



# Jewish Faculty Network



March 25, 2025

Jewish Faculty Network - Canada, Statement of Solidarity with U.S. Academics:

**NOTE: this replaces an earlier version of this letter that circulated on March 18, 2025**

The abduction and attempted deportation of Mahmoud Khalil, coupled with ongoing threats to university funding and crackdowns on activists, academics, and the imprisonment and attempted deportation of those without U.S. citizenship, has stirred collective horror and rage among members of the Jewish Faculty Network, whose membership includes more than 200 faculty members at universities across Canada.

Our anger is not new, but it has reached a boiling point, following a year and a half of pro-Israel lobby groups audaciously claiming to speak on our behalf in support of the genocide in Gaza. Worse, they claim objections to Israel's actions since the horrific attacks of October 7th, 2023, are antisemitic. Even when human rights lawyers, international law experts and those expressing solidarity with Palestinian women, children and civilians object to the IDF's brutal massacres of civilians, we are told that they too are modern day antisemites. Especially when Jewish intellectuals express solidarity with Palestinian suffering, we are called 'self-hating' or 'antisemites' ourselves. This absurdity must stop. Real harm is caused by diluting the definition of antisemitism and weaponizing antisemitism in response to political dissent.

As Jewish faculty at universities and colleges across Canada, we extend solidarity to our colleagues in the United States who face this wave of xenophobic "cleansing." We view with alarm the Trump administration's renewed efforts to purge U.S. public and private universities of students and staff whose speech and research it finds threatening to white [and Christian](#) supremacy. Among these efforts, we note in particular the scapegoating of gender and sexuality studies, social studies, humanities research on colonialism, racism, capitalism, and imperialism, and scientific research into climate change, social determinants of health, and public health. Attacks on universities including scholasticide in Gaza and Donald Trump's mass funding cuts to research and programs are different manifestations of the same thing: attacks on academic freedom and democratic ideals.

We watch in horror the capitulation of university leadership over the past year and a half to the federal scrutiny and defamation of Palestinian solidarity encampments on campuses like Columbia University. The seeds of the current wave of repression have been sown by the refusal of campus administrations to defend academic freedom, creating an "exception" on Palestine that has become the rule, and which will expand [endlessly](#) and voraciously until we stop it. We fear that if we do not speak out now, it will be too late, and the reality will become a matter for historians.

We understand such large-scale attacks on higher education to be characteristic of the early stages of totalitarian regimes. When effective, the destabilization of universities separates, atomizes, and isolates researchers, delegitimizes inquiry, and prevents people—especially the



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young—from assembling freely and sharing ideas. When staff are fired and students expelled, they often also lose their status, homes, and means of support. This makes them more vulnerable to the arrests and deportations already promised by the Trump regime. We see a direct relationship between, for example, increasing repression of speech at Columbia University, the shameful and early [capitulation](#) of Columbia University President at the Senate hearing, and the flagrantly unlawful detention of [more and more](#) students and alumni.

For Jewish faculty, in particular, we are saddened and horrified to see such acts justified in the name of protecting Jewish students with the support of right-wing groups such as [Betar](#). We are at a turning point in history. This is a time when overt Nazi symbolism is being legitimized, as we have seen with the Nazi salute flung into the air by a multibillionaire unelected bureaucrat, as well as by another prominent advisor and ideologue of the Trump regime.

And we see growing ranks of [Christian Zionists](#) advance calls for a cruel and ruthless apocalypse centred on Palestine. Nothing about the current administration's attacks on universities, nor about the arrest and targeting of activists against the genocide in Gaza, makes us safe. While it may be convenient for extreme nationalists to align for the moment with the far right administration in the US and with Christian Zionists in general, we believe that doing so is both unprincipled and a catastrophic misjudgment. We believe that Jewish people should stand shoulder-to-shoulder with anti-racist, anti-colonial and human rights advocates, with Palestinians, and with those being targeted - not Trump, Netanyahu or AIPAC.

We believe that the Trump administration's eagerness to expel, fire, and deport protestors and dissenters, so reminiscent of past state persecutions of Jewish dissent, has nothing to do with Jewish safety but rather is [consonant with the antisemitic and ethnonationalist aims of his administration](#). We condemn the association of Jewish safety with state violence and repression, which can only divide us from our allies, [materially harm Jewish students](#), and lead to more antisemitism. This is a time when Jewish people should lock arms with others under fire, as our Jewish heritage of solidarity has taught us. We are not safe until everyone is safe. We urge all university administrators and state and local officials to [resist unconstitutional directives](#) and to safeguard academic freedom and all who benefit from it.

We stand in solidarity with colleagues, staff, and students whose academic freedom, free speech, and liberty are under attack. We call on all universities to resist the waves of repression facing academia and society writ large. As the landscape shifts rapidly, we are horrified by these initial instances of violence and fear that they will continue to escalate and we remain steadfast in our resolve to do everything we can to stop it and to lock arms with all those impacted.

In solidarity,

The Jewish Faculty Network - Canada