

**Documents Submission from Jewish  
Community Relations Council of Minnesota and  
the Dakotas (JCRC)**

**Ethan Roberts, Deputy Executive Director  
Jewish Community Relations Council of  
Minnesota and the Dakotas**



**Resource Page (<https://minndakjcrc.org/news/understanding-and-addressing-israel-hamas-war/>): Understanding and addressing the Israel-Hamas War**



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## We Were Heard

*University of Minnesota Confirms Hiring Process for Next Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies Director to Start Fresh, most likely not until 2025-2026 academic year*



June 14, 2024 – MINNEAPOLIS, MN – Steve Hunegs, Executive Director, and Ethan Roberts, Deputy Executive Director, of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas (JCRC), released the following statement:

JCRC welcomes today's announcement by Interim President Jeff Ettinger ([https://tcjewfolk.com/2024/06/14/fresh-start-announced-in-search-for-center-for-holocaust-and-genocide-studies-director/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR18AjWyXS3Emb\\_2W3uXs0H67Cmtryqc2u4b\\_4ggjPMCvGhst5DSfjR\\_RJE\\_aem\\_ZmFrZW1bW15MTZie](https://tcjewfolk.com/2024/06/14/fresh-start-announced-in-search-for-center-for-holocaust-and-genocide-studies-director/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR18AjWyXS3Emb_2W3uXs0H67Cmtryqc2u4b_4ggjPMCvGhst5DSfjR_RJE_aem_ZmFrZW1bW15MTZie))

the search for the next Director for the University of Minnesota's Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies will start fresh and that there are currently no outstanding offers for the directorship.

Additionally, JCRC appreciates Interim President Ettinger's acknowledgment that because 'there are many Minnesota communities and

stakeholders who care deeply about the work of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and want to see it succeed... we look forward to engaging them in the search for the next director.' As the consensus public affairs voice for Minnesota's Jewish community, charged with the responsibility for commemorating and educating about the Holocaust, JCRC expects to be part of that selection process.

Notably, when the last Center Director, Dr. Alejandro Baer, was hired in 2012, Steve Hunegs was a member of the search committee. By contrast, we were not even made aware that a search was occurring to fill the Director position which Dr. Baer vacated in 2021. Clearly, the University now recognizes this was a mistake which led to the initial offering of the Director position to Professor Raz Segal without community engagement.

In his remarks before the Board of Regents, Interim President Ettinger indicated he expects the search for the new director will not occur until the 2025-2026 academic year. In the meantime, the Center's Interim Director, Joe Eggers, agreed to continue in his current role. These are wise decisions and JCRC looks forward to our ongoing partnership with the Center under Eggers' leadership.

Since we engaged the community (<https://minndakjcrc.org/advocacy-alert-reverse-u-of-m-decision-for-anti-zionist-to-lead-center-for-holocaust-and-genocide-studies/>), less than a week ago, members of the Jewish community and our allies responded by the hundreds with thoughtful, passionate, and respectful emails and phone calls. In conversations with University of Minnesota leadership we know we were heard.

Today's announcement would not have been possible without the powerful grassroots engagement of a broad cross section of our community. It remains an incredible privilege and honor to be the consensus public affairs voice for our remarkably resilient community.

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Updated June 11, 2024 to include this comment from Professor Alejandro Baer, former Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies:

*"During my tenure as Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies it was very important for me to uphold the center's strong tradition of public engagement, affirming the legacy of the center's founding Director Stephen Feinstein. The input of the extended Center community, including Holocaust survivors and their children, is integral to the Center's mission. I trust that the University of Minnesota will work collaboratively with all the members of the Center's extended family to find an inspiring scholar capable of providing knowledge and appropriate unifying leadership for these very difficult times."*

June 10, 2024 – MINNEAPOLIS, MN – Steve Hunegs, Executive Director, and Ethan Roberts, Deputy Executive Director, of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas (JCRC), released the following statement:

Today, after an outpouring of protest from our community, Interim President Jeff Ettinger announced that his office paused the selection process for the next Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Interim President Ettinger wrote:

*"In the past several days, additional members of the University community have come forward to express their interest in providing perspective on the hiring of the position of Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Because of the community-facing and leadership role the Director holds, [i]t is important that these voices are heard. Our focus is on the mission of the Center. Accordingly, the Interim President has paused the Director selection process to allow an opportunity to determine next steps."*

We support this decision and thank Interim President Jeff Ettinger for his leadership. However, until a qualified, unifying candidate is named, JCRC calls upon members of the community to continue voicing their opposition to the appointment of Professor Raz Segal to be the next Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

As the University determines its next steps, we expect that the consensus perspective of Minnesota's Jewish community, as well as that of mainstream Holocaust and genocide scholars, will be honored.

The work of the Center, which has been a close ally of the JCRC and our Jewish community for decades in preserving the memory of

the victims of the Holocaust and honoring its survivors and their families, is too important to be led by an extremist. The next Center Director must be a unifying and not divisive figure.

As outlined in the comprehensive reporting of *TC Jewfolk* (<https://tcjewfolk.com/2024/06/09/controversial-hire-leads-to-resignations-from-center-for-holocaust-and-genocide-studies-board/>), Professor Segal outrageously accused Israel of genocide on October 13, just days after Hamas' terror attack on October 7 which killed 1200 people, most of them civilians. He has repeatedly espoused many of the key slurs against-Israel, including that Israel is a 'settler-colonial project,' and a perpetrator of 'racism' and 'white supremacy.' The professor has even claimed there is 'no evidence' linking Jews today to our ancient ancestors, while calling 'absurd' the well-documented antisemitism present in recent campus protests.

Each of these statements are by themselves disqualifying from such a critical community-facing leadership role.

After learning the news that an offer was pending to Professor Segal, dozens of community members immediately contacted the University in thoughtful protest to the appointment of such a polarizing candidate. It was heartbreaking to read many of these comments, including from the descendants of Holocaust survivors as well as that of a community member who survived the October 7 atrocities.

There is much work to be done by the University to repair the damage done and rebuild the trust which has been lost not just during this process, but over the past eight months as the University has become a locus of antisemitism.

We again implore the University to honor the consensus perspective of our Jewish community by earnestly engaging with representative voices such as the JCRC, Hillel, Chabad, and mainstream Jewish faculty, before making critical decisions concerning Jews, Israel, the Holocaust, and antisemitism.

We look forward to working with incoming president Dr. Rebecca Cunningham in ensuring that the University returns to being an institution which honors its Jewish students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the broader Minnesota Jewish community.

On a recent Minnesota solidarity mission to Israel, participants were captivated by a banner which proclaimed that 'our wounds are centuries old, but so are our resilience and our strength.' This is no less true of our community here in Minnesota. The JCRC is honored to help lead such a strong community, which continues to be fierce advocates for our right to stand proudly in our Jewish identity.

*Am Yisrael Chai*, the people of Israel live.

###

As the consensus public affairs voice of the Jewish community, JCRC builds relationships to fight antisemitism and bigotry; educates about Judaism, Israel, antisemitism, and the Holocaust; advocates for Jewish values and priorities; and safeguards our community.

## Contact

Jewish Community Relations Council of  
Minnesota and the Dakotas

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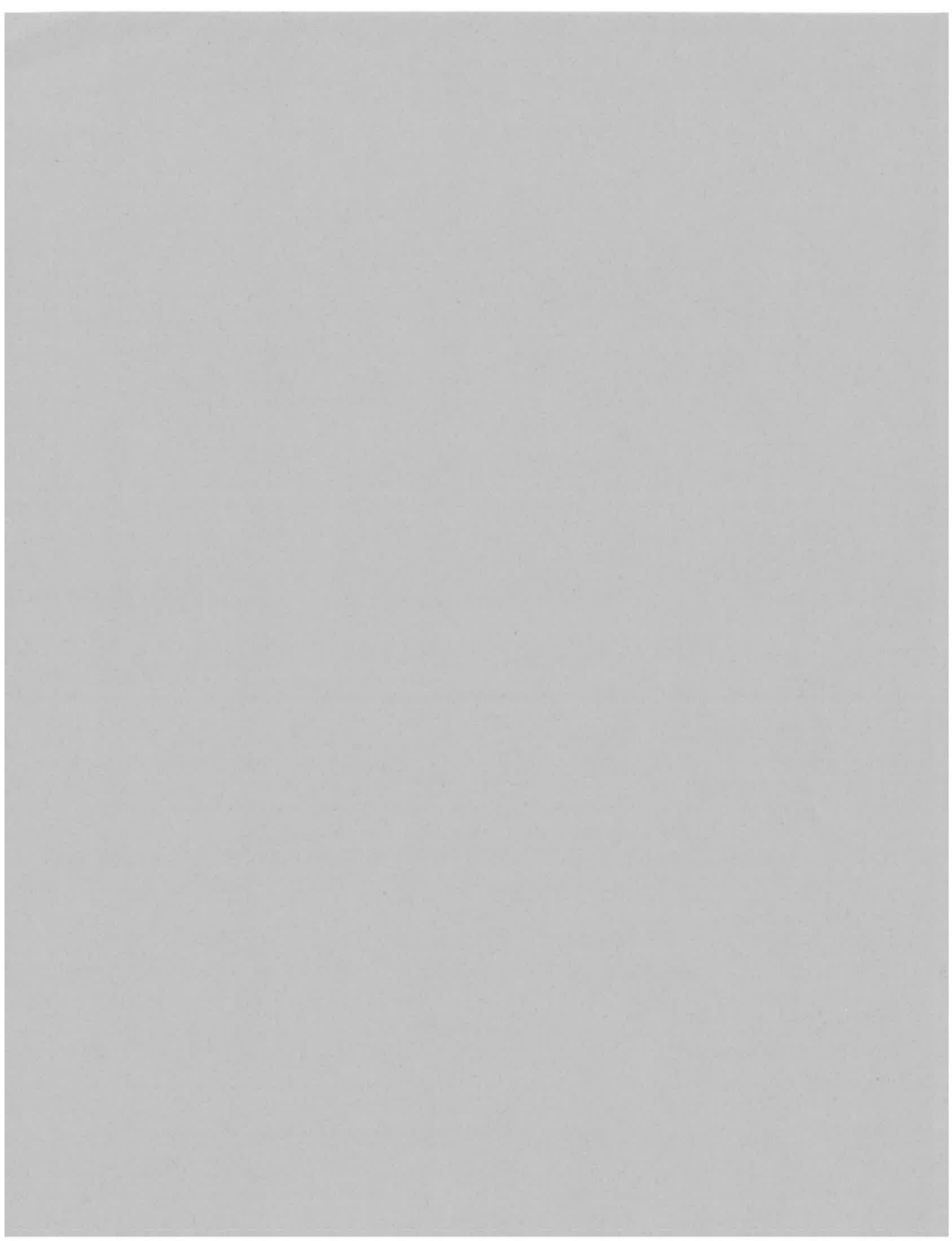
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UNITED STATES

# U of Minnesota backtracks on Holocaust Center hire who accused Israel of genocide

BY [ANDREW LAPIN](#) JUNE 11, 2024 3:03 PM



Raz Segal discusses his Jewish Currents article in which he stated Israel intends to commit genocide in Gaza, Oct. 25, 2023. (Screenshot via NJ Spotlight News/PBS)

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The University of Minnesota **has “paused” the search for a new director of its Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies after initially tapping an Israeli who accused Israel of genocide less than a week after Oct. 7.**

Jewish groups had opposed the planned hiring of Raz Segal after learning of it last week, and two members of the center’s advisory board — one of whom is Jewish — resigned over the appointment. Segal, who is currently the director of a Masters program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Stockton University in New Jersey, had written a controversial piece in the progressive magazine Jewish Currents on Oct. 13 **in which, citing his background “as a scholar of genocide,” he said Israel’s military campaign in Gaza was “a textbook case of genocide unfolding in front of our eyes.”**

The university had initially defended Segal’s hire for its Twin Cities campus, saying in a statement over the weekend that he “was enthusiastically recommended by the search committee for this important position” after an assessment of “strengths and weaknesses/pros and cons of each candidate it interviewed.”

**But amid mounting pressure — including the board resignations as well as opposition from the local Jewish Community Relations Council — the school reversed course on Monday.**

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“In the past several days, additional members of the University community have come forward to express their interest in providing perspective on the hiring of the posit[i]on of Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Because of the community-facing and leadership role the Director holds, [i]t is important that these voices are heard,” interim president Jeff Ettinger said in a statement, **according to TC Jewfolk.**

The statement added that Ettinger “has paused the Director selection process to allow an opportunity to determine next steps.”

Some notable Jewish scholars were also beginning to criticize Segal’s appointment.

“There would, of course, be no problem whatsoever with having the center headed by someone who is critical - even sharply critical - of the policies of the Netanyahu government, or of any other Israeli government for that matter,” Menachem Rosensaft, an adjunct law professor at Cornell University and former counsel of the World Jewish Congress, wrote in a Times of Israel op-ed Tuesday. “Segal’s radical views, on the other hand, lie so far outside the mainstream as to constitute a Hamas-like endorsement for the genocidal elimination of the State of Israel.”

The directors of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas praised the university’s reversal and insisted local Jews be given a bigger voice in the center’s eventual hire. They said that, unlike in years past when the center’s director position had been open, no one from the JCRC had been consulted this time on the search committee.

“As the University determines its next steps, we expect that the consensus perspective of Minnesota’s Jewish community, as well as that of mainstream Holocaust and genocide scholars, will be honored,” director Steve Hunegs and deputy executive director Ethan Roberts said in a statement.

The university’s Jewish community has been on edge in recent weeks. Vandals broke several windows and doors at Minnesota Hillel over the weekend. And last month, as part of a controversial deal the university administration made with its pro-Palestinian encampment movement, representatives of the encampment made a formal argument for divesting from Israel to the school’s regents (with student Hillel representatives providing a counter-argument).

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genocide scholar to call Israel’s actions in Gaza a genocide — though it was among the earliest and most emphatic. Dozens of other faculty members focusing on the discipline signed onto an open letter Segal spearheaded in the days after Oct. 7 that condemned Hamas’s actions while arguing that Israel’s campaign in Gaza at the time was “raising the question of genocide.” Israel, which was taken before the International Criminal Court on the charge of genocide, has emphatically denied the charges.

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The rise of such views among a corner of Jewish and Israeli academics has been cause for alarm among some pro-Israel Jewish groups, which have organized at some universities to keep left-leaning Jewish faculty off key antisemitism-related positions.

In her resignation letter from the Holocaust and genocide center’s advisory board, faculty member Karen Painter cited Segal’s Jewish Currents essay as a reason why she

viewed his hire unacceptable.

“Dr. Segal has positioned himself on an extreme end of the political and ideological spectrum with his publications on Israel and Gaza, including an essay in which he accused Israel of genocide a week after the October 7 terrorist attacks,” wrote Painter, whose husband, former George W. Bush administration official Richard Painter, **has brought complaints triggering a federal Title VI antisemitism investigation at the university.**

Bruno Chaouat, a Jewish former director of the center, also resigned over the appointment.

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### UNITED STATES

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BY ASAF ELIA-SHALEV JUNE 19, 2024  
3:20 PM



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BY RON KAMPEAS JUNE 19, 2024 8:59 AM

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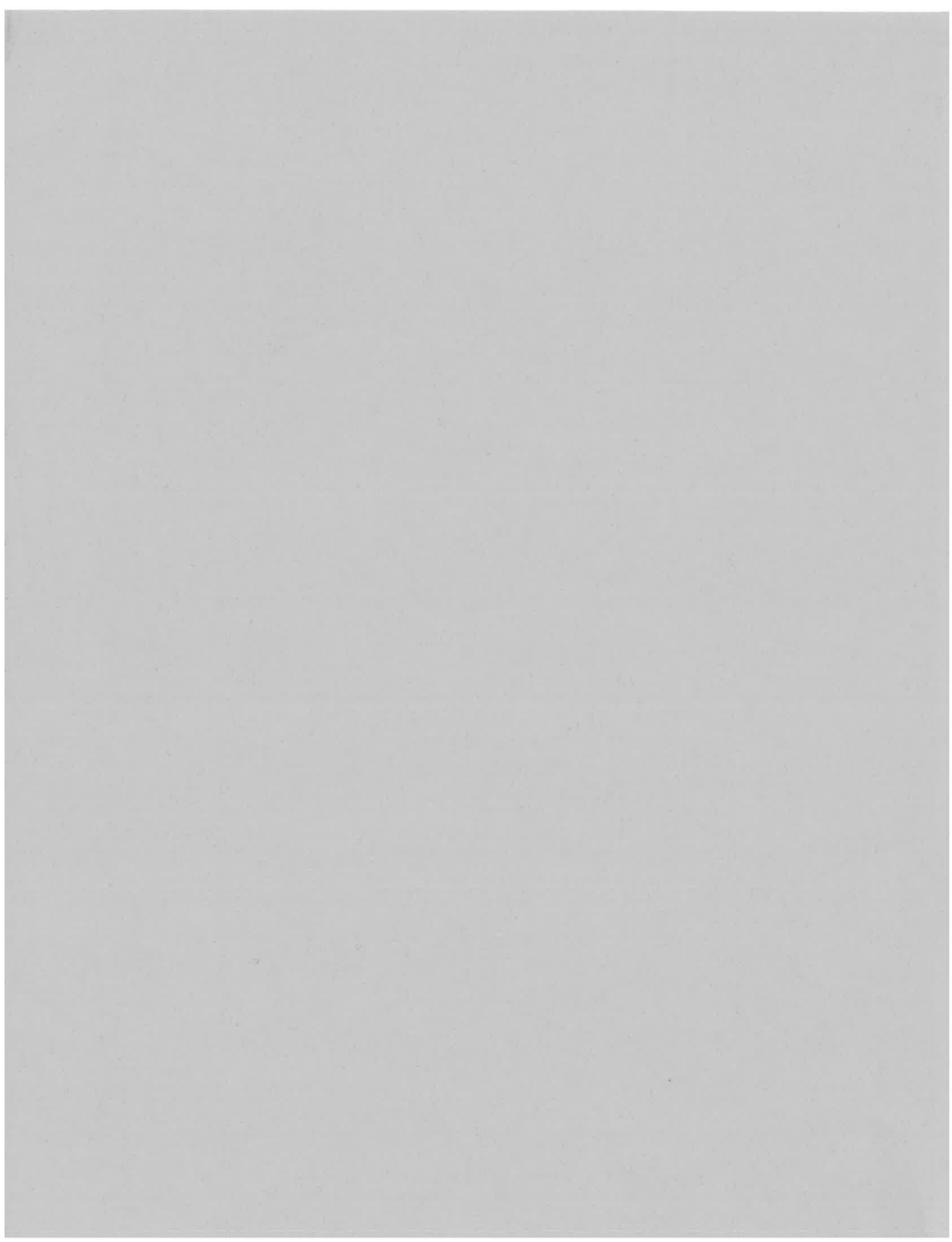
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# Controversial Job Offer Leads To Resignations From Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies Board

Two members of the [advisory board](https://cia.umn.edu/chgs/about/people/advisory-board) (<https://cia.umn.edu/chgs/about/people/advisory-board>) of the University of Minnesota's Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies have resigned in protest over the planned hiring of the center's new director.

Karen Painter and Bruno Chaouat both resigned Friday evening after learning that Raz Segal, a professor at Stockton University (<https://stockton.edu/refugee-studies/contact.html>) in New Jersey, had been offered the position by Ann Waltner, the interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts, which is where the CHGS resides at the university.



Segal has studied the Holocaust in [the Carpathians](https://www.sup.org/books/title?id=26373) (<https://www.sup.org/books/title?id=26373>) and in Hungary, and focuses his study of the Holocaust as a result of the decline of empires and the [building of nation-states](#)

([https://tcjewfolk.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Raz\\_Segal\\_pic\\_Feb\\_2017\\_225x300.jpg](https://tcjewfolk.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Raz_Segal_pic_Feb_2017_225x300.jpg))

Raz Segal (Photo courtesy  
Stockton University)

(<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14623528.2017.1412887>) in Europe. The focus on nation-states is a central theme in an argument Segal makes that the Holocaust is not unique compared to other genocides.

"Dr. Segal has positioned himself on an extreme end of the political and ideological spectrum with his publications on Israel and Gaza, including an essay in which he accused Israel of genocide a week after the October 7 terrorist attacks," Painter wrote in her Friday night resignation email to Provost Rachel Croson and Interim President Jeff Ettinger.

"The CHGS director is ideally a scholar whose principal area of research and public commentary is the Holocaust itself, and certainly should not be an individual publicly identified with extremist positions on the present Middle East war," she wrote. "We need a center director who will bring our community together to understand how the Holocaust and other genocides occurred, not someone who blames Israel for the rape and murder of 1,200 civilians, and kidnapping of hundreds more."

Segal wrote in [Jewish Currents](https://jewishcurrents.org/a-textbook-case-of-genocide) (<https://jewishcurrents.org/a-textbook-case-of-genocide>) on Oct. 13, 2023, that Israel's retaliatory strikes against Hamas positions in

(<https://tcjewfolk.com/2024/06/looks-at-true-story-behind-oscar-winning-holocaust-film/>)

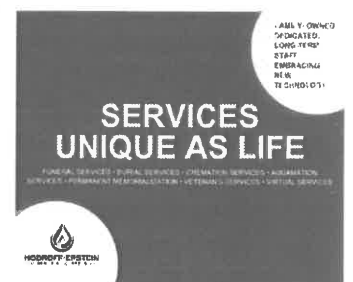
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"The assault on Gaza can also be understood in other terms: as a textbook case of genocide unfolding in front of our eyes," Segal wrote. "I say this as a scholar of genocide, who has spent many years writing about Israeli mass violence against Palestinians."

Segal has called the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/world-remembers-holocaust\)](https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/world-remembers-holocaust) (IHRA) definition of antisemitism [a tool to suppress \(https://www.972mag.com/antisemitism-israel-jews-ihra/\)](https://www.972mag.com/antisemitism-israel-jews-ihra/) all critique of Israel; contends Israel [\(https://contendingmodernities.nd.edu/global-currents/israeli-apartheid-and-its-apologists/\)](https://contendingmodernities.nd.edu/global-currents/israeli-apartheid-and-its-apologists/) is an apartheid state; and criticized the Israeli defense company Elbit Systems for helping to publish a book [distorting the Holocaust \(https://www.thenation.com/article/world/holocaust-bulgaria-elbit/\)](https://www.thenation.com/article/world/holocaust-bulgaria-elbit/) in Bulgaria.

In a piece he co-authored for [Al-Jazeera \(https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/1/14/intent-in-the-genocide-case-against-israel-is-not-hard-to-prove\)](https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/1/14/intent-in-the-genocide-case-against-israel-is-not-hard-to-prove) in January of 2024, Segal called Israel a "settler-colonial" power.

"Israel's explicit language of genocide and its unprecedented assault on Gaza should mark the end of its impunity in the international legal system and usher in a new stage in the struggle to stop the violence, save the Palestinians of Gaza, and end Israeli settler colonialism," he wrote.

Segal has also wrote  [\(https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2024-01-27/icj-israel-south-africa-gaza-genocide-court-ruling\)](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2024-01-27/icj-israel-south-africa-gaza-genocide-court-ruling) that "Israel's creation reproduced the racism and white supremacy that had targeted Jews for exclusion and, ultimately, destruction in Europe."

In 2022, he authored a piece [\(https://www.regthink.org/en/the-people-who-claim-eternal-ownership-of-jerusalem/\)](https://www.regthink.org/en/the-people-who-claim-eternal-ownership-of-jerusalem/) denying that Jews had a contemporary connection to Israel, writing "Many people believe that Jews today are linked to the ancient Judeans, even though no evidence supports this assertion."

Most recently, in an interview with [NJ Spotlight News \(https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/qa-professor-raz-segal-holocaust-genocide-studies-stockton-university-student-pro-palestinian-protests-encampments/\)](https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/qa-professor-raz-segal-holocaust-genocide-studies-stockton-university-student-pro-palestinian-protests-encampments/) he defended the anti-Israel campus protestors and encampments, saying that claims of antisemitism were "baseless."

When the encampment was active at the University of Minnesota last month, [Jewish students spoke out \(https://tcjewfolk.com/2024/04/26/jewish-students-angry-scared-of-toxic-campus-climate/\)](https://tcjewfolk.com/2024/04/26/jewish-students-angry-scared-of-toxic-campus-climate/) against Pro-Palestinian graffiti on the Coffman Union praising "the resistance," and signs were held at a rally on campus read "Intifada is revolution, is armed struggle; glory to the resistance."

The Arabic word Intifada translates to "uprising" or "shaking off," and has been used to describe periods of Palestinian protest against Israel, mainly in the form of violent terrorism. The First Intifada from 1987-1990 and the Second Intifada from 2000-05.

"If you know what the Intifadas were, could you imagine being a Jewish student hearing an agitated mob on your campus chant, "Globalize the intifada" – or as I hear it, "Globalize the killing of the Jews"? said Carlie Sachs, a University of Minnesota junior, at a press conference in April. "When the activists on campuses glorify October 7, I feel pained to see how proud they are that my people were massacred."



[\(https://tcjewfolk.com/wn-](https://tcjewfolk.com/wn-)





often felt unsafe.

Graffiti reading "Glory To The Resistance" on the walls of Coffman Union on the campus of the University of Minnesota.

"The messages our students have experienced around campus, in the classroom, and on social media have marginalized, demonized, and silenced the majority of Jewish voices, and isolated and targeted Jewish students," she said. "Student groups, faculty, and even off-campus actors are entitled to free speech and academic freedom within the university rules and the city and state laws. But allowing these actors to normalize the idea that October 7 was anything other than an act of terror is further marginalizing Jewish voices and dividing our campus."

Segal did not reply to an email seeking comment.

## 'Aggressive' interactions

In her feedback of Segal's interactions with members of the university, Painter said he was "aggressive" and "unwelcoming to questions and challenges."

"With Segal, [the departure of supporting scholars and faculty] would be gradual, leaving a shell of a center which would shift from being part of the nexus of the humanities and Jewish studies community to becoming part of the campus's anti-Israel contingent," she wrote.

"Many of us who work in this period have shown mistakes in survivor testimony, and unlike the sensitivity we try to show about this testimony, Segal seemed to exhibit a certain glee in allegedly proving that [H]olocaust victim stories aren't based on evidence."

Painter's notes state that Segal allegedly said the Israel-Hamas war would lead to more Holocaust denial, alongside criticizing "survivor testimony" as being often inaccurate.

In a statement from U of M Public Relations, the school said: "The University follows established hiring processes and procedures in all our searches, including a search committee composed of faculty members and broad consultation among stakeholders throughout the University. Professor Segal, an Israeli native, was enthusiastically recommended by the search committee for this important position."

However, according to an email from someone involved in the search obtained by TC Jewfolk, the position Segal is being offered is for an endowed chair, and therefore the responsibility of hiring rests solely with the dean. When asked for clarification on this, the school replied: "As is typical practice, the search committee provided strengths and weaknesses/pros and cons of each candidate it interviewed. The information from the committee and others in the college with whom the Interim Dean consulted showed enthusiastic support for Professor Segal."

In an email to the provost, interim president, and the board of regents, attorney Richard Painter – Karen's husband – said that the Waltner's appointment of Segal is "reckless," and is done at a time where the CLA has shown what he calls an "ongoing pattern of antisemitism" in the college. Painter and former Regent Michael Hsu reported this to the United States Department of Education Civil Rights Division last December and a formal investigation was opened in January.

"The CLA interim dean has embarked on this reckless appointment at the Holocaust Center days after the journal *Cultural Critique*, also housed in CLA, was caught intentionally boycotting (<https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2024-05-31/ty-article/.premium/university-of-minnesota-academic-journal-apologizes-for-boycotting-israeli-scholar/0000018f-ce5e-dc8d-a18f-ffdfcf520000>) all prospective authors affiliated with Israeli academic institutions. That was illegal under Minnesota law," Painter wrote in an email. "CLA also has yet to remove and retract pro-Hamas

The faculty of the Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies department, which is also housed in CLA and where Waltner is an associate faculty member, released a statement on Oct. 13 (<https://cla.umn.edu/gwss/news-events/news/gwss-faculty-statement-palestine>), saying in part that there are “unsubstantiated claims of ‘uncivilized’ violence.” The statement was amended on Nov. 20, but left the line about unsubstantiated claims in as more information was coming to light about what took place.

Absent from the search committee was anyone from the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas. The JCRC has worked closely with the CHGS most recently when it came to writing the language for the Holocaust education standards and benchmarks for state schools, and in passing state mandate on Holocaust and other genocide education, the JCRC lobbied for the CHGS to join it as co-chairs of the working group.

When **Alejandro Baer** (<https://tcjewfolk.com/2020/12/21/who-the-folk-alejandro-baer/>) was hired as director in 2012, JCRC Executive Director Steve Hunegs was on the search committee. With this search, JCRC Deputy Executive Director Ethan Roberts said they were first made aware of the search late last week.

“It’s been a long fruitful relationship” between the JCRC and the CHGS, Roberts said. “Historically, the center has been an asset for state, university, and the broader community. It’s hard to imagine what that relationship will look like” if Segal is hired.

“He holds outlier views among Jews in America, Jews in Israel, and he’s clearly not an expert in the laws of war,” Roberts said. “And he seems ideologically in line with the other extremist faculty in CLA. It’s incomprehensible that one administrator can be empowered to make a decision such as this.

“We don’t weigh in on every faculty hire. If Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies wants to hire someone else who thinks Israel is evil, so be it. But this program has a unique role to play and a relationship with the Jewish community, the survivor community and their descendants. I can’t think of anything the University could do to be more insulting.”

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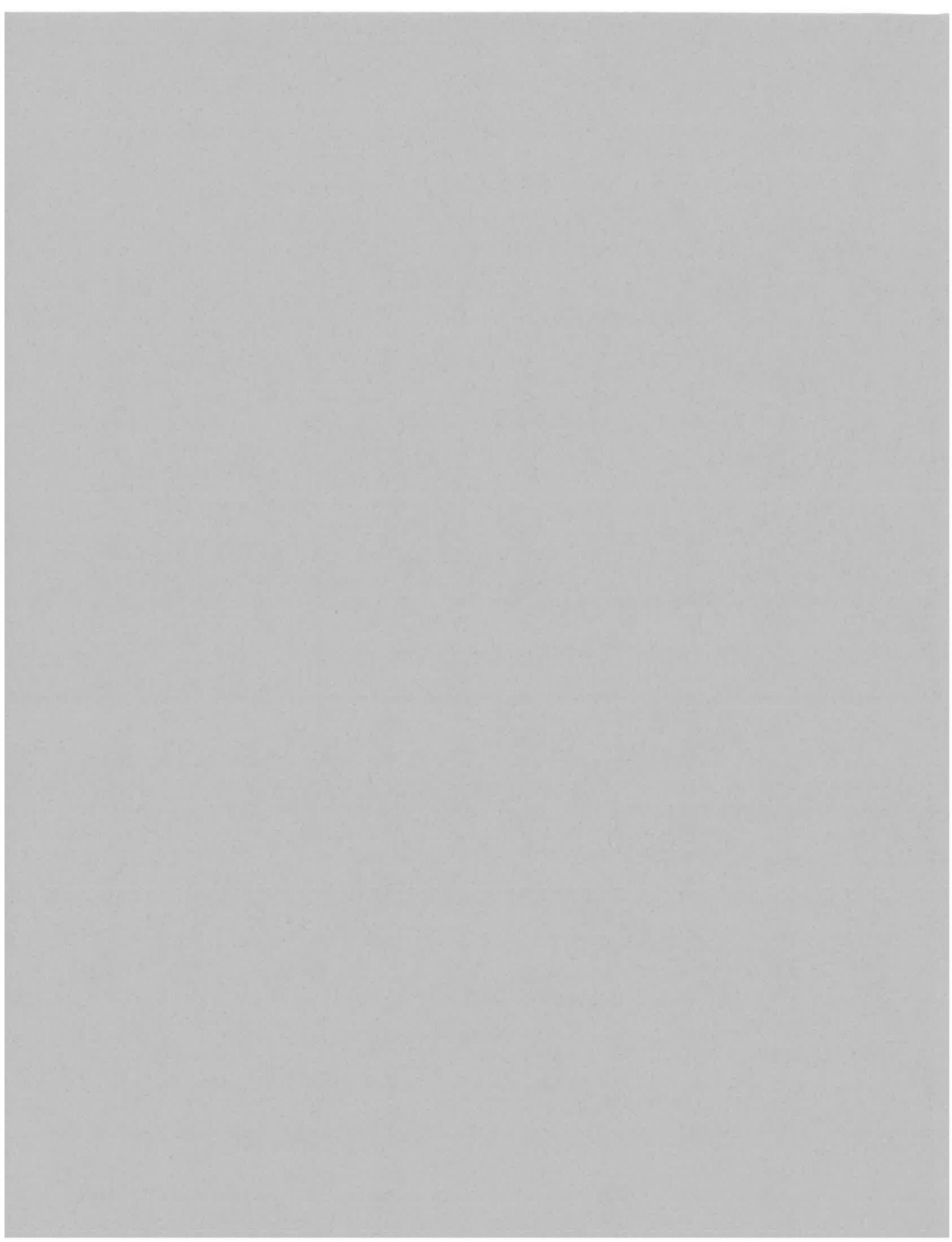
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11 comments

*Pingback: **Advocacy Alert: Reverse U of M decision for anti-Zionist to lead Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies - JCRC** (<https://minndakjrc.org/advocacy-alert-reverse-u-of-m-decision-for-anti-zionist-to-lead-center-for-holocaust-and-genocide-studies/>)*





# Jewish Students Angry, Scared Of "Toxic" Campus Climate

Around the country, college students have been arrested for protesting Israel's war with Hamas, setting up encampments in the middle of campus, and [harassing media for covering it](#) (<https://twitter.com/LoganSchiciano/status/1783569410248020251>). While things on the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus haven't been as dramatic as it has been at [Columbia](#) (<https://tcjewfolk.com/2024/04/24/minneapolis-resident-gives-account-on-columbia-u-unrest/>), [Ohio State](#) (<https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/local/2024/04/25/hamas-israel-war-gaza-protest-ohio-state-university-campus/73456832007/>), or [University of Texas-Austin](#) (<https://thedailytexan.com/2024/04/25/faculty-protest-student-arrests-in-front-of-tower-call-for-hartzell-resignation/>), it has served to create a "toxic" culture on the campus.

## Minnesota Hillel/JCRC Press Conference



"The eliminationist rhetoric being spewed on campuses since then has been toxic, and often felt unsafe," said Abby Kirshbaum, [Minnesota Hillel](#) ([https://tcjewfolk.com/ctp\\_directory/minnesota-hillel/](https://tcjewfolk.com/ctp_directory/minnesota-hillel/))'s assistant director, at a press conference Friday afternoon. "The messages our students have experienced around campus, in the classroom, and on social media have marginalized, demonized, and silenced the majority of Jewish voices, and isolated and targeted Jewish students."

"Student groups, faculty, and even off-campus actors are entitled to free speech and academic freedom within the university rules and the city and state laws. But allowing these actors to normalize the idea that October 7 was anything other than an act of terror is further marginalizing Jewish voices and dividing our campus."

In the past week, pro-Palestinian graffiti on the Coffman Union praised "the resistance," and signs held at a rally on campus read "Intifada is revolution, is armed struggle; glory to the resistance."

The Arabic word Intifada translates to "uprising" or "shaking off," and has been used to describe periods of Palestinian protest against Israel, mainly in the form of violent terrorism. The First Intifada from 1987-1990 and the Second Intifada from 2000-05.

"If you know what the Intifadas were, could you imagine being a Jewish student hearing an agitated mob on your campus chant, "Globalize the intifada" – or as I hear it, "Globalize the killing of the Jews"? said Carlie Sachs, and



(<https://tcjewfolk.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/glory-to-the-resistance.jpg>)

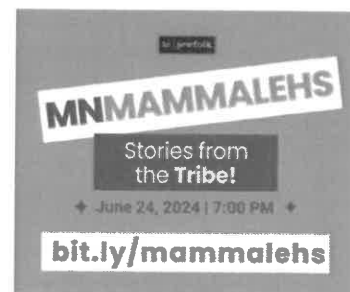
## Film

(<https://tcjewfolk.com/2024/06/18/d-looks-at-true-story-behind-oscar-winning-holocaust-film/>)

[Macalester Committee Recommends Divesting Endowment From Israel](#) (<https://tcjewfolk.com/2024/06/17/r-committee-recommends-divesting-endowment-from-israel/>)



(<https://englishrosesuites.com>)



([https://secure.lglforms.com/form\\_er](https://secure.lglforms.com/form_er))



(<https://bluestemremodeling.com/>)



University of Minnesota junior. "When the activists on campuses glorify October 7, I feel pained to see how proud they are that my people were massacred."

Graffiti reading "Glory To The Resistance" on the walls of Coffman Union on the campus of the University of Minnesota.

Bias incidents on campus have more than doubled this school year from the 2022-23 year; there were 55 total last year, and 122 this year. Forty-two of those have been related to "Israel/antisemitism" and 16 tied to "Palestine/Islamophobia," according to the school. The U stats track with an increase nationwide. According to statistics compiled by [Hillel International \(https://www.hillel.org/antisemitism-on-college-campuses-incident-tracking-from-2019-2023/\)](https://www.hillel.org/antisemitism-on-college-campuses-incident-tracking-from-2019-2023/), antisemitic incidents against Jewish students on college campuses have increased 700% over the same period last year.

"So many Jewish students on this campus felt the need to fly under the radar over the last six months, often hiding any outward signs of their identity," said U senior Ethan Fine. "Most just want to get home or go to class without disrupting any protests. But now we must confront this in the classroom as well."

Fine was one of several students who gave examples of how the topic was handled in classes, including those having nothing to do with international relations. He said professors are canceling classes and encouraging students to go to protests.

Isabelle Pizzurro, a junior at the school, said her art history class was disrupted by the conversations in the class.

"I find this disheartening because it's disrupting my education and my academic pursuits," she said. "And it also singles me out as the only Jewish student in my classes, and I feel forced to take a position on this conflict that I may not be prepared for."

Lyla Prass, a sophomore, said that she had an experience where a professor in a geography class decided to teach about the war, in the middle of a discussion on South America. The professor said that Israel was a genocidal apartheid state before the students broke up into small group discussions. Prass sat stunned, wearing the necklace of her name – in Hebrew that she got for her bat mitzvah.

"One of my peers next to me saw it and asked why I was killing her roommate's cousins," Prass said. "I never wanted to go back to that class again."

She said that despite that, she continues to wear the necklace, but often keeps it tucked under her shirt rather than being visible.

"I wear it because I'm proud," she said. "It's part of who I am."

Prass said it's a scary time to be a student at the U right now.

"I feel like my education in that class was sacrificed and that's not okay," she said. "I want to learn, I want to want to go to my classes. I want to feel safe in my classes."

Alex Stewart, Minnesota Hillel's student president, said that this week in particular on campus has been "hard and disgusting and depressing and horrifying."



"Walking on campus listening to people say that they want a global Intifada and death to Zionism is not okay," she said. "These things I see on campus on the sidewalk and the walls of the union make me feel uneasy. I'm a college junior. I volunteer in my community. I have a job and I have finals next week. I should not have to also spend hours explaining to people that my safety in this moment is relative."

Molly Seligman said the scariest thing about encountering the protests is that people don't know what they don't know, citing the lack of Holocaust education mandates in Minnesota and Wisconsin, which are the two largest feeder states to the school – although Minnesota passed one in the 2023 legislative session.

<https://tcjewfolk.com/wp->

[content/uploads/2024/04/zionists-fuck-off.jpg](https://tcjewfolk.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/zionists-fuck-off.jpg)

**fuck-off.jpg**

"Zionists, Fuck Off" on the wall of Coffman Union at the University of Minnesota.

"Since I started school here every incident I've had of antisemitism has never been taken seriously. And that has only become worse this past year," she said. "The fact that people are able to say this rhetoric that they don't even understand and no one has taken the time to explain it yet is the part that makes it makes it scary to be a student here right now."

Said Kirshbaum: "They are being used as propaganda for these terrorist organizations. It is incredibly sad to see them being used like this. I feel sad for everyone in this situation."

In the education sessions around antisemitism, JCRC Communications and Community Affairs Director Sami Rahamim said he often talks about not knowing the intent of a particular speaker when it comes to what they're saying. However, he, Kirshbaum, and the students made clear the effect the language was having.

"We're super clear about the impact of those types of language has on our community. And we've been saying it over and over again: That this language is harmful. It is demonizing Israel and Jewish people who have a connection to Israel. That's problematic and we're not being listened to," Rahamim said.

"I can understand wanting to protest the humanitarian crisis. It is deeply upsetting. And there are some students that know better, they know that what they're advocating for is a pro-terror, pro-Hamas message. And then there are others who we have to give up some benefit of the doubt that they are, swept up, that they've watched three TikToks, and they think that they have suddenly understood, you know, all of Middle East history."

## Administration support lacking

Fine said that he took his concerns about the campus climate to administrators as far back as November, but was told that because there was no imminent threat to student safety, it couldn't take action.



<https://tcjewfolk.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Ethan-Fine.jpg>

University of Minnesota senior Ethan Fine.  
(Photo by Lonny Goldsmith/TC Jewfolk)

"Does this administration really have to wait for Jewish students to feel an immediate threat for safety for something to be done?" he said. "I'm concerned about the university not taking action until it was too late, whatever that may be. This lack of action at our university and others across the country is a failure of the higher education system. A failure not only to protect our students, but to educate them on such nuanced and complex ideas."

Steve Hunegs, the executive director of the JCRC, said that he had met with Jeff Ettinger, the interim president of the University of Minnesota, in the fall.

"They heard as at that time. There's been some movement. I think there should be more," said Hunegs. "The university could speak with its very loud and clarion voice about these messages that the students are hearing, acknowledge the situation our Jewish students are facing. That would be critically important."

Hunegs said that what the students are hearing from protesters is not acceptable discourse.

"The university, of course, acknowledged the importance of First Amendment rights on campus," he said. "But simultaneously [there are] dangerous levels of incitement. Where will this go when you're comparing Zionism to genocide? I can't think of anything that's more incendiary, than that. [It's] putting people at risk."

Ettinger, in an [emailed letter \(https://view.ecommunications2.umn.edu/?qs=a6eda0c09aa34c3a00e334a58411f0d81138c75471d472d73e5f773368c7663fd576643d9e4ee2697c9ba459b94834b97dbc0be79301ff1b0b82477ba00ce\)](https://view.ecommunications2.umn.edu/?qs=a6eda0c09aa34c3a00e334a58411f0d81138c75471d472d73e5f773368c7663fd576643d9e4ee2697c9ba459b94834b97dbc0be79301ff1b0b82477ba00ce)

to the campus community, said: "Protests on our campus and across the country this week highlight the diversity of lived experiences, identities, beliefs, and backgrounds within our communities."

Fine said that he's been disappointed in the university's response in everything that's happened on campus since October 7.

"[It's] 203 days since October 7. I'm all more angry and more upset," he said. "And as a student, it's incredibly hard to go to class every day, to sit next to your peers, to sit and listen to faculty members, and even know that just the administration – all these people – you feel are against you. You feel not supported in your education. I just want to go to school."

Stewart, the student president of Minnesota Hillel, said she's fielding questions from prospective students about whether the campus is safe.

"I worry that recent media coverage that only focuses on the few 100 camped in front of the union, many of whom are not students, is making prospective Jewish students deem this place unsafe," she said. "We are lucky that unlike other campuses, we have not seen anti-Jewish violence yet. However, I, like many students, fear that the extremist rhetoric could at any moment become real violence."



(<https://tcjewfolk.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Alex-Stewart.jpg>)

Minnesota Hillel student president Alex Stewart. (Photo by Lonny Goldsmith/TC Jewfolk)

## The difficult conversations are difficult to have

The speakers were asked if they had attempted to discuss how the protests affected them. Rahamim said that the national leaders of Students for Justice Palestine make that impossible.

"There's something called anti-normalization," Rahamim said. "This is a doctrine...that instructs all of their campus chapters to refrain from any engagement with Israeli or Zionist mainstream Jewish voices."

"Because of this policy, SJP and their supporters isolate and place Jewish students outside the community of the good. Just write them off as so evil and untrustworthy. And that conversation isn't even possible. It's heartbreaking."

Sachs talked about the bi-annual trip that Minnesota Hillel offers to five Jewish students and 25 non-Jewish student campus leaders to Israel and the Palestinian territories that she went on last year. She said for the past several years, recruiting has been a challenge.

"There have been letters sent from advisors to student groups saying you won't be meeting with these people. We will not pass along your invitation for this experience," Sachs said. "And it's truly just a learning experience. That just shows how closed off they've been to conversations in the past."

Kirshbaum, who in her role with Hillel also works with Jewish students at the other campuses in the state, said that students chose not to attend an interfaith Thanksgiving event because Hillel was there.



(<https://tcjewfolk.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Carlie-Sachs.jpg>)

University of Minnesota junior Carlie Sachs. (Photo by Lonny Goldsmith/TC Jewfolk)

## Calling out media

Sami Rahamim, the JCRC's director of communications and community affairs, said that media outlets calling the protests "pro-peace" were missing the point. Independent, in-depth Jewish journalism costs money to produce. TC Jewfolk's nonprofit reporting is available paywall-free thanks to the financial support of donors. The ideas animating these campus protests are not about peace and reconciliation for Israelis and Palestinians," Rahamim said. "Each of these protests begins with the infamous chant 'From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.' This chant means the destruction of Israel. Why do we think that? Because Hamas tells us this is exactly what they mean (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zT32jleadTU&t=18s>). These protests are using the same language and imagery that we would see at a Hamas rally."





(<https://tcjewfolk.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/death-to-america-1.jpg>)

"Death To America" a recurring slogan of the Iranian regime, on the walls of Coffman Union at the University of Minnesota.

Rahamim played a video of Hamas officials using the slogan, and showed several images of offensive language, flyers and images from scenes around campus this week, and explained why they are problematic.

"Intifada is the same thing as October 7, just over a period of years, instead of all packed into one day," he said. "This is what armed struggle looks like to the Palestinians who ruled Gaza."

He explained that Hamas is an acronym, which, in translation, stands for Islamic Resistance Movement.

"This is a pro-terror message," he said. "Why is the media not taking this seriously?"

There were also photos of people carrying the flag of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a designated terrorist organization by the State Department since 1997, and, in chalk slogans "Zionists Fuck Off" and "Death To America."

"The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran has voiced support for the student protests sweeping the country, so we see that symbiosis here as well, given that 'death to America' is a popular slogan amongst supporters of the Iranian regime," he said. "The ideas animating these protests are built on an extreme maximalist vision to destroy Israel, the world's only Jewish state."

Ethan Roberts, the deputy executive director of JCRC, said calls for the divestment from Israel are essentially the same as calling for its destruction because the founder of the boycott, divestment and sanction movement has said that is the goal.

"One of the best ways to destroy Israel is to render it vulnerable and unable to protect itself," he said. Roberts cited the drone and ballistic missile attack launched from Iran on Israel on April 13. "How do you think Israel is able to defend itself? It's the companies that these protesters are targeting: American companies, which provide American jobs.

"This is a movement which does not believe Israel has a right to exist. If Israel doesn't have a right to exist, then has the no right to defend itself. If it has no right to defend itself, when it does defend itself it's obviously committing a genocide. So they want to want to make Israel toxic on campus so you can't defend it. They also literally want to make sure that Israel can't defend itself. So that they can carry out that message from Hamas from the river to the sea."

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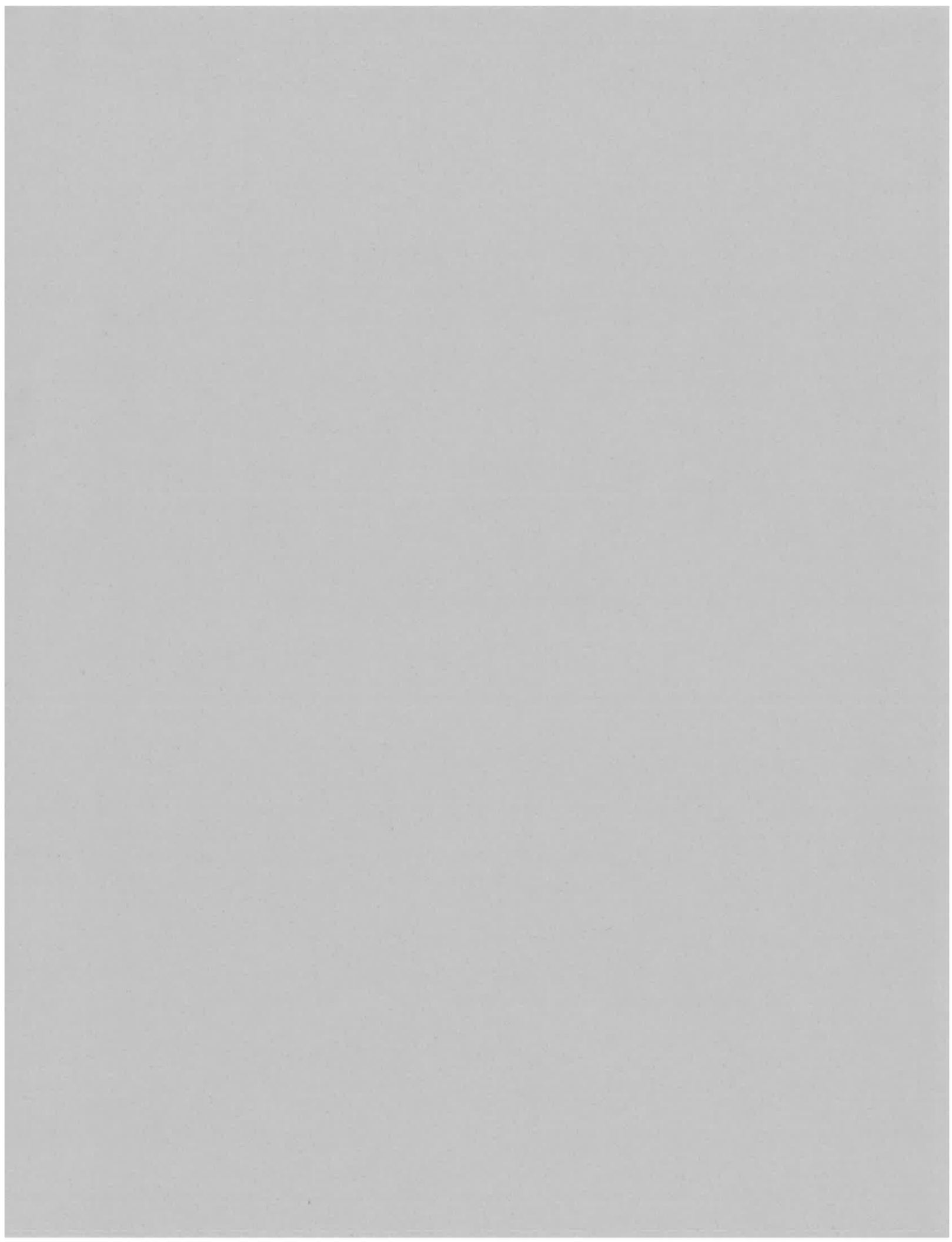


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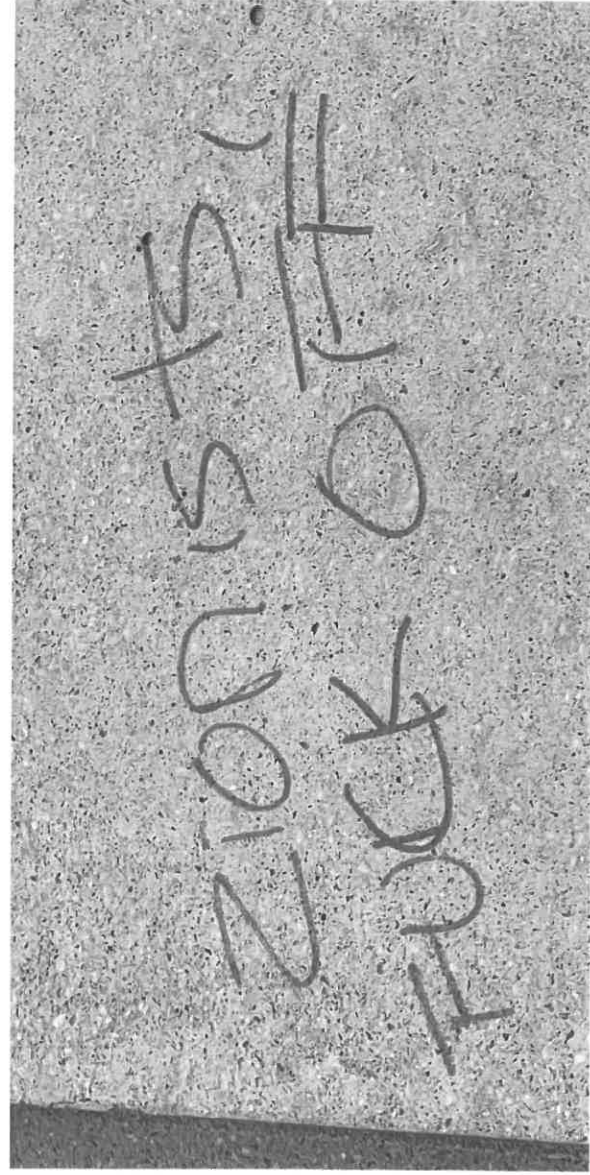












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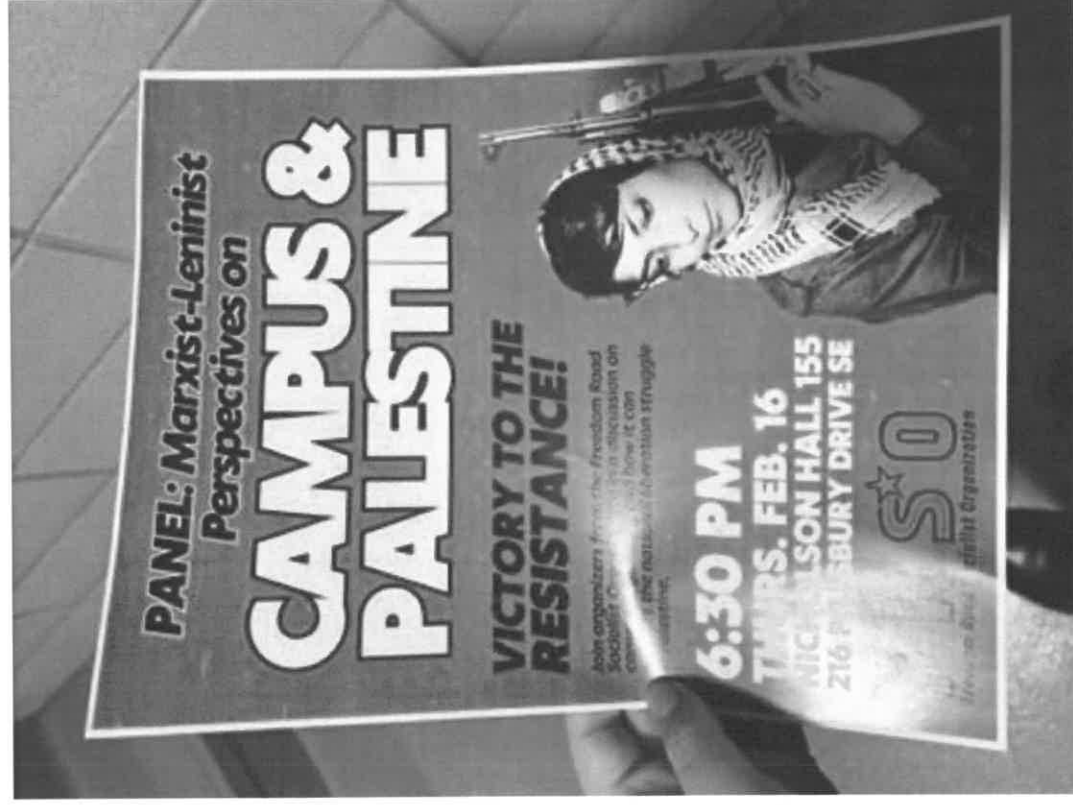
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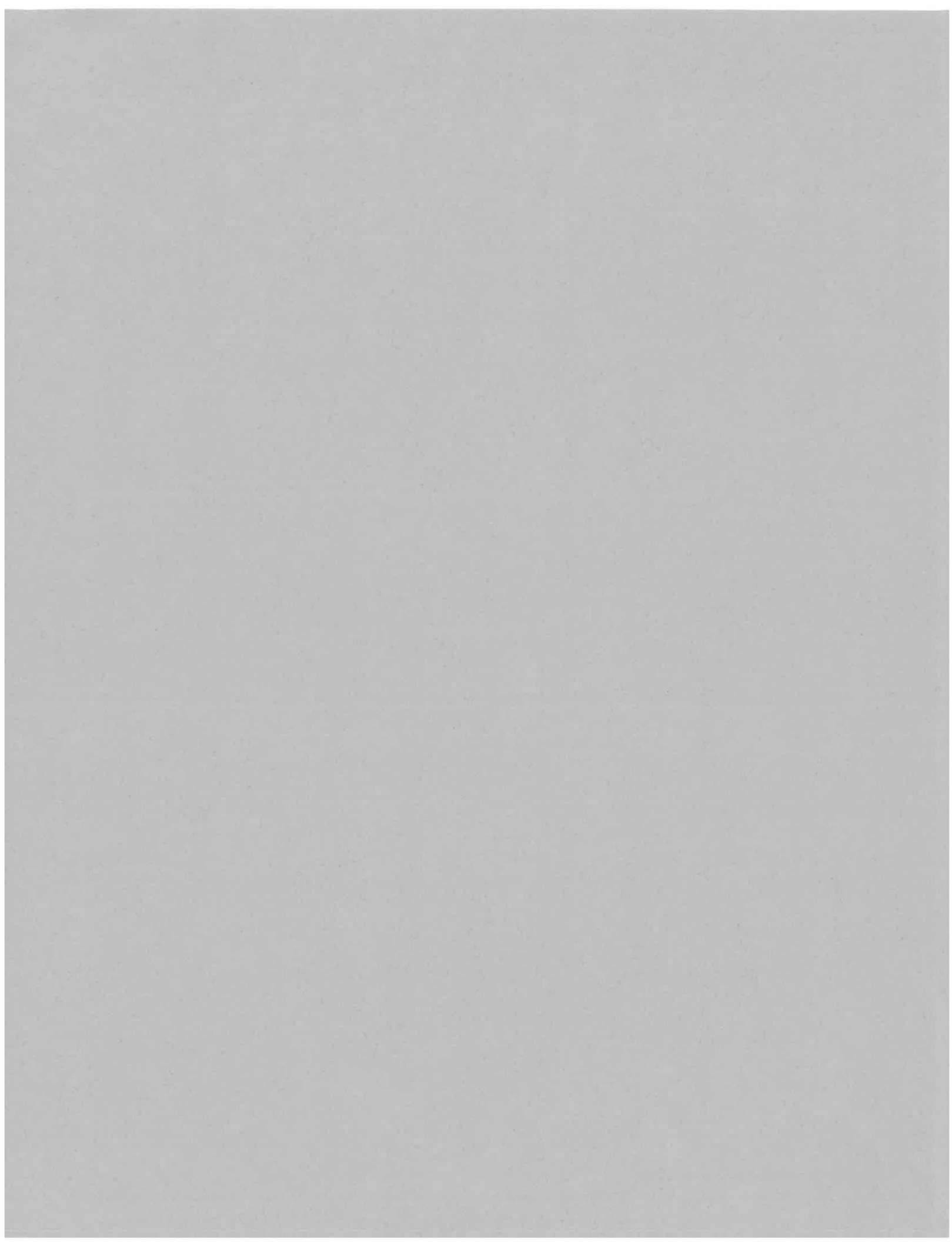
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LOCAL

## Israel-Hamas war creates 'really fraught times' at Minnesota colleges

The latest conflict is happening thousands of miles away. But debates over Palestinian rights and antisemitism hover over U.S. college campuses, including the University of Minnesota.

By Liz Navratil (<https://www.startribune.com/liz-navratil/6370437/>) Star Tribune

APRIL 25, 2024 — 6:12PM

Fadwa Wazwaz attended a pro-Palestinian protest at the University of Minnesota recently and intentionally took a picture with a Jewish attendee to show they could coexist despite the war in the Gaza Strip.

"This has to stop," Wazwaz, a Palestinian U employee, said of the violence.

Jewish student Jon Greenspan felt unnerved a couple weeks ago when his group, holding Israeli flags and pictures of people taken hostage by Hamas, was surrounded by a few dozen people.

He worried what might happen to Jewish students if no one spoke out and decided "that fear completely outweighs any other fears I have standing up for myself."

The war between Israel and Hamas, unfolding thousands of miles away, has reinvigorated a wave of activism on college campuses in Minnesota and across the nation. More than 100 pro-Palestinian protesters were arrested at Columbia University, prompting the Ivy League school to cancel in-person classes and religious leaders to encourage Jewish students to celebrate Passover elsewhere. That spurred a flurry of other demonstrations across the country.

Protests in Minnesota have been less disruptive, though nine people were arrested (<https://www.startribune.com/university-of-minnesota-police-arrest-9-after-pro-palestinian-encampment-set-up-on-campus/600361025/>) for trespassing at the U earlier this week. And the issue hovers over many aspects of university life.

"These are really fraught times," said Macalester College President Suzanne Rivera.



ANTHONY SOUFFLE, STAR TRIBUNE

Pro-Palestinian supporters chant during a rally against the latest war between Israel and Hamas after University of Minnesota police

## ADVERTISEMENT

The last six months have corresponded with what the U.S. Department of Education has described as an "alarming nationwide rise" in complaints of antisemitism and Islamophobia since Oct. 7. On that day, Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel that killed an estimated 1,200 people and resulted in hundreds being taken hostage. Israel responded by invading the Gaza Strip, where the Palestinian death toll has now surpassed 34,000, according to statistics released by the United Nations.

College leaders find themselves facing renewed pressure to protect free speech rights while ensuring students' safety — and lamenting that two values they have long held dear are increasingly being pitted against each other.

"Most people will tell you they believe in the importance of free speech and that they believe free expression is important on college campuses, right up until they hear a word they don't like," Rivera said. "And then, at that point, it seems like there is an urge to expect presidents and other leaders to step in and limit free expression."

### An open forum?

Leaders at Macalester College say this is a moment to teach students how to make a difference in a messy world. They've hosted events aimed at reducing the rancor in political discourse and invited officials from different parties to come debate hotly contested issues.

Interim University of Minnesota President Jeff Ettinger has received requests to block speakers from coming to campus, remove faculty members' statements on the conflict or quash protests.

"To me, as the months have gone by, it has reinforced in my mind the notion that a campus needs to try to be an arena of public discourse and try to avoid being one of the participants in it," he said, emphasizing that college should be an open forum.



(<https://arc.stimg.co/startribunemedia/C3JAL3EAPZC3JIYI?auto=format,compress&cs=tinysrgb&>)

ANGELINA KATSANIS, STAR TRIBUNE

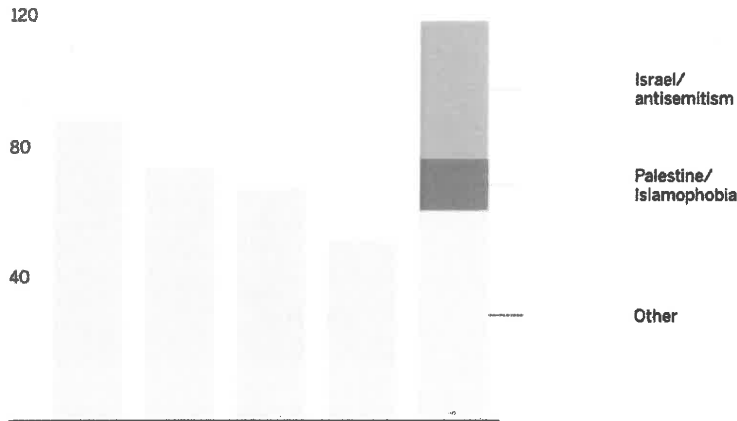
University of Minnesota Interim President Jeff Ettinger, shown in January, has received requests to block speakers from coming to campus.

## Bias reports rise at the U

Complaints of antisemitism and Islamophobia have risen at college campuses across the United States since the Israeli-Hamas war began. At the University of Minnesota, bias complaints have more than doubled compared to last school year.

*Hover/tap for detail*

BIAS INCIDENTS BY SCHOOL YEAR



\*2023-24 numbers through April 25.

Mark Bowtell, Star Tribune • Source: University of Minnesota

Bias complaints at the U have more than doubled, with 122 reports filed so far this year. Of those, 42 "reported bias against Israel/antisemitism," while 16 "reported bias against Palestine/Islamophobia." Ettinger said the university has boosted security when appropriate.

The U is also working to create a policy that aims to better outline when and how faculty can issue statements on high-profile issues. Members of at least four U departments issued statements on the war, some supporting Israelis and some supporting Palestinians. Some were referenced in a complaint asking the U.S. Department of Education to [investigate concerns about antisemitism](https://www.startribune.com/university-minnesota-antisemitism-department-education-discrimination-shared-ancestry-investigation/600336303/) (<https://www.startribune.com/university-minnesota-antisemitism-department-education-discrimination-shared-ancestry-investigation/600336303/>). One drew a rebuke from Republican state lawmakers who noted they would consider the U's response while vetting funding requests.

In the meantime, U faculty are approaching the conflict differently. Some have joined pro-Palestinian rallies and sent letters reaffirming students' right to protest. Others have avoided discussing the war.

Bruno Chaouat, an antisemitism scholar who teaches about the Holocaust, avoids discussing Oct. 7 in class but will talk about it during office hours. That's partially an effort to stay closely on topic, but Chaouat also said, "I was overwhelmed by the event and frankly didn't have words."

"The Holocaust has become extremely difficult to teach," said Chaouat, who previously ran the U's Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. "It is relativized, and there is a trend toward accusing the Jews of monopolizing suffering and victim status."

## A search for peace

A pro-Palestinian rally on the U campus earlier this week drew hundreds of people, enough to cover the lawn outside Coffman Memorial Union. Many people approached by the Star Tribune said they didn't want to talk. Some said they feared retaliation.

Wazwaz suspects many also worry about a scenario where "the whole movement becomes misinterpreted as antisemitism" and harms the effort to get help to the 1.7 million people in Gaza.

She was born in Jerusalem and regularly sees videos from the war-ravaged areas.



(<https://arc.stim.co/startribunemedia/GAO6VHEEPZGHZ>)

"You'll see people crying for help," she said, adding that some of those killed are aid workers trying to provide people with food or medical care. She worries that in some of the debates over protests, some are losing track of the fact this violence is "costing people's lives."

Rally organizers have called on the U to divest from companies supporting Israel, ban defense recruiters on campus, and issue statements supporting Palestinian students. Some also lamented the nine arrests earlier this week. Ettinger said the university has a policy prohibiting encampments and aims to ensure it's enforced neutrally, for all groups.

At the rallies, some speakers said they believed protesters of color were being unfairly targeted and were receiving fewer protections than their Jewish colleagues on campus. People participated in group chants calling for a ceasefire, describing the violence in Gaza as genocide and accusing Israel of promoting terrorism.

Graduate student Imogen Page, a member of Jewish Voice for Peace Twin Cities, has attended some of the pro-Palestinian protests.

"We know that we have a moral obligation to do everything in our power to stop our government from supporting this," Page said.

Page helped coordinate a Seder meal at the U protest site earlier this week.

"The way they participated was so moving," said Page, who noted this was the first time many had experienced the meal celebrating the deliverance of the ancient Hebrews from slavery in Egypt.

Greenspan, who is trying to revive a chapter of Students Supporting Israel, spent the first half of the week trying to balance his final classes of the semester with Seder meals held elsewhere. It's been a long few months full of unnerving protests. At one point, he and some others spotted a poster where someone had crossed out the Star of David.

He worries some of their messages are getting lost.

"I think there is a confusion when pro-Israel people come out and there's the idea that the Zionists or the pro-Israel people, we want this war to continue," he said. "We just want peace."

**Liz Navratil** covers higher education for the Star Tribune. She spent the previous three years covering Minneapolis City Hall as leaders responded to the coronavirus pandemic and George Floyd's murder.

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SHARI L. GROSS, STAR TRIBUNE

Senior Isabel Lundquist tapes flyers representing those kidnapped by Hamas on the windows at the University of Minnesota Hillel center in November.



(<https://arc.stimg.co/startribunemedia/JLFDLLARHONM>)

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ANTHONY SOUFFLE, STAR TRIBUNE

Pro-Palestinian supporters construct yurts during a rally against the latest war between Israel and Hamas. The protest happened hours after the University of Minnesota's campus police cleared an encampment set up by student groups on Tuesday.



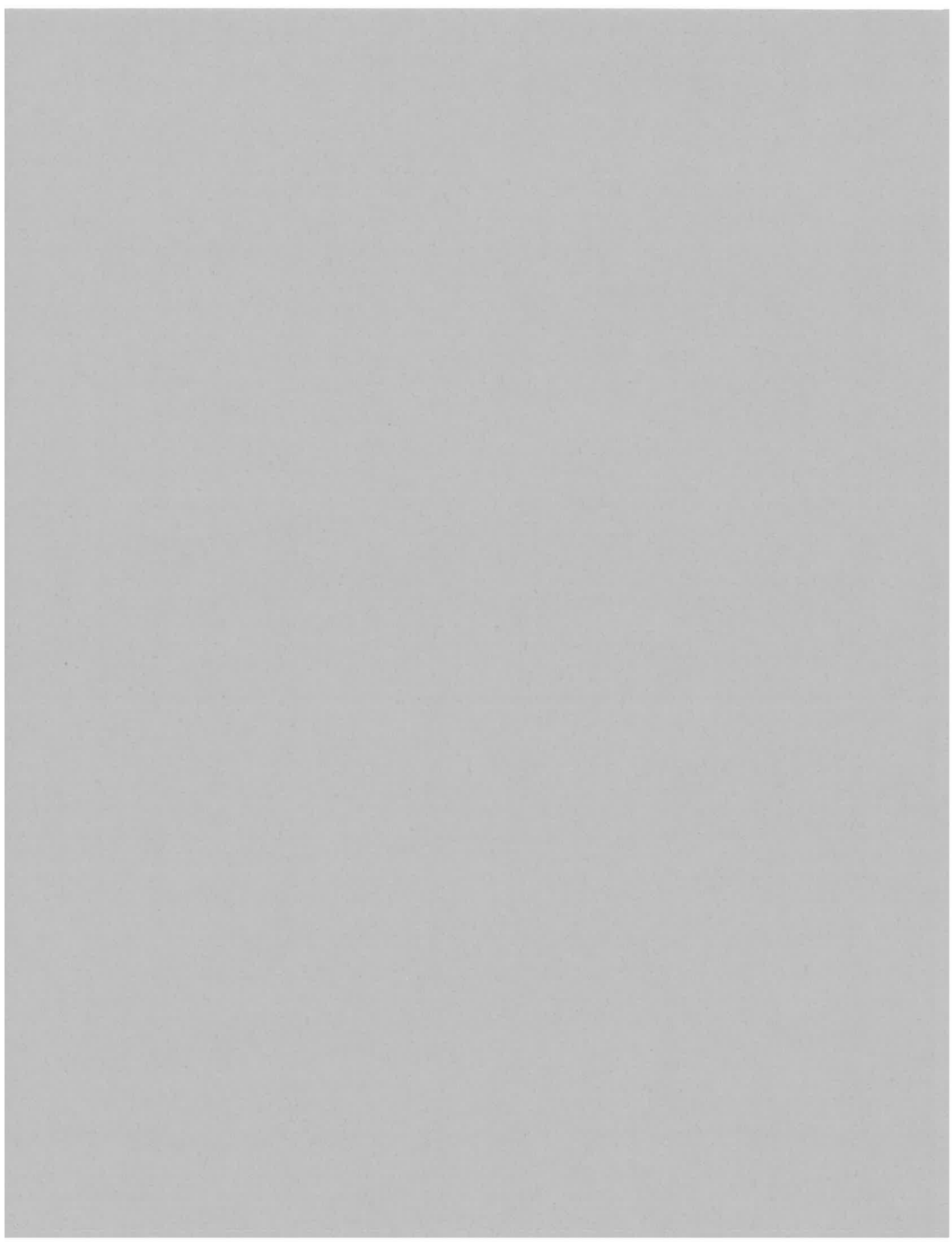
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ANTHONY SOUFFLE, STAR TRIBUNE

Pro-Palestinian protesters including Mirabai Dornfest, a junior, hold signs during a rally against the war between Israel and Hamas after the University of Minnesota's campus police cleared the Gaza Solidarity Encampment set up by the UMN Divest coalition.







# GWSS Faculty Statement on Palestine

October 16, 2023

**Gender Women and Sexuality Studies Faculty Statement on Palestine**  
**University of Minnesota**  
**October 13, 2023**

Amended November 20: This statement was written collectively by the tenured core faculty of the Department of Gender Women and Sexuality Studies. This statement does not reflect the position of the University of Minnesota. It is consistent with our right to exercise academic freedom and the principles and commitments reflected in other statements written by national and international organizations pertaining to our academic field; for example, the National Women's Studies Association call for an end to the war on Gaza, American Studies Association's statement on Gaza, and the Palestine Statement of the International Critical Geographies Group.

In the last week, violence has dramatically escalated in Palestine. After Hamas fighters brought down border fences and launched an incursion into Israeli territory, Israel responded by declaring total war on Gaza. On October 12, 1.1 million Gazans were given 24 hours to "evacuate", despite all checkpoints being closed and documented bombings of evacuees.

We mourn for the many lives lost. We stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people, and with Palestinian scholars and organizers. At a time when so many institutions are renewing a commitment to Israel's right to "self defense", we assert that Israel's response is not self-defense but the continuation of a genocidal war against Gaza and against Palestinian freedom, self-determination, and life.

To understand what is happening, we must look to history, and we must study. For the last sixteen years, Israel has illegally besieged 2 million people in Gaza. Gazans' access to power, water, and food are controlled by Israel and have been systematically cut off. Multiple military attacks by the Israeli state have destroyed Gaza's infrastructure; during these attacks, Israel bombs hospitals, schools, mosques, and apartment blocks where civilians live, claiming that Hamas is using civilians as human shields. Israel continues to expand illegal settlements in the West Bank and to stand by

while settlers commit terrifying attacks on Palestinian residents. We strongly reject the media coverage that condemns “both sides”, or seeks to tell a one-sided story of an unprovoked terrorist attack. Israeli leaders are wielding a violent power that subjugates the Palestinian people and constructs them as dehumanized terrorists, upon whom any bloodshed can be meted out. Meanwhile, global media coverage reproduces Islamophobic tropes of terrorism and unsubstantiated claims of “uncivilized” violence. In the process, politicians and the media are legitimizing the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. This is an obscene, immoral, and cowardly act.

The U.S. administration remains silent in the face of this ongoing massacre, refusing to recognize Israel’s persistent violations of international laws and human rights obligations. Israel has never been held to the same legal and human rights commitments that the U.S. demands from states to which it provides military and monetary support. As the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid, Israel had accumulated \$263 billion of assistance since 1949. In 2023, the U.S. government gave Israel \$3.8 billion in military aid, not including the resources President Biden promised Israel this week. This is a continuation of the settler colonialism and exceptionalism upon which the United States nation-state is founded and which has provided legitimacy to a host of U.S. imperial wars or proxy wars: in Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, Nicaragua, Panama, Vietnam, Laos, Korea, the Philippines, and many other places.

In the past decades, all forms of Palestinian resistance and solidarity with Palestine have been further criminalized or violently repressed, from the global boycott, divestment and sanctions movement (BDS) to the Great March of Return in 2018, during which peaceful protesters were fired on by Israeli soldiers. We stand against antisemitism. Objecting to the Israeli state’s settler colonial violence, however, is not antisemitic, and the conflation of support for Palestinian resistance with antisemitism is itself a violent oppressive form of censorship and an insult to our academic and moral integrity. We echo the South African anti-apartheid leader Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Palestinian civil society who have rightly pointed out that, “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.”

Our department has a rich history of studying transnational geopolitics and settler colonialism. We stand in solidarity with other scholars and centers facing the curtailing of academic freedom to speak on this issue, and to study it closely. Along with the Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Department at U.C. Santa Cruz, we condemn the harassment against organizers from the Institute for the Critical Study of Zionism (ICSZ). Along with the National Women’s Studies Association, we reaffirm support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement, and we call on students, colleagues, and friends around the country to call for lifting the siege, ending the occupation, and dismantling Israel’s apartheid system.

As members of a land grab university that resides on the unceded land Mni Sota Makoce of the Dakota people, we are painfully aware of our complicity with the settler colonial violence against Indigenous people and the continuing dispossession of their land on Turtle Island. We are equally

complicit with the global imperialism that engenders the maiming and killing of the Palestinian people by the U.S.-backed Israeli state. We insist on our ethical and political responsibility to raise our voices against settler colonialism, and the U.S. government's enabling military and monetary support of the apartheid state of Israel.

Writing from the site of the murders of Jamar Clark, Philando Castile, Isak Aden, Dolal Idd, Jamar Clark, George Floyd, and Daunte Wright, we reaffirm our commitment to anti-colonialism, abolition, and the dismantlement of militarized state violence across the world. Like many U.S.-based universities, the University of Minnesota has investments in companies that do business in illegal Israeli settlements in Palestine. We ask our university to divest from Israel, and support the call by Palestinian civil society for BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions). As we observe students and academic workers around the country being singled out and harassed for speaking out on Palestine, we call on the University of Minnesota to reaffirm a commitment to academic freedom, and to protect all in the university community who speak out against Israeli and U.S. violence.

As scholars and solidarity workers who seek justice everywhere, we respond to the call of Palestinian feminists and Palestinian freedom fighters for transnational solidarity and assert that Palestine is a feminist issue. None of us will be free unless the Palestinian people are free and Palestinian land is liberated.

"It is our duty then to write down the events that took place, as they took place, and to note them as they are before time weaves its strings of forgetfulness around them."—Palestinian journalist Arif Al-'Arif, writing on the Nakba in 1948

This statement reflects our individual views and we do not purport to speak for the University.

## **Solidarity and Educational Resources**

Al-Madinah Student Cultural Center

UMN Students for Justice in Palestine

Jewish Voice for Peace

Palestine Legal

Teaching Palestine resources from the University of Illinois Chicago Critical Asian Studies

Al Jazeera: Middle East-based news network

Jadaliyya: an independent ezine produced by the Arab Studies Institute

Gabriel Winant, "On Mourning and Statehood: A Response To Joshua Leifer," Dissent magazine October 12 2023.

Noura Erakat on Democracy Now, October 13 2023

\* This statement was adapted from a joint statement written by AGITATE! Journal collective members, the Imagining Transnational Solidarities Research Circle (ITSRC), and Gender Women and Sexuality Studies faculty in 2021. We are grateful for the solidarity of our colleagues.

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### **Reimagined Futures: The Transformative Power of Knowledge**

Associate Professor Rachmi Diyah Larasati founded a center for cultural education in Indonesia, where children imagine new futures for themselves through the power of dance.



### **“Not all is Lost”: The Violence of Colonial Architecture at the US-Mexico Border**

Graduate student Isaac Esposto spent the past summer in the Sonoran Desert, researching how colonialism is reflected and reinforced by the architecture of the southern border.



### **Moriah Shumpert Awarded RIDGS GRPP Summer Fellowship**

Feminist Studies PhD student Moriah Shumpert was awarded a GRPP Summer Fellowship from the Center for Race, Indigeneity, Disability, Gender, and Sexuality for 2024! Congrats