to promote civil discourse on our campuses.”<sup>164</sup> He also spoke about the Temerty Faculty of Medicine’s efforts to address its antisemitic history, including the introduction of a new unit on antisemitism and anti-racism as part of the faculty’s professional training.<sup>165</sup>

While the university presidents indicated that some students have been suspended or expelled for antisemitic conduct,<sup>166</sup> and that disciplinary processes are underway in other cases,<sup>167</sup> the committee heard concerning evidence suggesting that the repercussions for students engaged in antisemitic conduct on campus thus far have been minimal.<sup>168</sup>

### 2.5.1.1. University Policies

Several witnesses expressed concerns regarding the inaction of administrators, as well as the exclusion of Jews and their experiences of antisemitism from university policies, in particular those relating to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI).<sup>169</sup>

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162 JUST, *Evidence*, 27 May 2024 (Deep Saini, President and Vice-Chancellor, McGill University). See *McGill University c. Association McGillienne des Professeur.e.s. de droit (AMPD) / Association of McGill Professors of Law (AMPL)*, 2024 QCCS 1761 (CanLII) (15 May 2024) [in French].

163 JUST, *Evidence*, 27 May 2024 (Benoit-Antoine Bacon, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of British Columbia).

164 JUST, *Evidence*, 27 May 2024 (Meric Gertler, President, University of Toronto).

165 Ibid.

166 Ibid.

167 Ibid; JUST, *Evidence*, 27 May 2024 (Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor, Concordia University).

168 JUST, *Evidence*, 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual).

169 These policies are also referred to in terms of “diversity, equity and inclusion” (DEI).



For example, Ms. Cook recounted that after she went public about the removal of the Christmas decorations at the UAlberta’s faculty of law (see section 2.3.3. of this report (Disavowal of Jewish Symbols, Events and Organizations)) the ensuing EDI meeting “did not include Jewish people when they were discussing what to do about a Jewish person complaining about antisemitism on campus.”<sup>170</sup> In the same vein, Dr. Rosenberg told the committee that “antisemitism or Jew hatred is not officially recognized in the DEI search engine for vulnerable groups” at UBC.<sup>171</sup>

EDI frameworks “are not speaking to Jewish people, are not speaking to antisemitism, and in fact in some cases are using an ideological framework that divides the world into black or white, victimized or victimizer, and oppressed or oppressor,” opined Dr. Kogan.<sup>172</sup> Ms. Lyons agreed. In her view,

there is no question that EDI is failing Jews in this country. EDI is failing antisemitism. It focuses on a very narrow description of marginalized, racialized or equity-seeking groups, and it does not address antisemitism at all. That has to change.<sup>173</sup>

For Ms. Cook, these failures point to a problem with EDI itself:

I think the EDI system has made the problem worse. [...] I think it can start at the top, but it also starts in institutions and in massively funding EDI programming, such that, quite literally, when I asked who decides who is in these EDI meetings—is it a percentage of population?—their response was, well, it’s the groups that deserve equity and deserve inclusion. Well, who decides that?<sup>174</sup>

Others supported strengthening EDI programs and policies through the inclusion of Jewish experiences of antisemitism.<sup>175</sup> Student leaders from the UOttawa’s faculty of law emphasized the importance of consulting with Jewish and Muslim student leadership with respect to university policies aimed at combatting hate.<sup>176</sup> There were also

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170 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Rachel Cook, Student, As an Individual).

171 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Ted Rosenberg, Doctor, As an Individual).

172 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Cary Kogan, Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

173 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual).

174 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Rachel Cook, Student, As an Individual).

175 See, for example, JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Cary Kogan, Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics; Deidre Butler, Associate Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics); JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Nicole Nashen, Student, As an Individual; Nati Pressmann, Founder, Canadian Union of Jewish Students).

176 JUST, [Brief](#), 26 May 2024 (Arjun Gupta, Student Leader and Convenor; Ferdous Hasan, Co-President, Muslim Law Students’ Association; and Shayna Horvath, President, Jewish Law Students’ Association).

widespread calls for antisemitism training for university administrators, faculty members, legal counsel and especially for those holding EDI positions.<sup>177</sup>

The university representatives who testified before the committee all agreed that EDI policies and programs must include the Jewish community.<sup>178</sup> In terms of steps already taken, Professor Gertler informed the committee that the U of T's equity office has "broadened its mandate to explicitly recognize antisemitism as a form of discrimination requiring concerted action," and that the university requires all equity staff to undergo antisemitism training.<sup>179</sup> Speaking on behalf of McGill, Professor Saini stated that "as antisemitism has become much more obvious and explicit in our society, including on our campuses, we have been calling it out specifically." He added that the university would continue to consider whether their EDI policies should explicitly recognize specific groups going forward.<sup>180</sup>

### 2.5.2. Law Enforcement and Reform

The evidence also underscored the failure of police and prosecutors to fully enforce Canadian laws against antisemitism, including hate-motivated offences under the *Criminal Code*. "There are laws that exist in our country and in our provinces that can address these issues but which have not been applied," stated Dr. Butler.<sup>181</sup>

For example, the committee heard that Jewish individuals have been publicly harassed by protestors on Canadian streets and campuses while law enforcement officers stand by.<sup>182</sup> Deep concern was also expressed about the failure to prosecute Imam Adil Charkaoui for hate speech under the *Criminal Code*, as discussed earlier in section 2.3.2.1 of this report (Glorification of Terrorism and Genocide).

Mr. Sandler lamented "the underuse and inconsistent use by law enforcement and prosecution services of existing criminal law tools" to address antisemitism. He identified a lack of understanding of antisemitism, latent bias, and the weaponization of freedom of

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177 See for example, JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual; Cary Kogan, Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics); JUST, [Brief](#), 28 May 2024 (Canadian Women Against Antisemitism); JUST, [Brief](#), 4 June 2024 (Talia Klein Leighton); JUST, [Brief](#), 24 May 2024 (Chabad Concordia).

178 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024.

179 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Merik Gertler, President, University of Toronto).

180 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Deep Saini, President and Vice-Chancellor, McGill University).

181 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deidre Butler, Associate Professor, Network of Engaged Canadian Academics).

182 JUST, [Brief](#), 26 May 2024 (Council of Muslims Against Antisemitism).



expression as factors contributing to the problem.<sup>183</sup> In addition to training and education, Mr. Sandler called for designated hate crime prosecutors—a recommendation also made by Ms. Lyons<sup>184</sup>—and “a national approach that understands antisemitism, understands the criminal law tools that are available to deal with it and applies across the country.”<sup>185</sup>

Some witnesses also offered recommendations for how law and policy could be reformed to better hold perpetrators of hate accountable. Speaking on behalf of the Toronto Police Service (TPS), Deputy Chief Johnson observed “a sense of frustration around the lack of clarity as to what constitutes a hate incident as opposed to a hate crime or hate propaganda.”<sup>186</sup> To address this issue, the TPS advocated for a standardized definition of “hate crime” along with ongoing education and training for police officers.<sup>187</sup>

Kiran Bisla, Acting Detective Sergeant for the TPS, informed the committee that “[h]ate crime laws are complex because determining motivation of bias, prejudice or hate can be difficult, and context is key.” She also noted that the threshold for laying hate crime charges is very high.<sup>188</sup> To make it easier to lay hate crime charges, the TPS recommended removing the requirement to obtain the consent of the provincial Attorney General.<sup>189</sup>

Mr. Marceau and Ms. Kirzner-Roberts expressed support for Bill C-373, An Act to amend the *Criminal Code* (promotion of hatred or antisemitism),<sup>190</sup> which would eliminate, as a defence to the wilful promotion of hatred or antisemitism, the fact that a person was expressing a religious opinion.<sup>191</sup> Ms. Lyons also said she was “very interested in exploring this as an option.” She observed that the defence is being used in a way that “does not stand the ground in these difficult times.”<sup>192</sup> As already noted in section 2.3.5

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183 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual).

184 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual).

185 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark Sandler, As an Individual).

186 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Robert Johnson, Deputy Chief of Police, Toronto Police Service).

187 Ibid.

188 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Kiran Bisla, Acting Detective Sergeant, Toronto Police Service).

189 Ibid.

190 [Bill C-373, An Act to amend the Criminal Code \(promotion of hatred or antisemitism\)](#), 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> session.

191 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs; Jaime Kirzner-Roberts, Senior Director, Policy and Advocacy, Simon Wiesenthal Center Canada).

192 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual).



(Online Hate, Extremism and Foreign Actors), some support was also expressed for Bill C-63 (Online Harms Act) and for banning the display of terrorist symbols.

Detective Sergeant Bisla told the committee that the way police respond to hate-motivated incidents varies from one service to another. In Toronto, there is a dedicated hate crime unit that engages in data collection, internal training and public education programs; however, this is not the case for all police services.<sup>193</sup> The TPS recommended the creation of more such dedicated hate crime units with specialized training for investigators, explaining:

This will provide service members with the foundational knowledge of the practice of religions such as Judaism and Islam, as well as enhanced understanding of the community impact of hate crimes, and it will ensure a consistent investigative approach.<sup>194</sup>

Regarding data collection, CIJA emphasized that police hate crime data “must be standardized, reporting must be more frequent and more granular, and this data must be routinely shared with the public and with the communities facing these threats.”<sup>195</sup> Mr. Robertson added that further data about Jewish experiences on campus would be helpful.<sup>196</sup>

Finally, the importance of antisemitism education and training, particularly for police and prosecutors, was a recurring theme in the testimony related to law enforcement.<sup>197</sup> In her testimony, Ms. Lyons expressed appreciation for the funding committed in the most recent budget to improve police training on handling hate crimes.<sup>198</sup> The committee cannot overstate its agreement with these key tools to address antisemitism and ensure that perpetrators of hate crimes are held accountable by law.

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193 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Kiran Bisla, Acting Detective Sergeant, Toronto Police Service).

194 JUST, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024 (Robert Johnson, Deputy Chief of Police, Toronto Police Service).

195 JUST, [Brief](#), 14 June 2024 (Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs), p. 3.

196 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Robertson, Director, Research and Advocacy, B’nai Brith Canada).

197 See, for example, JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Mark J. Sandler); JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs); JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Secure Canada).

198 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual).



### 2.5.3. Government

While schools, universities and law enforcement agencies fall largely under provincial jurisdiction, the committee heard that the federal government still has an important role to play in combatting antisemitism in these and other institutions across Canada, especially with respect to funding, education and training.

Some witnesses emphasized the need for strong political leadership in this area, including clearer messaging from the federal government.<sup>199</sup> Attorney Neil G. Oberman opined that the current landscape of antisemitism “is a result of a void that’s been created.”<sup>200</sup> He stated, “[w]hen you send messages that aren't clear [...] [i]t creates ambiguity, it fuels the fire, it stokes TikTok and it stokes online hate.”<sup>201</sup>

There were also calls for more concrete action from those in power. “Fighting antisemitism cannot be a partisan issue,” stated Mr. Robertson.<sup>202</sup> As Mr. Oberman put it, “if we don't act now, we will not be able to stop the tide of antisemitism.”<sup>203</sup> In this vein, Bring Love suggested a national summit on antisemitism.<sup>204</sup>

On the topic of law enforcement, Mr. Marceau remarked that “[t]he justice minister must give clear direction that laws already on the books must be applied.”<sup>205</sup> He suggested that the federal government develop a “turnkey program” to provide training to police and prosecutors across the country.<sup>206</sup> Mr. Marceau also proposed improving the federal Security Infrastructure Program by following Britain’s Community Security Trust model,

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199 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs; Richard Robertson, Director, Research and Advocacy, B’nai Brith Canada).

200 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Neil G. Oberman, Attorney, As an Individual).

201 Ibid.

202 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Robertson, Director, Research and Advocacy, B’nai Brith Canada).

203 JUST, [Evidence](#), 9 May 2024 (Neil G. Oberman, Attorney, As an Individual).

204 Just, [Brief](#), 11 June 2024 (Bring Love). The most recent national summit on antisemitism was held in 2021.

205 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs). See also JUST, [Brief](#), 11 June 2024 (Bring Love).

206 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs).

which “creates a synergy between the Jewish community and law enforcement to make sure the security is dynamic and it's not simply helping institutions.”<sup>207</sup>

Regarding the situation on university campuses, Ms. Pressmann opined that the government has a role to play in holding administrations accountable, given the significant government funding they receive.<sup>208</sup> Ms. Lyons recommended establishing a national review committee “to understand the impact of increased antisemitism across campuses this past school year.”<sup>209</sup> Stand With Us Canada called for a federal review of university policies to ensure they are effectively preventing antisemitism while also safeguarding free speech and academic freedom.<sup>210</sup>

Ms. Lyons described the work being prioritized by her office, including,

collecting accurate and timely data on hate crimes and incidents, promoting and preserving Holocaust remembrance and education alongside education on contemporary antisemitism, the rise in online hate, and the situation in our post-secondary education systems.<sup>211</sup>

Regarding the latter, she told the committee that she has met with Jewish students, faculty, university administrators and provincial ministers responsible for advanced education, among others, to address the issue.<sup>212</sup> Ms. Lyons’ office is also in the final stages of producing a handbook to help university administrators, prosecutors, law enforcement bodies and others to more effectively implement the IHRA definition of antisemitism.<sup>213</sup>

Ms. Lyons also noted that most provinces have committed to Holocaust education in public schools, to be implemented beginning in the fall of 2025, with funding support

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207 Ibid. The Canadian program “help[s] Canadian communities at risk of hate-motivated crimes protect and strengthen the security of their community centres, places of worship or other institutions.” See “[Public Safety Canada, Supporting communities at risk of hate-motivated crime through an expanded Security Infrastructure Program](#),” News Release, 6 November 2023.

208 JUST, [Brief](#), 9 May 2024 (Nati Pressmann).

209 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons).

210 JUST, [Brief](#), 17 June 2024 (Stand With Us Canada).

211 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons).

212 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual).

213 JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons).



from the recent federal budget.<sup>214</sup> She stressed that this initiative should not only teach about the Holocaust but also be “tied to a better understanding of modern-day antisemitism.”<sup>215</sup> In addition to public school education, some briefs called for federal education and awareness-raising campaigns at the community level.<sup>216</sup>

While Ms. Lyons expressed her appreciation for recent government funding commitments, she noted that, to be effective, the training being funded must specifically address antisemitism and incorporate the IHRA definition.<sup>217</sup> Mr. Marceau stressed the need to ensure that such government funding does not inadvertently go to individuals who promote hate.<sup>218</sup>

Finally, the National Respectful Dialogue Initiative asked the committee to “endorse respectful dialogue as a crucial measure to combat hatred, and to encourage all governments to promote such dialogues in their own workplaces and at educational institutions across the country.”<sup>219</sup> It suggested that public funding for institutions should be conditioned on the establishment of respectful dialogue strategies.<sup>220</sup>

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214 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual).

215 Ibid.

216 See, for example, JUST, [Brief](#), 27 May 2024 (Jewish Parents of Ottawa Students Association); JUST, [Brief](#), 17 June 2024 (Stand With Us Canada).

217 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism, As an Individual).

218 JUST, [Evidence](#), 23 May 2024 (Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs).

219 JUST, [Brief](#), 20 May 2024 (National Respectful Dialogue Initiative).

220 Ibid.

## CHAPTER 3—CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

**“It is urgent that we act now. The cost of inaction is the well-being of our future generations here in this country. Let us not be the ones who look back and wish that we had done more when we had the chance. Let's ensure that all students, regardless of background or belief, can pursue their education in an environment free from intimidation, hate and fear.”**

Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen's, Hillel Ontario

The evidence heard during this study leaves no doubt as to the serious danger posed by rising antisemitism in this country, and the need for strong leadership on this issue. The time to act is now.

Much of the evidence heard by the committee pertained to antisemitism on university campuses. While recognizing that these institutions fall primarily under the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories, the committee heard that the Government of Canada has an important role to play in addressing the issue of antisemitism across the country. Cognizant of both the need to respect the division of powers in this area, and to ensure that its recommendations respond appropriately to the evidence, the committee recommends the following:

### **Recommendation 1**

**That the Government of Canada, respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, the provinces and territories, affirm the need for university administrations to prioritize a safe campus environment for Jewish students, faculty and staff.**

**In particular, university administrations must:**

- **Clearly communicate and enforce campus rules, standards, and policies: Make clear to students what it means to be a member of the campus community, and ensure students, faculty, and staff are aware of school policies. This must include a clear understanding that encampments are not permitted and what the rules are for protests and demonstrations,**



**including that hateful speech, and speech that incites and justifies violence, will not be tolerated.**

- **Support Jewish students and faculty: Prevent discrimination, unequivocally denounce antisemitism, ensure inclusivity, and provide antisemitism education and training from Jewish organizations who recognize the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism to the administration, faculty members, security personnel, students' associations and the heads of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) offices. Ensure the academic freedom of all faculty is upheld by opposing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) and academic boycotts of Israel.**
- **Ensure campus safety: Enforce university codes of conduct, maintain clear reporting avenues for antisemitic incidents with commitment to response, ensure campus security and staff are trained to address violations of campus rules, and reaffirm rejection of BDS and academic boycotts of Israel.**
- **Reaffirm faculty responsibilities: Students have a right to learn in a non-discriminatory learning environment. Communicate and enforce policies regarding "abuse of podium" actions and ensure that faculty members treat all students equally.**
- **Prepare for October 7: Anticipate and mitigate disruptions on the anniversary of the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023.**

**The Government of Canada should ensure that the above issues are on the agenda of the next Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety.**

#### **Recommendation 2**

**That the Government of Canada convene a national review committee, comprised of federal, provincial and municipal representatives, university administrators, faculty members, and students, to understand the impact of increased antisemitism across campuses, and to develop non-binding recommendations to ensure a healthier campus environment.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**That the Government of Canada provide funding for the further collection of quantitative and qualitative data regarding Jewish experiences of antisemitism on university campuses across the country.**

### **Recommendation 4**

**That the Government of Canada ensure that all of its Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) programs include the Jewish community, all EDI officers are champions of Jewish inclusion and that antisemitism training approved by the Special Envoy on Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism be provided to all government departments.**

### **Recommendation 5**

**That the full diversity of the Jewish identity be acknowledged within Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) frameworks, including Jewish peoplehood, ethnicity, nationality, multi-denominational religion, cultural diversity, and language, as well as Zionist and Indigenous aspects of Jewish identity. This includes the recognition of Zionism as the self-determination of Jewish people in their ancestral homeland of Israel.**

### **Recommendation 6**

**That the Government of Canada work with the provinces and territories to ensure that Holocaust education in public schools and other institutions includes explanations of modern-day antisemitism and integrates a Jewish community-centered lens.**

### **Recommendation 7**

**That the Government of Canada, respecting the jurisdiction of, and in consultation and collaboration with, the provinces and territories, support the further adoption and implementation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism by governments and institutions across the country, including by:**

- **encouraging university administrations to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and to implement the definition using the IHRA handbook provided by the Government of Canada as a resource;**
- **encouraging university administrations to appoint special advisors on antisemitism trusted by Jewish organizations who recognize the IHRA definition of antisemitism; and**



- **encouraging the integration of the IHRA definition of antisemitism into Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training for all sectors, including universities, law enforcement and prosecution services.**

#### **Recommendation 8**

**That the Government of Canada, in line with its commitment to build strong communities and celebrate multiculturalism, and respecting the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories, provide funding to develop a five-year program to enhance the literacy of post-secondary students regarding the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.**

#### **Recommendation 9**

**That, building on the efforts of the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Government of Canada take additional measures to ensure that recipients of government funding:**

- **comply with Canada's anti-discrimination and anti-hate laws;**
- **respect the values underlying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Human Rights Act; and**
- **do not advocate intolerance, discrimination, prejudice, racism or hate.**

**Such measures should include enhancements to vetting processes, and provisions allowing the Government of Canada to terminate a funding agreement immediately and reclaim all funds paid out to date should the recipient be found not to meet the above conditions.**

#### **Recommendation 10**

**That the federal Parliament consider creating a new intimidation offence under the *Criminal Code* to more clearly and directly protect entrance to and exit from community buildings such as schools, places of worship and community centers, in addition to existing offences that may apply in situations where such buildings are being blocked.**

#### **Recommendation 11**

**That the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada engage with their provincial and territorial counterparts to encourage the establishment of Crown prosecution positions dedicated to hate crimes prosecutions.**



**Recommendation 12**

**That the Minister of Public Safety and the Attorney General of Canada meet with their provincial and territorial counterparts to discuss how policing can be enhanced to deal with demonstrations where the line is crossed into criminal behaviour, including national guidelines given to police by agreement of all jurisdictions.**

**Recommendation 13**

**That the Government of Canada provide additional funding, support and training for police hate crimes units and prosecutors and assistance to local police to establish hate crimes units or bolster them.**

**Recommendation 14**

**That the Government of Canada move to create a national anti-hate fund to support initiatives at the provincial, territorial, and municipal level, which may include enhanced approaches to crime prevention and programs to reduce antisemitism.**

**Recommendation 15**

**That the Government of Canada consider removing the requirement to obtain the consent of the provincial Attorney General in order to prosecute certain hate crimes.**

**Recommendation 16**

**That the Government of Canada take steps to ban the display of symbols of terrorist organizations that are listed under the *Criminal Code*.**

**Recommendation 17**

**That the Government of Canada work with police forces across the country to develop a standardized definition of “hate crime” and “hate incident.”**

**Recommendation 18**

**That Statistics Canada work with police services across the country to improve and standardize data collection on hate crimes.**



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CANADA

### **Recommendation 19**

**That the Government of Canada reiterate that, under section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which states that “[e]veryone has the following fundamental freedoms: freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association,” Canadians have the right to be Zionists, and that it is unacceptable in Canadian society to target Zionists or to deny them fair and equitable access to public spaces for the sole reason that they are Zionists.**

## APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

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The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<b>As an individual</b>	2024/05/09	104
Rachel Cook, Student		
Michael Eshayek, Student		
Nicole Nashen, Student		
Neil G. Oberman, Attorney		
<b>Canadian Union of Jewish Students</b>	2024/05/09	104
Nati Pressmann, Founder		
<b>Hillel Ontario</b>	2024/05/09	104
Yos Tarshish, Director, Hillel Queen's		
<b>As an individual</b>	2024/05/23	105
Dr. James A. Diamond, Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies, University of Waterloo		
Deborah Lyons, Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance & Combatting Antisemitism		
Dr. Ted Rosenberg, Doctor		
<b>B’nai Brith Canada</b>	2024/05/23	105
Richard Robertson, Director, Research and Advocacy		
<b>Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs</b>	2024/05/23	105
Richard Marceau, Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel		
<b>Network of Engaged Canadian Academics</b>	2024/05/23	105
Dr. Deidre Butler, Associate Professor		
Dr. Cary Kogan, Professor		

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Simon Wiesenthal Center Canada</b> Jaime Kirzner-Roberts, Senior Director, Policy and Advocacy	2024/05/23	105
<b>As an individual</b> Mark Sandler	2024/05/27	106
<b>Concordia University</b> Dr. Graham Carr, President and Vice-Chancellor	2024/05/27	106
<b>McGill University</b> Prof. Deep Saini, President and Vice-Chancellor	2024/05/27	106
<b>Secure Canada</b> Sheryl Saperia, Chief Executive Officer	2024/05/27	106
<b>Toronto Police Service</b> Det Sgt Kiran Bisla, Acting Detective Sergeant D/Chief Robert Johnson, Deputy Chief of Police	2024/05/27	106
<b>Universities Canada</b> Gabriel Miller, President and Chief Executive Officer	2024/05/27	106
<b>University of British Columbia</b> Dr. Benoit-Antoine Bacon, President and Vice-Chancellor	2024/05/27	106
<b>University of Toronto</b> Prof. Meric Gertler, President	2024/05/27	106

## **APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS**

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The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

**Adler, Scott**

**Alliance Combatting Campus Antisemitism**

**Allied Voices for Israel**

**Association des Médecins Juifs du Québec**

**Barkel, Laura**

**Barylko, Iara**

**B'nai Brith Canada**

**Bring Love**

**Brown, Daniel**

**Calgary Jews in Healthcare**

**Canadian Federation of Jewish Medical Associations**

**Canadian Union of Jewish Students**

**Canadian Women Against Antisemitism**

**Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs**

**Chabad Concordia**

**Cleugh, Charlie**

**Council of Muslims Against Antisemitism**

**Davis, David H.**

**Deri Armstrong, Catherine**

**Ehrlich, Carl**

**End Jew Hatred**

**Fogel, Joshua**

**Freeman, David**

**Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies**

**Goba, Ruth**

**Gould, Prof. Kevin**

**Greenspoon, Sydney**

**Grossman, Marlene**

**Gupta, Arjun**

**Gutt, Lindsey**

**Hasan, Ferdous**

**Hillel Concordia**

**Hillel Edmonton**

**Hillel McGill**

**Hillel Ottawa**

**Horowitz, Sara**

**Horvath, Shayna**

**Human Rights Action Group**

**Independent Jewish Voices Canada**

**Independent Jewish Voices Concordia**

**Jewish Academic Alliance of BC**

**Jewish Educators and Family Association of Canada**

**Jewish Faculty Network**

**Jewish Federation of Edmonton**

**Jewish Medical Association of British Columbia**

**Jewish Medical Association of Ontario**

**Jewish Parents of Ottawa Students Association**

**Kesteher, Miriam**

**Klein Leighton, Talia**

**Koffman, David**

**Kouri-Towe, Dr. Natalie**

**Kraft, Sophie**

**LaForme, Hon. Harry S.**

**Lasry, Eytan**  
**Lawyers Combating Antisemitism**  
**Lawyers for Secure Immigration**  
**Light, Matthew**  
**Luna Goldet, Eden**  
**Lyons, Deborah**  
**Matas, David**  
**Matthews, Prof. Sara**  
**McGill Jewish Law Students Association**  
**Montreal Academic Network Against Antisemitism**  
**Nashen, Nicole**  
**Natanblut, Chana Leah**  
**National Respectful Dialogue Initiative**  
**Network of Engaged Canadian Academics**  
**Ottawa Against Antisemitism**  
**Pravaz, Prof. Natasha**  
**Pressmann, Nati**  
**Queen's Coalition Against Antisemitism**  
**Restoule, Karen**  
**Rosen, John**  
**Ross, Leah**  
**Rubinstein, Daniel**  
**Rugheimer, Sarah**  
**Salzmann, Ariel**  
**Sandler, Mark**  
**Secure Canada**  
**Shulman, Ahouva**  
**Snidman-Stren, Jacqueline**  
**Stand With Us Canada**  
**Stander, Delwen**

**StartUp Nation McGill**

**Stefaniak, Patryk**

**Swanson, Anna**

**Temple Sinai Congregation of Toronto**

**Toyber, Yael**

**UOttawa Students Against Antisemitism**

**Weiser, Kalman**

**Weitzner, Prof. David**

**Wiseman, Laura**



## REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 104 to 106, 110, 112, 114, 117, 119 and 120](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Lena Metlege Diab  
Chair



## **Dissenting Report on Antisemitism and Additional Measures to Address the Valid Fears Expressed by Canada's Jewish Community**

### **Standing Committee for Justice and Human Rights**

This dissenting report reflects the views of the Conservative Members who sit on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights; M.P. Larry Brock (Shadow Minister for Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Vice Chair, Brantford-Brant), M.P. Jamil Jivani (Durham), M.P. Michelle Ferreri (Shadow Minister for Families, Children and Social Development, Peterborough—Kawartha), and M.P. Tako Van Popta (Shadow Minister for Pacific Economic Development, Langley—Aldergrove ).

#### **Introduction**

Under Justin Trudeau's Government, Canada has seen a disturbing and unprecedented rise in antisemitism and hate crimes. Even before the October 7th terror attacks, hate crimes had surged by 165% since Trudeau became Prime Minister. In 2023, following those attacks, Canada recorded a shocking 5,791 antisemitic incidents—setting a new, tragic high.

Jewish Canadians have the right to live in safety and without fear, and Canada has a moral duty to confront and eliminate all forms of hatred, including antisemitism. To protect our communities and uphold the values of equality and respect, it is imperative that we take decisive action against groups and ideologies that promote violence, hatred, and division.

This report addresses a matter of great sensitivity and urgency. The rise in antisemitic incidents across Canada demands an immediate and unified response from all levels of government. Now, more than ever, it is critical for parliamentarians to come together and take concrete steps to combat violence, hate, and discrimination—particularly as antisemitic behaviour continues to escalate under the current Liberal government.

However, the statistics clearly demonstrate that the Liberal government's current approach to combating antisemitism is not working. Given this, while we support most of the report's recommendations, we believe there are key areas where improvements are necessary. Based on firsthand experience and the evidence bravely provided by witnesses to this committee, Conservatives offer further comments and recommendations that are not reflected in this report to enhance and strengthen Canada's efforts in the fight against antisemitism.

#### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Multiple witnesses testified that diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, referred to as EDI in the report, on their campuses have discriminated against Jewish students and faculty members. In response, the majority of committee members propose addressing this issue by expanding universities' DEI programs to ensure that Jewish voices are included. Conversely, the Conservative members of the committee viewed this testimony as evidence that, despite their good intentions, DEI programs are ineffective in fostering justice both in society at large and specifically on university campuses.

As we heard earlier on in this study, DEI has exacerbated the problem at hand. As further stated by witness Rachel Cook, a diversity, equity, and inclusion meeting “did not include Jewish people when they were discussing what to do about a Jewish person complaining about antisemitism on campus. I think it can start at the top, but it also starts in institutions, when I asked who decides who is in these DEI meetings—is it a percentage of population? —their response was, well, it's the groups that deserve equity and deserve inclusion. Well, who decides that?”<sup>1</sup>.

This viewpoint was further supported by Witness Ms. Deborah Lyons who stated that “there is no question that EDI is failing Jews in this country. EDI is failing anti-Semitism. It focuses on a very narrow description of marginalized, racialized or equity-seeking groups, and it does not address antisemitism at all. That must change”<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, given the evidence, we strongly recommend that the Government of Canada acknowledge that DEI policies have enabled organizations and bureaucracies to exclude certain groups and have proven ineffective in addressing hate, as evidenced by the incidents of antisemitism presented through testimonies during this report.

Ultimately, while we support the majority of the report’s recommendations, we advocate for the removal of all suggestions aimed at enhancing any DEI programs.

### **Advocating for the Enforcement of Conduct Codes and the Protection of Academic Freedom**

Instead, we recommend eliminating these programs altogether in favour of the equal and consistent enforcement of laws and codes of conduct against racism. Witness Gabriel Miller, President and CEO of Universities Canada, highlighted instances where university codes of conduct were not enforced, emphasizing the administration's failure to respond to the increasing tide of antisemitism<sup>3</sup>.

Academic freedom is designed to foster the exploration of challenging ideas without fear of reprisal, which is essential for intellectual growth. However, as this committee heard, some university departments maintain that the only acceptable stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict aligns with the destruction of Israel, often justifying violence and suppressing alternative viewpoints<sup>4</sup>. Given the emphasis placed on this issue by witnesses during our discussions, we also recommend that universities cultivate an academic environment that encourages viewpoint diversity and upholds academic freedom. Initiatives like the National Respectful Dialogue Initiative at the University of Ottawa and the Network of Engaged Canadian Academics exemplify this approach<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence from Rachel Cook Testimony <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/JUST/Evidence/EV13088019/JUSTEV104-E.PDF>

<sup>2</sup> Evidence from Deborah Lyons Testimony <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/JUST/meeting-105/evidence#Int-12752377>

<sup>3</sup> Evidence from Gabriel Miller Testimony <https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/JUST/meeting-106/evidence#Int-12760879>

<sup>4</sup> JUST Meeting 105 <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/JUST/meeting-105/evidence#Int-12752857>

<sup>5</sup> JUST Meeting 106 <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/JUST/Evidence/EV13127317/JUSTEV106-E.PDF>

## **Recommendations to the Government of Canada**

In light of the evidence presented and the urgent need for action, we submit the following recommendations for the Government of Canada.

It is evident that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs have failed to address antisemitism and have actively excluded Jewish students and faculty. Therefore, we recommend that the Government of Canada end all DEI initiatives in federally funded institutions. In place of DEI, universal codes of conduct should be implemented to address discrimination with consistent, impartial standards that ensure equal protection for everyone. Additionally, universities should uphold academic freedom and foster viewpoint diversity, creating an environment that supports open debate and intellectual inclusivity without ideological bias. These steps will help build a more genuinely inclusive environment within Canadian institutions, promoting justice and unity without the divisiveness associated with current DEI programs.

Furthermore, we recommend that the Government of Canada designate the Houthis as a terrorist organization under Section 83.05 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, which will better align Canada's counter-terrorism efforts with the realities of global threats.

The Government must also adopt a clear, consistent, and principled stance regarding the ongoing conflict in Israel. The current approach, with conflicting messages from members of the governing Liberal caucus—supporting Israel within Jewish communities while delivering contradictory statements to pro-Palestinian groups—has become politically expedient and deeply divisive. This approach risks fracturing Canadian society on an issue that requires national unity, moral clarity, and a principled foreign policy.

In addition, we call for the immediate suspension of Canadian funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) until it can be verified that no Canadian taxpayer dollars are supporting terrorist activities. Canada must ensure that its contributions do not inadvertently fund violence or terrorism.

Finally, we strongly condemn recent comments by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which she stated that Canada's foreign policy is being shaped by the demographics of her constituency<sup>6</sup>. Such remarks underscore the Government's politically motivated, morally compromised approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and weaken Canada's standing on the global stage as a principled advocate for peace and justice.

These recommendations are designed to guide a more coherent and ethically grounded approach to combating antisemitism in Canada—one that prioritizes the safety, security, and well-being of Jewish Canadians. Canada's policies must reflect a steadfast commitment to justice, equality, and the protection of all citizens from hatred and violence. By taking decisive action against antisemitic groups, promoting unity, and ensuring Canada's leadership in combating all forms of hate, we can create a safer and more inclusive environment for Jewish communities and Canadians as a whole.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://nationalpost.com/opinion/demographics-apparently-driving-canadas-anti-israel-stance>

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this dissenting report underscores the urgent need for a more robust and effective strategy to combat antisemitism and safeguard Jewish communities across Canada. The alarming rise in antisemitic incidents under the current government demands immediate and decisive action. However, the response from the Liberal government, with the support of the New Democratic Party, has been insufficient in addressing the severity and scope of the issue. Testimonies from witnesses throughout this study have highlighted how existing policies—particularly the expansion of diversity, equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs—have failed to protect Jewish students and faculty from discrimination, and in some cases, have even worsened the challenges they face.

The Conservative Members of this committee are committed to advocating for a Canada where Jewish Canadians can live free from fear and violence. We believe that prioritizing the strict enforcement of conduct codes, upholding academic freedom, and adopting a principled approach to global issues such as the situation in Israel are essential steps toward creating a safer environment for Jewish communities. It is only through these actions that we can ensure Jewish Canadians are truly protected from hate and are able to live without fear of discrimination or violence.

## Dissenting Opinion of the Bloc Québécois

The Bloc Québécois salutes the members of the Committee and the staff of the Library of Parliament for their professionalism and the work they accomplished during this study, and thanks all the witnesses and citizens who contributed to the debate and reflections, without which this study would not have been possible.

In accordance with the motion of March 21, 2024, the committee agreed that it would conduct two studies, one on Islamophobia and the other on anti-Semitism. In the interests of fairness, and given the social climate exacerbated by the war between the State of Israel and Hamas and ongoing tensions on campus, the committee agreed to conduct the two studies concurrently. The Bloc Québécois fully supported these studies. We hereby present a dissenting opinion, not to deny the importance or magnitude of hate events, but to draw the attention of all parliamentarians to the limits of federal power, Quebec's specific characteristics with regards to living together, and the reasons for our opposition to certain recommendations.

### The Constitutional Order of 1867

The Canadian federation is based on two distinct levels of government. On one hand, the federal government, and on the other, the provinces and the Quebec nation. Under sections 91 to 95 of the Constitution Act, 1867, each level has its own exclusive areas of jurisdiction. As the fight against racism is not the subject of any specific provision in the 1867 Act, actions taken to fight racism must be interpreted in accordance with the intent of the constitutional text.

Section 93 gives Quebec and the provinces the power to enact laws relating to education. Since education plays a decisive role in the fight against intolerance, any strategy to combat racism is the responsibility of the Quebec government.

Also, although immigration is a shared jurisdiction, the *Canada-Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens* stipulates that reception and linguistic and cultural integration must be provided by Quebec.

The Bloc Québécois recognizes that the federal government has a responsibility in the fight against racism. Its legislative authority over Criminal Law enables him to act against hate speech and hateful acts. To this end, the Bloc Québécois has proposed legislative measures to combat hate crimes more effectively.

Furthermore, its jurisdiction over telecommunications, which includes online communication, gives it the latitude to address a crucial aspect of racism: online hatred.

The Bloc Québécois also recognizes that the Canadian government, as Canada's largest employer, has a duty to promote discrimination-free workplaces. Therefore, he has a responsibility to intervene in workplaces under its jurisdiction.

### Principled Position of the Bloc Québécois

The Bloc Québécois is a party deeply attached to democratic values and institutions. Our independence project is democratic, inclusive, and respectful of human rights and freedoms. Our political action is guided by humanist principles and a constant concern for the value, dignity, and autonomy of individuals. At every opportunity, and as often as necessary, we denounce all forms of hate speech and hate crimes in the strongest possible way.

The rise in anti-Semitism voiced by the targeted individuals and communities, attested to by official statistics and reported by the media, was ample justification for the decision of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to undertake the present study. The first chapter of this report attest that the current situation, and the distinct form of hatred directed at the Jewish population or people of the Jewish faith, calls for a carefully tailored response.

While the Committee's inquiry, in particular the testimonies and the numerous briefs submitted, informs parliamentarians, and suggests useful and relevant courses of action, the Bloc Québécois feels that the recommendations to the House and to the government that emerge do not constitute "a carefully tailored response."

The Bloc Québécois believes that it is unnecessary and counter-productive for parliamentarians to issue recommendations calling for public action in areas that do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada. This practice, which is becoming increasingly common in House of Commons committees, is even more regrettable when the public issues in question are of the utmost importance, as is the case with the protection of fundamental rights and the fight against discrimination, hatred, and violence. These problems call for an appropriate public response, one that is both realistic and effective.

Unfortunately, it has become common practice in the House to clumsily add the phrase "respecting the jurisdictions of the provinces" or a similar expression, when we know that the proposal we are making does not respect provincial jurisdictions. This practice reveals either a less-than-honourable attitude on the part of parliamentarians towards the Constitution and the very foundations of Canadian federalism, betraying a penchant for the development of a centralized and eventually unitary state, or an admission of announced failure, or both. The Bloc Québécois does not subscribe to this approach, which does no credit to the institution and shows a lack of consideration for the public, who have a right to expect public authorities to provide appropriate and consistent solutions to real problems, especially when citizens exercise their democratic rights by participating in the work of the House.

As Quebec independentists active on the federal political scene, we fully understand the dissatisfaction that may be felt with the fundamentally dysfunctional nature of the Canadian federal system. But this doesn't change the fact, fundamental to the development of a public policy, that the success of such policy requires adequate consideration of the institutional environment and social reality in which it is embedded and will be deployed.



Accordingly, the Bloc Québécois supports most of the recommendations that would enable the federal government to improve its practices and policies, mobilize the public apparatus in the fight against discrimination and hatred, and amend legislation, notably the Criminal Code, to better protect individuals and communities against heinous crimes and acts.

The Bloc Québécois supported and continues to support, the definition of anti-Semitism proposed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), specifying that the latter must in no way be interpreted as a restriction on legitimate criticism of the State of Israel or as a restriction on freedom of expression. The definition specifies that “criticism of Israel comparable to that expressed against other countries cannot be qualified as anti-Semitic.”

To these recommendations, we propose to add the Bloc Québécois bill to eliminate the religious exception of the Criminal Code criminalizing hate speech or incitement to violence. The critic for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, as well as Human Rights, the MP for Lac-Saint-Jean, introduced bill C-373, *An Act to Amend the Criminal Code* (promoting hatred or anti-Semitism). This enactment amends the *Criminal Code* to eliminate as a defence against wilful promotion of hatred or antisemitism the fact that a person, in good faith, expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text. Many witnesses have welcomed this bill, and the Bloc Québécois believes that it should have been one of the recommendations of this report.

We are also opposed to recommendations that suggest federal intervention in Quebec's exclusive jurisdictions, particularly in the field of education. It is unacceptable that the federal government should invent for itself rights of oversight over the administration of educational establishments, particularly in terms of hiring and curriculum content. The support of federal parliamentarians for these worrying proposals deserves to be reported and denounced.

It is certainly important to recognize that expressions of anti-Jewish hatred and acts of hatred exist in many spheres of society, just as recent manifestations of anti-Semitism have notably taken place on some university campuses. On the other hand, it is not desirable for the federal government to substitute itself to other competent authorities.

In this respect, the report seems to overlook over an important fact: Quebec has its own policies for combating discrimination, defending, and promoting rights, and the specific issue of anti-Semitism is also the focus of attention of the Quebec nation's elected representatives in the Quebec Parliament. The Quebec government is, and must remain, in charge of the fight against racism in Quebec.

On the specific subject of the fight against anti-Semitism, the Bloc Québécois supports the Quebec government's commitment. On May 26, 2021, the members of Quebec's National Assembly unanimously denounced the threats, violence, and attacks against Quebecers of the Jewish faith. The National Assembly also reiterated the need to maintain a healthy, democratic debate on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and recalled that violence against anyone is intolerable at any time.

Since then, the National Assembly has paid tribute to the victims of the terrorist attacks in Israel on October 7, 2023, and to those of the war between Israel and Hamas. It has reaffirmed its commitment by denouncing the hateful anti-Semitic acts committed in Montreal and condemning the attacks on places belonging to Jewish, Arab, or Muslim communities, particularly the violent attacks on the Azrieli Talmud Torah school, the Yeshiva Gedola school, the Beth Tikvah congregation synagogue and the Federation CJA building.

The Bloc Québécois endorses these positions of the National Assembly and calls on the federal government to circumscribe its actions while respecting Quebec policies and laws.

The subject being studied by the Committee is important to both the Canadian and Quebec nations. However, it is important to establish that our two nations maintain parallel and distinct democratic conversations on the aspects of the question that are fundamental to them, i.e. those that deal with social cohesion and what is commonly referred to as “vivre-ensemble” (living together).

Living together, accommodating societal diversity, intercultural dialogue, cultural and linguistic sovereignty, the integration of immigrants, the secular nature of the State, the protection and promotion of rights, and the fight against discrimination are all fundamental issues for the Quebec nation.

As set out in the Act respecting the exercise of the fundamental rights and prerogatives of the people and State of Québec, the State of Québec is sovereign in its own areas of jurisdiction. The National Assembly is made up of MNAs elected by universal suffrage by the Québec people, and derives its legitimacy from these people, for whom it is the sole legislative body. All matters relating to the future of the Québec people fall within the rights and prerogatives of the National Assembly.

On the thirtieth anniversary of the constitutional coup de force, the National Assembly unanimously and formally reaffirmed that it had never adhered to the Constitution Act of 1982, which diminished Québec's powers and rights without its consent, and that it remains unacceptable to Québec.

In Quebec, it is the *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* that establishes and protects fundamental rights. Among other things, the Charter protects every human being's right to dignity and equality. It prohibits any discrimination based on ethnic or national origin, or skin colour.

The Quebec Charter also states that “Human rights and freedoms are exercised with respect for democratic values, the secular nature of the State, the importance of protecting the French language, public order and the general well-being of the citizens of Quebec”.

Consequently, the Federal Parliament must refrain from legislating on matters that are fundamental to the Quebec people and recognized by the Canadian constitution.

If Canada is to maintain harmonious relations with the Quebec nation, its elected representatives must recognize Quebec's resolute commitment to human rights and freedoms, agree that Quebec has not acceded to the Constitution Act, 1982, and then exercise a practice of asymmetrical federalism based on recognition, by the House of Commons, of the Quebec nation.

This recognition should take the form of federal legislation affirming that the Canadian Multiculturalism Act does not apply to Quebec, given that Quebecers form a nation and therefore have all the tools they need to define their identity, affirm pluralism, and protect their common values.

The Bloc Québécois has tabled such legislation in the House of Commons on several occasions. The most recent opportunity came with the introduction of Bill C-226, An Act to amend the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, during the 43rd Parliament. Unfortunately, on Wednesday, June 9, 2021, parliamentarians from all Canadian parties, including their federalist representatives for Quebec, voted against this Bloc Québécois proposal.

In conclusion, federal anti-discrimination policy would not only be more effective if it took better account of the respective responsibilities of the various public authorities involved, it could also become more coherent, if it recognized Canada's plurinational character and agreed to deploy a territorially differentiated policy for Quebec.

#### Additional considerations

Considering the above remarks, the Bloc Québécois opposes many of the recommendations contained in the Report on Antisemitism of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

The Bloc Québécois rejects recommendations 1, 2, 6 and 8 of the Report on Anti-Semitism, as they fall within the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces in matters of education, as set out in section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867. Whatever its objective, the federal government should never interfere in teaching programs or in the administration of education, as this is clearly unconstitutional. No government is better placed than that of Quebec and the other Canadian provinces to develop effective school programs for the benefit of their citizens.

The Bloc Québécois is also opposed to Recommendation 10, as it is a proposal to criminalize behaviour without any data to support its effectiveness. Numerous witnesses told the Committee that inadequate application of the Criminal Code creates fertile ground for hatred and racism (paragraphs 101 to 103 of the Committee's Report). In other words, it is not because of a lack of legislative tools that anti-Semitism is not combated with sufficient effectiveness, but rather because of a misuse of existing provisions.

Following this logic, it seems inappropriate to add a new section to the Criminal Code aimed at criminalizing certain expressions and gestures in a specific area around schools and places of worship. Any infringement of freedom of expression must be carefully considered and justified, which was clearly not the case here.

Recommendation 15 is also problematic for a similar reason. Removing the requirement to obtain the consent of the Attorney General to initiate a hate speech prosecution (s. 319 Cr.C.) could have the effect of multiplying the number of prosecutions under this section, by speeding up the judicial process. However, as indicated above, the Bloc Québécois believes that any infringement of freedom of expression must be carefully thought out and justified, and that prior authorization from the prosecutor is essential. We fail to see how recommendation 15 would have a beneficial effect in the fight against anti-Semitism.