

OVERVIEW

1.1 About JEFA

The Jewish Educators and Family Association of Canada (JEFA) is a registered not-for-profit corporation that was born out of necessity to represent Jewish educators, students and their families, in the K-12 school system. It's founding members represent licenced educators, parents and education experts who felt compelled to respond to the precipitous increase in antisemitism in our education system. For more information, please go to www.JEFA.ca.

JEFA is firm in its belief that we can and should have schools free of hate and discrimination of all forms. This submission is intended to help provide insight on the practical implication that Anti-Palestinian racism (APR) policies have on Jewish Educators and Families, the vast majority of which are Zionist. Hate or discrimination of any kind against Palestinian people only serves to weaken the fabric of our communities. APR policies and training that have been implemented in our schools have not succeeded to promoting tolerance, acceptance or peace.

Palestinian identity can and must co-exist alongside Jewish identity in Canada. Jewish identity cannot exist in Canada if it's deemed a source of racism – Anti-Palestinian Racism (APR).

Terminology

2.1 Definition of Anti-Palestinian Racism

The most cited definition of Anti-Palestinian Racism is the one proposed by the Arab Canadian Lawyer Association, as the following (emphasis added):

*Anti-Palestinian racism is a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians **or their narratives**.*

The Arab Canadian Lawyer Association include the following as examples of anti-Palestinian racism:

denying the Nakba;
failing to acknowledge Palestinians as an Indigenous people with rights in relation to historic Palestine;
excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians and their allies;

APR is a proposed category of hate and discrimination that requires thoughtful deliberation because it expands on the concept of discrimination in two very unique ways:

First, it would be the first category of racism to apply to a nation-seeking group. Currently, there is no protected equity class for Anti-Kurdish Racism or Anti-Yazeedi Racism, as examples. APR is inherently geopolitical.

Secondly, this is the only form of hate that captures “narratives”; differences of opinion in relation to geopolitical issues become discriminatory. Additionally, because it captures “narratives”, it also extends to allies sharing those narratives.

IHRA definition and incompatibility

Anti Palestinian Racism is incompatible with the IHRA definition of antisemitism which has been adopted by the Government of Canada.

This does not seem to be contested.

Several major advocates for APR tie Jewish identity to this form of “racism.” In the Canadian Center for Justice and Peace in the Mid-East (CJPME) 2022 Anti-Palestinian Racism In Canada report:

“One of the most significant mechanisms of APR today is the controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism (“IHRA”)”

The Arab Canadian Lawyers Association, together with other organizations, says in their May 6th, 2024 submission on Combatting Anti-Palestinian Racism and Antisemitism that Canada must address the role “the IHRA definition of antisemitism has played in perpetuating anti-Palestinian racism.” The IHRA definition of antisemitism is one that connects Jewish identity with Israel and provides that anti-Israel or Anti-Zionism is a form of antisemitism. Most recently, CJPME stated that that “IHRA should therefore be understood as a form of state-sponsored anti-Palestinian racism.”¹

Practical Implications of APR Policies

3.1 SILENCING OF JEWISH PEOPLE WITH CLAIMS OF APR

Examples	Accusations
Orgs - CIJA	CJPME cites, as an example of APR, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), for example, dismissed Amnesty’s report that referred to Israel as apartheid because doing so “ignores the right of Jews to their ancestral homeland, where they have live for thousands of years.”
Politicians – Selina Robinson & Deborah Lyons	Ex. 1 Accused of APR and successful calls for her resignation, after her comments that Israel was founded on a “crappy piece of land.” Ex. 2 CJPME stated in a recent report considering the conduct of the Special Envoy Deborah Lyons and concluded that her efforts to combat antisemitism “clearly demonstrates a pattern of anti-Palestinian racism”. ²
Parents – Anissa (Halton)	Pulled her daughter out of school for antisemitism and was subsequently accused of APR because she expressed concerns about a map of Israel being labelled Palestine
Teachers	Ex 1. CK, a TDSB teacher accused of APR for retweets of prominent and respected public figures, with campaign to file complaints against her for it. Ex 2. Lisa Levitan, <u>awarded the Prime Minister's Certificate of Achievement</u> , is a well-respected teacher in the Ottawa Carleton District School Board. In October, within days of Oct 7th and before any military incursion, Lisa took to social media declaring that people either stand with Israel or with terrorism. Her comments precipitated a nation-wide effort to have her disciplined, including multiple petitions and letter writings campaigns.

¹ https://www.cjpme.org/defaming_palsol

² https://www.cjpme.org/defaming_palsol

“Demand suspension of Ottawa educator Lisa Levitan for anti- Palestinian racism!” – CJPME IG post¹

SUSPEND NOW!

Lisa Levitan
Educator with Ottawa–Carleton District School Board

for social media posts and statements to the media suggesting that anyone who doesn't support Israel actually supports terrorism.

EMAIL THE OCDSB NOW!

cjpmeofficial u campussolidarity

cjpmeofficial Demand suspension of Ottawa educator Lisa Levitan for anti-Palestinian racism!

https://www.cjpmecontent.org/suspend_lisa_levitan

In October, Lisa Levitan, an educator with the Ottawa Carleton District School Board made social media posts and statements to the media suggesting that either people support Israel – a country accused of practicing apartheid by Amnesty International – or they are supporters of terrorism. Ms. Levitan's statements contribute to a climate of hostility and discrimination within the OCDSB, violating several provisions of the

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29 ноември 2023 г.

Влезте, за да харесате или коментирате.

3.2 Informal Incorporation of APR into the Education System

Anti Palestinian racism has not been formally adopted in any school board in Ontario. It has, however, been unofficially implemented in many school boards.

The closest it has got to formal recognition within school boards was on June 19 2024 when the Toronto District School Board, the fourth largest school board in North America, approved the development of a 2 year anti- Palestinian racism strategy.

In debating the report itself, Director of Education Colleen Russel-Rawlins explained that there was no possible way that they could define anti-Palestinian Racism. Despite having that clarity that there was no possibility of defining APR, the Board adopted the Strategy and APR's inclusion therein

No one at the meeting seemed to have the answer for how a strategy could be developed to tackle an undefined term with no guidance as to its meaning; however, we can look to the training received by trustees, administrators, educators, and students.

For instance, in February of 2022, TDSB educators were provided training during a professional development session with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation that provided education on anti-Palestinian racism. This training provided the following examples of Anti-Palestinian Racism:

- Assigning genocidal or violent intent to the phrase “Free Palestine, from the river to the sea”, which the APR training frames as ‘hopeful Palestinian poetry’
- Asking why other Arab countries don't help Palestinians
- Asking someone to denounce Hamas and Hezbollah as a means of testing the “acceptability” of their views on the Middle East conflict

Later that same month (Feb 2022) the TDSB implemented anti-Palestinian racism training for staff and students and trustees. Later that school year the TDSB approved an initiative to combat anti-Palestinian racism, starting at grade 3.

The following year (Feb 2023) the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation provided additional anti- Palestinian racism professional development, titled “Anti-Palestinian Racism: Nakba Denial.” At this training proposals were made to urge the Ministry to make the “Nakba” a mandatory subject in Ontario.

In December of 2023 the TDSB provided two sessions of anti-Palestinian racism training for TDSB administrators. TDSB staff are being trained on a definition of APR that is not compliant with Jewish identity, with the IHRA definition adopted by the Government of Canada, and does not allow for the mutual coexistence of Israeli and Palestinian identities. Its use is coinciding with the silencing of Jewish voices and Jewish identities.