



# Delegation

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**Name: Shira Waldman**

**Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:**

Ottawa's Jewish community is in a state of crisis. Although we represent a mere 1% of the Canadian population, according to CIJA in 2022, the Jewish community was the most targeted religious minority, accounting for 67 percent of religiously motivated hate.

Those numbers have skyrocketed since the October 7th massacre by Hamas who is recognized as a terrorist group in Canada.

Police and multiple guards are now a familiar presence at our synagogues, private school, and community centre.

Because In the last 45 days:

- Hateful propaganda has been plastered in public spaces
- Schools have received bomb threats and been shot at.
- A synagogue was fire-bombed.
- Jewish businesses have been vandalized and boycotted,
- Gasoline was poured and anti-Semitic messaging was left at the hospital under threat of arson.
- A local rabbi's life was threatened.
- Swastikas are painted on signs at protests and Universities

Meanwhile, our family in Israel is under rocket fire and continues to be threatened by terror attacks from Hamas and Hezbollah. 240 kidnapped civilians are still being held hostage in Gaza and 45 days later, forensic specialists and archaeologists have not yet been able to identify the remains of victims from the massacre.

It's a lot to process. Now imagine that you are a kid. Every day, you need to go to school and face your peers who are increasingly openly hostile, who post hateful lies on their social media accounts, who are walking out of class and encouraging your friends to join them in protests that are aimed against you. You feel like a target.

How can our kids' mental health be ok?

My older son is the President of the Jewish club at JMSS. During last month's meeting, a group of kids yelled into the room, "look there are the Jews!" "Free Palestine!"

As if he has anything to do with what is happening on the other side of the world.



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Now no one is coming to the club. They are afraid. Afraid to be a Jewish student at a public school in Canada.

We reached out to the principal and JEC who spoke with my son, and the perpetrators, but it's not enough to make the handful of Jewish students feel safe enough to attend club meetings.

Although pro-Palestinian walkouts are happening off school property, the kids attending are congregating in the school. Stations are even set up in the lobby to paint Palestinian flags on students' faces.

Once, when my son (who is an Israeli/Canadian) went to the washroom, he was faced with a large group of male students congregating there as they readied for the walkout. I want you to imagine how intimidated he felt, especially as his religious and cultural identity is known.

Chants of "From the river to the sea," is a call to wipe Israel off the map and instill fear in Jewish students. Now add to this, signs with swastikas like the one we saw at Merivale High School last week

Our schools have become a toxic environment for our children. How are we upholding the OCDSB policy of multiculturalism and inclusivity when we are fostering hate against the Jewish minority under the guise of free speech and right to protest.

I see only hate speech and incitement to target Israel and the Jewish people.

Take international politics out of our schools so our kids can learn in a safe and inclusive environment without fear.

If kids want to advocate for peace, create spaces for positive dialogue where they can learn to be true leaders, discussing how to move forward while recognizing the devastation on both sides, instead of pitting one group against another.

Anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. You can't advocate for a country for one group while demanding that another lose the right to theirs (which is their ancestral homeland)

We are begging you to implement the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism as we have been asking for the last 3 years so that it is clear when boundaries of hate speech have been crossed.

Finally, enforce your codes of conduct and make meaningful consequences for hurtful behaviour so that this will stop. You already have the policies in place! Enforce them!!!

(Harassment S.306 of the Education Act:



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- Engaging in offensive behaviour or conduct against another person that is known or ought to be reasonably known to be unwelcome with respect to an individual race, place of origin, ethnic origin, or citizenship) Inappropriate use of technology.

S.310:

- conduct injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school.

Safe schools Policy P.032.SCO section 4.3:

-Where engaging and conduct is likely to have a negative impact on school climate.

Our schools should not emulate a war zone.

Thank you