

Submission to the Toronto Police Service Board

August 22, 2024

Dear Valued TPS Board Members:

As a third generation Torontonian who has always felt a deep affinity and appreciation for the City of Toronto, I have been horrified by the virulent and too-often unchecked acts of antisemitism, violence, and hatred being demonstrated on an almost daily basis on the streets of this city since October 7, 2023, some of which began before Israel had even the time to react to the largest terrorist attack on Israeli soil in recent times, thanks to the global organization and funding efforts that appear to receive financing from Iran and its proxies.

<https://torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/kinsella-who-is-behind-funding-for-pro-palestinian-protesters> ; <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202408012272>

Canada and Ontario have strong hate and other civil disobedience laws in place to protect its citizens from acts that infringe on civic rights; it is imperative that these laws are fully acted upon and enforced to ensure the safety of all law-abiding Canadians.

Without full and consistent enforcement of existing legislation, chaos, fear, harm, disruption, and actions targeting an identifiable ethnic group (Jews and allies of Jews, in particular) will not only continue to plague this city, but will also grow in audacity, as reactions by officials to illegal actions that don't result in indictments are often perceived as an indication of general indifference at best and endorsement at worst. The impact of this situation on our city's tourism sector, economic state, as well as public safety, will be swift and serious. Our global reputation as an inclusive beacon of diversity and safety will continue to deteriorate due the unchecked disingenuous acts of criminal actors.

With a purported 64% increase in hate crimes, and a 108% increase in specifically anti-Jewish/Israeli hate crimes, in Toronto since last October, the TPS requires increased financing and manpower during these turbulent and unprecedented times. The "pro-Palestinian" protestors who barricade public bridges, engage in group prayer on public roads, sell anti-Israel paraphernalia on public sidewalks that obstruct pedestrian and wheelchair traffic, block access to high profile events like that of Italian Prime Minister Meloni, set off smoke bombs while wearing insignia of designated terrorist groups and broadcasting hate speech in Arabic in weekly demonstrations while also plastering hateful/inciteful posters on public utility poles/mailboxes/parking meters, set up encampments on public land, and target synagogues as well as Jewish homes, businesses, schools, and daycares are creating a strain on both the police force's budget as well as their ability to respond. On a personal level, they are also impeding my own sense of safety as I engage in mundane daily activities like walking my dog, commuting to work, and making my way to local weekend festivals and activities.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/thenational/hate-crimes-toronto-1.7228778> ;

https://www.cija.ca/anti_jewish_hate_crimes_in_toronto_more_than_doubled_in_2023

Without additional training and funding in place for this city's beleaguered police officers, it is difficult to imagine how the Toronto Police Service will be able to effectively respond to the disruptive, illegal actions that will no doubt resurge as the school year restarts in only two weeks'

time, or how citizens like me will be able to report and receive follow-up regarding illegal hate-related and other incidents. I have found that, over the past months, contacting TPS alternatives, like 311 as well as my Councillor, MP, and MPP in regard to illegal acts have been limited and inconsistent in response.

I am immensely grateful for the support that has already been provided to the Jewish members of this city and to the many kind and professional police service members whom I and others have encountered and engaged with since October 2023, but I believe that the goings-on of the past 10 months are a clear indication that more needs to be done to strengthen and enforce the existing legislation that will keep the streets of this beautiful city safe for all of its residents. Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the TPS consultation on public order.

Sincerely,

H. Turner