

## **TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY FACULTY UNION TAKES HISTORIC STAND AGAINST ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM**

May 15, 2025

TORONTO—On the anniversary of the 1948 *Nakba* (the catastrophe), the Toronto Metropolitan University Faculty Union (TFA) has voted overwhelmingly to support a joint motion to recognize and address anti-Palestinian racism in solidarity with the people of Palestine, as well as the students, faculty and staff at the university.

The historic motion, jointly introduced by TMU Faculty for Palestine (F4P) and TMU Jewish Faculty Network (JFN), was passed by a vote of 106-22. It acknowledges the urgent and escalating issue of anti-Palestinian racism, defined as the systemic silencing, defamation and erasure of Palestinian voices in light of the ongoing genocide, which has claimed more than 50,000 lives and left more than 115,000 injured.

“Because this has been a long-lasting oppression, I’m still processing what it means,” said Maher El-Masri, a Palestinian professor at the TMU Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing, after the results were announced. “But what I can see through this is that finally, finally, we are able to speak for ourselves. We are able to talk about our experiences of oppression, of dehumanization and of erasure. We’re able to say who we are without fear of who we are. We’re able to stand up to people who discriminate against us. This has always been silent suffering.”

The motion called for TFA membership to acknowledge and address three specific statements:

- Anti-Palestinian racism is a serious and specific kind of violence/oppression;
- Supporting Palestinian self-determination is not antisemitic; and
- Criticizing the policies of Israel, like any other state, is legitimate political expression.

“We need to name and oppose anti-Palestinian racism, just as we name and oppose antisemitism, anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism and settler colonialism,” said Christopher Powell, associate professor of sociology. “All antiracist struggles complement each other and they all work to the same end. So we’ve taken this measure to make the world a little bit safer for Palestinians, and for Jews, and for all people.”

The resolution demands the university create a formal policy to recognize and address anti-Palestinian racism and to protect freedom of speech, academic freedom and assembly rights for those expressing support for Palestine.

“As a Jew, I think anti-semitism is a real problem, on campus and off-campus,” said Joshua Price, professor of criminology. “But I’m consternated and concerned about using the charge of anti-semitism as a cudgel to try and quash pro-Palestinian voices.”

TFA equity chair Shiri Pasternak also highlighted the significance of the motion. “We have an important leadership role to play in society by standing shoulder to shoulder as a diverse membership of workers to vehemently oppose racism of all kinds, especially antisemitism, Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism at this crucial time of brutal – and seemingly endless – bombardment.”

By taking a stand rooted in principles of justice and solidarity, TMU faculty reaffirm our commitment to protecting academic freedom and human rights globally.

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