Dear Toronto Police Service Board:

Thank you so much for highlighting the importance of Public Order, by requesting input on important elements that residents would like to see in the Board’s new Public Order Policy, and input on suggested priorities the Board should establish for the Service and the Chief in this area.

It pains me greatly to say this: *For every resident providing a submission such as this one, there are many, many others with similar concerns regarding public order, but who are* ***silent*** *because they are* ***intimidated*** *by the antisemitic violence and hatred that has increased on our streets and in our communities so dramatically since October 7th 2023.*

Therefore, the continued effectiveness and ability of Toronto Police to maintain and enforce public order at this time, even more important than ever:

1. For the sake of maintaining orderly society in the face of an increasing number of violent disruptions impacting ordinary citizens in public spaces. **And equally important**:
2. To prevent those who disrupt the public order from intimidating the rest of us by sending the implicit message that if they can get away with unacceptable aggressive behaviours, that we should fear them, and not speak out.

As a proud member of Toronto's Jewish community, I am deeply concerned about antisemitism in our city that has grown in recent years - And which has increased especially sharply since October 7th, 2023. As you are aware, October 7th was the day on which thousands of Gaza-based Hamas terrorists invaded Israel and tortured, [raped, mutilated](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67629181) and murdered over 1200 Israelis and kidnapped 250 others, in the largest single-day mass-murder of Jews since the Holocaust.

I would like to express my deep gratitude for everything the Toronto Police have been doing, and continue to do, to respond to the sharp rise of antisemitic confrontations and even physical attacks on Jews in Toronto since October 7th, 2023. Toronto Police demonstrated their professionalism and support of the Jewish community immediately, starting with their substantial presence at Earl Bales Park, at the rally on Monday October 9th 2023. And have continued to provide a steady and regular presence since then at synagogues and schools, and in our streets. **Thank you so very much**.

But as Chief Demkiw explained back in December (per <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/hate-crimes-data-toronto-police-1.7064086> ):

* ***Antisemitism makes up 53 per cent of all reported hate crimes since Oct. 7 (56 of 105 total occurrences).***

This is a truly staggering volume of hate crimes perpetrated specifically against members of Toronto's Jewish community - given that Jews comprise a very small fraction - **only 4.5% of Toronto's population**.

Members of the Toronto Jewish community such as myself, have been subjected to repeated intimidation and confrontation by a loud and sometimes even riotous anti-Israel, antisemitic minority. They are ever more brazenly invading public spaces across the city, and as you are aware, have broken windows of synagogues, vandalized Jewish businesses; and have repeatedly disrupted normal public life by blocking traffic and highways. They have even invaded residential neighbourhoods with significant Jewish populations, such as at the 401 and Wilson Avenue.

I believe the board's new priorities should include clear and urgent focus on how officers can rapidly and effectively stop these disruptions to public order, and ensure basic civility both at Jewish institutions specifically, and in all public spaces across the city.

Officers should be educated and trained appropriately to understand the critical distinction between acceptable, peaceful protests, vs. unacceptable forms of protest (including calls for genocide) and how to respond effectively. Here are some examples for your consideration, as to how the policy should emphasize and prioritize, *as described in the Service’s current* [*Procedure 11-04 Protests and Demonstrations*](https://www.tps.ca/media/procedures/4a50b3c4-ddee-4af0-a73a-b3f6817a4ac8.pdf)*, that a police officer, upon arrival at the scene of a protest or demonstration shall* ***prevent any breach of the peace*** *and* ***ensure*** *persons and vehicles have access to the premises concerned and* ***are not intimidated or interfered with:***

**Examples of acceptable peaceful protest**:

* Peaceful protests outside a consulate are acceptable
* Peaceful protests outside Queens Park are acceptable
* Peaceful gatherings and marches that *do not* disrupt public thoroughfares or highways - and that *do not* call for killing Jews - are acceptable.

In contrast, here are examples of **unacceptable forms of protest (which clearly constitute hate crimes)**, and for which the Public Order policy should prioritize effective responses by officers:

* **Calls for support of Hamas** and the crimes they perpetrated on October 7th is a violation of public order as it is an outright call to violence. It is intended to instill fear in Jews and anyone who opposes antisemitism and hatred.
* **Chants promoting "Globalize the Intifada"** are outright calls for genocide of Jews worldwide, and disruption of civil society
* **Chants that "Palestine will be free from the river to the sea"** constitute an outright call for the destruction of the State of Israel, home to [over 6 million Jews (and over 2 million Israeli non-Jewish Arabs)](https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/mediarelease/DocLib/2021/447/11_21_447e.pdf)
* **Masked protestors invading a residential neighbourhood** and confronting residents with this type of hate speech is extremely threatening to members of the Jewish community – and in my opinion, *to the entire community*, including members of all religions and of none.
* **Invasions of places of government, public services, businesses, or university campuses, and disruption of events** based on a perceived entitlement to protest policies related to Israel are a severe disruption of public order, and officers should be able to prevent such invasions of public space and enforce the peace, including arrests if necessary.

The above are examples of outright **hate speech**. And all too often devolve into illegal riots by masked protestors. Officers have been valiantly confronting and are beginning to make arrests where needed, and should continue to increase efforts and resources needed to do so.

For all of the above, the board should consider how more officers can be provided with the education and training, in consultation with the appropriate Jewish organizations in Toronto as needed: Officers should be enabled to rapidly and effectively identify these severely problematic and even illegal disruptions of public order, and take immediate action to break up the disruptions, **including arrests as necessary**. Exactly as would be the case for any outright call to murder any other group of people.

Thank you so much for your consideration of the above, and for your continued dedication to serve and protect our community.

Sincerely,

David Freudenstein

Toronto