

# Canadian Women Against Antisemitism



Canadian Women Against Antisemitism (CWAA) thanks the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB) for the opportunity to participate in a public consultation on new public order policy for the TPSB. We believe that community engagement is vital and we trust that the TPSB will review our response with sensitivity and consideration.

CWAA would like to formally acknowledge the important work that Toronto Police Services has provided to the community in response to the unprecedented surge of antisemitic hate in Toronto since October 7th, 2023.

As a women-led, women-centric organization, we are writing on behalf of women in Toronto who are deeply concerned about the safety of our city. While some women have been outspoken; many more have been silenced by fear. Our primary focus is the impact and normalization of the frequent hateful and violent protests that promote terrorist and jihadist ideologies, criminal vandalism, verbal and physical assaults, and threats of violence aimed directly at the Jewish community. By offering insight, we are confident that TPS can determine how to mobilize, monitor, prevent and/or curb these illegal activities, and arrest and charge the criminals and terrorist promoters. Women are often targeted by criminal threats of sexual violence, which are commonly combined with misogynistic language and imagery. This exacerbates and compounds the emotional trauma women already experience, and exponentially increases fears for our safety, the safety of our families and the safety of our communities.

**“At 91 years of age, having lived in Canada through antisemitism in the 1930s, she is more afraid for herself and her family now than ever before. “When I was a child, they hated us quietly. Now they scream and threaten and not one does a thing. Now I am scared. I have never been scared before.” ~Betty**

Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms and its adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child give all Canadians rights and freedoms that include security and non-discrimination among other protections.<sup>1</sup>

CWAA approaches the topic of safety from the intersectionality of our identities as Jews and as women. We caution readers that this letter includes disturbing language and imagery. Based on our position within the community, we will speak to aspects of safety where this intersectionality is present, as follows:

- Women are more likely to be targeted for public intimidation and isolation in general.
- There has been an astronomical rise in antisemitic incidents. Jews have been warned not to enter public spaces where their safety could be compromised. This includes spaces such as university and college campuses, where all students, including Jewish students, ought to have equal access. For Jewish women, there is a particular vulnerability - physically, psychologically and socially - that is triggered and exploited.

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<sup>1</sup> CRC – Articles, 19, 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39.

- For Jewish women, there is explicit misogyny that is attached to antisemitic epithets: Examples include “You are Zionist whores” or “Resistance by Any Means Necessary.” Women are often physically blocked or threatened as part of this misogynistic intimidation. Witness statements included below provide lived experiences of these incidents.
- Given the presence of the slogan “By Any Means Necessary” and the violent misogynistic rhetoric present at protests and encampments, we firmly stand on the understanding that this slogan is the legitimization of and direction to rape as a weapon of war and specifically, when it is chanted on our streets, it serves as a call for violence against women.
- Compounding and further violating through inversion and subversion; the rhetoric of the denial of the sexual violence inflicted on Jewish women on Oct 7 is often juxtaposed with the blatant celebration of this day of massacre against the Jewish people, which glorifies the sexual violence amplified by its perpetrators.
- The aggregate of this multifaceted, evolving and intersectional nature of antisemitism in Canada, particularly in Toronto, its largest city, and its pervasion in all aspects of Canadian society - education, employment, community and politics - has led to a sense of fear, insecurity, isolation and uncertainty for many Jews in Canada. CWAA will put forward a series of tangible recommendations to address these issues.

#### **Activities between October 8th, 2023 and August 21, 2024**

While the following examples are not all specifically misogynistic, one must understand that as women, we are not only recipients of female-targeted hate, but all Jewish-targeted hate, and in accumulation, these activities have fostered an image of Toronto as a host city that is frightening and unsafe. The actions of TPS thus far have not enabled us to regain a sense of freedom or safety, and our fear has only intensified as antisemitic incidents multiply and escalate.

#### **Pro-jihad protests and aggression at Pro-Israel rallies**

The overt tone and content of pro-jihad protests, including weekly protests at the Avenue Road Bridge and throughout the GTA have been threatening. Demonstrations featuring aggressive and inflammatory language, hate symbols associated with groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, and the use of masks and smoke bombs have heightened fears and unease among Jewish residents. Additionally, the denial and glorification of the October 7th massacres have further contributed to the anxiety experienced by the community.

At an Iranian celebratory event at Queens Park in October 2023, one of our CWAA members was punched in the face and physically harmed by a pro-jihad aggressor whose cohort ambushed this event. The police presence was insufficient to protect the celebration from this aggression by terrorist supporters. Our member was violently assaulted ostensibly because she was holding a hostage poster at an event expressing multi-faith solidarity with the Iranian people. No charges were laid against any individual who committed this hate crime, aggravated assault, and gender

based violence, yet the incident received some media attention, was spoken about in the House of Commons, and was recorded and photographed.

In June, masked pro-jihadists roamed along Hove Street in Toronto, a known Jewish neighbourhood during the UJA Walk for Israel threatening residents and calling them “baby killers”, after being blocked from entering the Prosserman JCC property from the ravine entrance in order to protest the Walk. We thank TPS for barring them from entering the property, and preventing them from threatening the children that were eating and playing mere metres away.

In August, an 88-year old Jewish man was violently assaulted at the weekly pro-Israel rally at Bathurst and Sheppard, an incident that was recorded and spread across social media. The Islamist woman charged by Toronto Police Services uttered hate speech in a recorded video clip, saying “that’s the problem with these Jews. They’re liars.”

Pro-jihad protesters use signs and slogans of “By any means necessary” and “Rape is resistance”, as well as other threatening language. Video footage of multiple instances is readily available online.



Sticker found in Toronto, 2024



Toronto Protest, 2024



Uber in Toronto, 2024

## University-based pro-jihad protests and encampments

The encampments at the University of Toronto this year, as well as protests and demonstrations at York University and TMU, were threatening to Jewish women due to the hostile environment that they cultivated. Female Jewish students were targeted and threatened both physically and verbally through the use of anti-Israel rhetoric that crossed into antisemitism. This environment led to feelings of alienation, fear of harassment, and concern for personal safety, particularly for those who openly identify as Jewish or express pro-Israel views.

According to protesters at TMU on April 30th, 2024, members of CWAA were called “Zionist whores” and “fucking child abusers for having Zionist babies” and of course, “Rich Jewish Bitches.” We were also told that we “ought to be raped”.

One student was targeted at the TMU and threatened with rape and death and told she “should have been aborted”. She had to continue her studies from home for fear of her safety.



University of Toronto Encampments, 2024



Union Station, May 31, 2024

## Vandalism of Jewish establishments and Toronto buildings

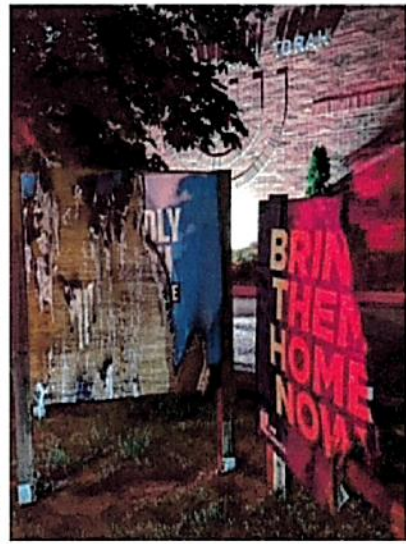
Multiple Jewish community buildings, private businesses and property recognized or assumed to be owned by Israelis or Jews have been threatened and/or vandalized in the last 10 months, often repeatedly. Jewish day schools have been shot at or set on fire. Synagogues have been vandalized. A Jewish-owned school bus was set on fire. While there has been an increased police presence at some establishments, it is our view that a strong response will deter further instances, as opposed to the response provided by our Mayor suggesting that Jewish buildings install “bullet-proof windows”.



Palestinian Flag painted on the building at 53 Strachan Avenue, Toronto



Vandalism at a Jewish MP's office



Vandalism and fire at a Toronto Synagogue, July 2024

## Threats to Jewish Institutions

On the morning of August 21, 2024 over 100 Canadian institutions, including many in Toronto, received email bomb threats. While determined to be a “hoax”, buildings had to be closed and inspected, causing disruption and terror for the Jewish community, individually and collectively.

**Every single Jewish person in the City of Toronto is reframing their baseline of safety. It is understood that our very identity is a liability.**

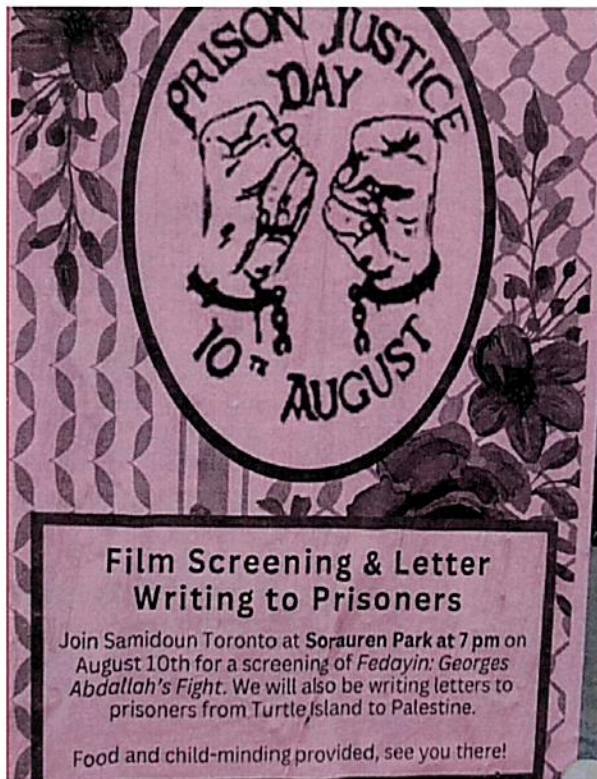
## Indoctrination and Incitement

Over the past several years, and with a notable escalation since October 7th, 2023, there has been a troubling increase in the indoctrination of Toronto's youth and the glorification of individuals

associated with terrorism. This trend has created an environment that is rapidly becoming unmanageable and volatile.

Organizations such as Samidoun, an arm of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a listed terror organization in Canada, have put on several events in Toronto aimed at indoctrinating more “soldiers” for their cause, and spreading hate.

One example is Samidoun’s July 19th event to “teach” new recruits with the use of the PFLP manifesto, which resulted in a new Toronto chapter being formed, and its leader making an inflammatory, highly antisemitic and inciteful speech in Vancouver shortly after. Another is a recently scheduled screening of a movie glorifying the life of Georges Abdallah, a convicted terrorist. Thankfully, a CWAA member pre-empted the screening by speaking to bylaw and police officers, who had no knowledge of Samidoun but understood that the group had no permit to show the film, and had it shut down.



This flyer was posted by the hundreds in the Roncesvalles areas August 2024



Screenshot from a Samidoun class taught in Toronto July 17th, 2024

## **Recommendations:**

Through many discussions with federal and provincial legislators and lawyers, CWAA understands that the TPSB is responsible for providing directives that are within the Criminal Code, Charter of Rights and Freedoms and other current legislation.

To be clear: under no kind of critical analysis, under no kind of contrived diverse, equitable and inclusive framework, can these expressions, acts and threats of violence, hate and intended terror be equated with “Islamophobia”, “anti-Muslim racism” or “anti-Palestinian racism”. Every documented and preventable anecdote that we shared are explicit, emboldened and metastasizing Jew Hate/Antisemitism. We respectfully reject any further platitudes, connotations or equivalencies going forward.

Recognizing this, the TPSB can take several steps to increase the safety and security of the Toronto Jewish Community. Included below are some key recommendations for consideration and implementation.

1. **Enhanced Patrols in Jewish Areas:** Increase police presence in neighborhoods with significant Jewish populations, particularly around synagogues, Jewish community centers, and schools, especially during holidays and events.
2. **Strengthen the Hate Crime Unit:** Allocate more resources and provide specialized training in identifying acts of antisemitism in general and antisemitic acts and language targeting women. This training should be extended to all police officers, hate crime officers, administrators, and trainees, focusing on the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and the recognition of hate speech, symbols, and gestures and be led in concert with leaders of the mainstream Jewish community. Additionally, include training on identifying and understanding pro-jihadist groups within Canada, such as Samidoun, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) and other fringe groups that have co-opted Jewish names for antisemitic purposes, and Students for Palestine. Publicize the Unit’s efforts to demonstrate a strong commitment to combating hate crimes. The TPSB should also collaborate with provincial and federal governments to better understand and apply current laws related to hate crimes and criminal behavior in Toronto.
3. **Community Outreach and Engagement:** Establish regular communication channels between the police and Jewish community leaders to ensure that concerns are heard and addressed promptly. Hold town hall meetings or forums to discuss safety issues and foster trust. Establish Jewish Community Liaison Officer positions, to be filled by leaders of the mainstream Jewish community.

4. **Rapid Response Protocols:** Develop and implement rapid response protocols for threats against Jewish institutions. This could include faster dispatch times and coordinated efforts with private security teams.
5. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Partner with mainstream Jewish organizations to create public awareness campaigns that promote understanding and condemn antisemitism. Highlight police efforts to protect the community, reinforcing the message that hate will not be tolerated.
6. **Surveillance and Intelligence Gathering:** Increase surveillance and intelligence efforts to identify potential threats to the Jewish community, particularly from extremist groups. Collaborate with federal and provincial agencies to monitor and act on credible threats, including known and promoted Telegram and Instagram sites.
7. **Support for Victims:** Provide specialized support services for victims of antisemitic crimes, including counseling, legal assistance, and guidance through the criminal justice process. Jewish Community Liaison Officers could lead such support.
8. **Increase Police and Hate Unit budgets:** all of the above cannot be made possible without increased budgets. More officers are required to fulfill the current climate of hate on our streets, and more finances are required to accomplish the necessary training.
9. **Ensure that more charges are laid once arrests have been made in order to both set a precedent that hate crimes will not be tolerated, and act as a deterrence for future hate crimes.**
10. **Ensure that the TPSB and TPS are not liable to inclusivity of individuals who privately and/or publicly uphold, practice, or identify with terrorist or jihadist beliefs or ideologies, or express solidarity with known or suspected terrorist or jihadist ideologues or entities, irrespective of the individual's race, religion, ethnicity, cultural or gender identity.**

Pursuant to the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General of Canada's official response on August 21, 2024 to Talia Klein Leighton's E-Petition e-4960 of June 5, 2024 as presented to the House of Commons by Kevin Vuong (Spadina-Fort York), we compel the Toronto Police Services to uphold and execute the law against violators as follows:

"Independent police and prosecutors are responsible for applying the criminal law, including determining whether or not particular conduct amounts to a criminal offence. In all cases, decisions to prosecute are generally based on two considerations: (1) whether there is a reasonable prospect of conviction and (2) whether it is in the public interest to prosecute"



These measures, directed by the TPSB, will significantly enhance the physical security of the Jewish community, and contribute to a broader sense of safety and trust between the community and law enforcement.

In conclusion, we thank you for the opportunity to submit our document and look forward to clear, sustainable changes that will make a difference in our community. We offer our availability to discuss this matter further to provide mechanisms to partner with the TPSB.

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Canadian Women Against Antisemitism