



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA

DEIAC 2-2024

Tuesday, April 30, 2024

4:00 p.m.

Meeting will be held by electronic participation only

If you are interested in viewing this meeting or would like to speak to an item listed on the agenda please contact the Office of the Regional Clerk at clerk@niagararegion.ca.

	Pages
1. <u>CALL TO ORDER</u>	
2. <u>LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT</u>	
3. <u>DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST</u>	
4. <u>PRESENTATIONS</u>	
5. <u>DELEGATIONS</u>	
6. <u>ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION</u>	
6.1 <u>DEIAC Terms of Reference Review</u>	3 - 46
Note: The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2023 - 2027 has been included for reference purposes only.	
6.2 <u>DEIAC-C 3-2024</u>	47 - 148
Correspondence from Gabriel Gebril, resident, City of St. Catharines, respecting his delegation at the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting held on April 16, 2024	
7. <u>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u>	
None.	
8. <u>OTHER BUSINESS</u>	

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend or participate in meetings or events, please contact the Accessibility Advisor at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 (office), 289-929-8376 (cellphone) or accessibility@niagararegion.ca (email).

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Appendix to Report CLK 4-2023

**Recommended for Approval by the Corporate Services Committee on May 10,
2023**

Ratified by Regional Council on May 18, 2023

CONSOLIDATED AMENDMENTS:

Subject	Authority	Date
Reporting Structure	Housekeeping due to corporate restructuring	January 11, 2024

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1. PREFACE

The Regional Municipality of Niagara and the 12 Local Area Municipalities affirmed their support for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) when they signed a joint declaration to join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIM) on September 18, 2020. The objectives of the Coalition are to improve municipal practices for social inclusion, establish policies to eradicate racism and discrimination, and promote human rights and diversity. There are ten common commitments to guide municipalities in developing policies and programs, which focus on challenging racism and discrimination and providing opportunities for community members from all backgrounds to have a voice and participate in decision making in areas including housing, police, education, employment, and the labour market.

A glossary of terms to assist with understanding diversity, equity, and inclusion have been provided at the end of the Terms of Reference.

2. MANDATE

The Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DEIAC) is an advisory body established by the Regional Municipality of Niagara in accordance with the following Terms of Reference. The Committee will provide support to Regional staff in the implementation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan and provide recommendations, advice, and information to Regional Council and Regional Staff on matters pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This includes matters relating to anti-racism, the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, and other intersections of diversity within Niagara.

3. GOAL AND PURPOSE

The goal of the Committee is to address bias and discrimination and its negative impacts on quality of life, safety, health, and inclusion for the diverse communities in Niagara providing a safe place for all people to voice their opinions in order to work together to promote and foster understanding and inclusion in Niagara.

The purpose of the Committee is to:

- Advise and provide recommendations on the development and review of Niagara Region plans, policies and procedures to ensure they reflect Niagara Region's commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion within the organization, and within the community
- Provide advice and feedback for the municipality as an employer and service provider on the organizations' diversity and inclusion needs

- Provide input and feedback as requested on Regional issues relating to DEI
- Provide advice to advance the internal action items of the DEI Action Plan

4. REPORTING STRUCTURE

The DEIAC will report to Regional Council through the appropriate Standing Committee.

5. BUDGET

The DEIAC shall have an annual operating budget to be used for valid Committee purposes as detailed in the budget approved by Regional Council for the current year and aligned with the annual Committee work plan.

6. MEMBERSHIP

a. Composition

The DEIAC will be comprised of up to 12 members. Membership for the DEIAC shall include:

- Two (2) Regional Councillors
- Ten (10) public members

One (1) designated staff member shall serve as staff liaison. Other staff may be requested to join meetings or support the work of this committee as need arises.

The members shall represent the diversity of the Region and broad cross-section of residents, including geographical and gender balance. An intersectional approach should be taken to ensure representation by community members with lived experience or service in agencies related to one or more of the following dimensions of diversity:

- Ethnocultural and linguistic diversity
- Racialized communities or People of Colour
- Francophone
- New immigrants
- Indigenous communities
- LGBTQ2S+ individuals
- Individuals with disabilities, including mental health disabilities
- Seniors/older adults
- Individuals living with low income/homeless

- Post-secondary students/youth
- Faith-based diversity

All attempts will be made to stay within the guideline composition; however, if the applications received or the qualifications of applicants do not fully address the guideline composition criteria, the most capable and qualified applicants will be recommended for appointment to fulfill the membership composition.

b. Term

The term of membership shall be four years, with every four years concurrent with Regional Council's elected term of office. Membership shall be approved by Council in accordance with membership requirements in the Terms of Reference.

7. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Chair & Vice Chair

A Chair and Vice Chair will be elected from Committee members at the first meeting to preside over meetings and Committee business for a two-year term. The Chair of the Committee shall be a Regional Councillor and the Vice Chair of the Committee shall be a public member of the Committee.

It is the role of the Chair to preside over Committee meetings so that its business can be carried out efficiently and effectively, and to act as liaison between the Committee, Regional Council, and other committees. It is the role of the Vice Chair to preside over Committee meetings and act as a liaison in the absence of the Chair.

b. Committee Members

All DEIAC members, including the Chair and Vice Chair, have the responsibility to help achieve the Committee's Mandate and Purposes. Committee members are also responsible for:

- Reviewing meeting materials in advance of the meetings and arriving prepared to provide a broad perspective on the issues under consideration
- Contributing to the creation of an annual work plan
- Working diligently to complete assigned activities
- Participating on working groups, as appropriate
- Agreeing to describe, process, and resolve issues in a professional and respectful manner

- Providing input to help identify future projects or strategic priorities for future years' work
- Communicating activities of the Committee to groups represented or those who may have an interest and offer information back to the Committee
- Be a positive representative of the Regional Municipality of Niagara Region
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct for Public Members on Niagara Region Advisory Committees

8. WORKING GROUPS

To fulfill its mandate and accomplish its goals, the DEIAC may establish working groups to deal with specific issues or projects. Working groups are considered to be time-limited, project specific sub-committees of the DEIAC in that they are convened to accomplish a specific task (or tasks) in a narrowly defined time period.

Working groups must be comprised of at least one member of the DEIAC and may include community members and other individuals with relevant knowledge and expertise.

Working groups shall be chaired where possible by a voting member of the DEIAC and shall provide regular updates to the DEIAC regarding recommendations on assigned projects. Meeting notes of the working group shall be taken and submitted to the DEIAC. Working groups may meet at a time and place as decided by the members of the working group.

9. RESOURCES

The Manager of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Indigenous Relations, or a delegate is the designated lead to provide resource support for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee.

The DEIAC is encouraged to collaborate with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and Women's Advisory Committee, and any other relevant Advisory Committee on areas of common interest.

The DEIAC shall receive administrative support from the Office of the Regional Clerk for meeting and agenda management.

10. MEETINGS

The DEIAC shall meet at least six times per year and may meet more frequently if required. A meeting schedule should be set for the DEIAC and circulated to the members for approval each year. Should a time sensitive matter arise requiring immediate attention, the DEIAC may meet at the call of the Chair.

The DEIAC meetings may be held in a virtual format, at Regional Headquarters or another suitable location as may be determined. All meetings will be open to the public.

Meetings shall be governed by the Region's Procedural By-law, being a by-law to govern the calling, place and proceedings of the meetings of Council and its Committees, as may be amended from time-to-time.

A committee member who is unable to attend a meeting, shall forward their regrets to the Office of Regional Clerk as soon as possible. Should the Office of Regional Clerk not have confirmation of quorum 24 hours prior to the meeting, the meeting shall be cancelled.

11. ABSENTEEISM

Members who miss three unauthorized consecutive meetings shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and will be notified of this in writing by the Committee Chair.

12. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference should be reviewed and refined at a minimum of every four years to ensure that they remain current and meaningful.

Proposals to amend the Terms of Reference shall require the approval of a majority of the members present. Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference shall be submitted to Regional Council for Approval.

13. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

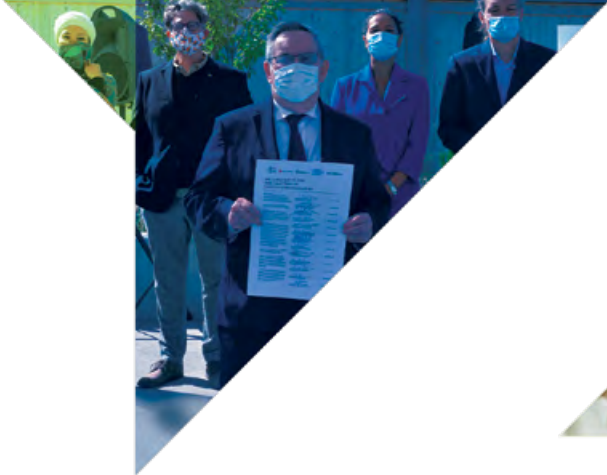
Discrimination: The treatment or consideration based on class or category rather than individual merit and that can be used to privilege (special treatment in favour of) as well as disadvantage (special treatment against) a particular group or individual.

Diversity: The presence of differences in the lived experiences and perspectives of people that may include race, ethnicity, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical ability, mental disability, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, class, education, and/or socio-economic situations. Individuals affiliate with multiple identities.

Equity: The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people. It involves striving to identify and eliminate unfair biases, stereotypes, or barriers that may limit the full participation of individuals or groups in society.

Inclusion: An active, intentional, and continuous process to address inequities in power and privilege and build a respectful and diverse community that ensures welcoming spaces and opportunities for all to fully participate and flourish.

Racialization: The process where society creates differences between races as real, different, and unequal in ways that affect areas of economic, political, and social life. People can be racialized not only based on skin colour, but also according to other perceived characteristics such as their culture, language, customs, ancestry, country or place of origin, or religion, as in the case of Islamophobia or antisemitism.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Action Plan 2023–2027

June 2022



Niagara  Region

Acknowledgements

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Niagara Region is situated on treaty land. This land has a rich history of First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. There are many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples from across Turtle Island that live and work in Niagara today.

Special thanks to the following individuals who supported community engagement, data collection, and review of documents:

Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Working Group: Pam Abeysekara, Doran Anzolin, Katie Desharnais, Jacqueline Gates, Kate Harold, Shilini Hemalal, Andrew Korchok, Jodie Middleton, Steve Murphy, Tyler Neal, Mike Ogunlaja, Tania Saha, Jeffrey Sinclair, Janine Tessmer, Matthew Trennum, Jacalyn Winger, Shelby VanderEnde

Local area municipality (LAM) Working Group:

Sarah Ane, Rachael Ball-Condron, Beverley Bradnam, Andrea Daisley, Anika Forde, Beverly Hendry, Jamie Knight, William Kolasa, Lauren Kruitbosch, Brianna Longohr, Shannon McHugh, Jason McLean, Mary Murray, Niki Walker, Melissa Wenzler

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

(DEIAC): Sabrina Hill (Chair), Liz Hay (Vice Chair), Cindilee Ecker-Flagg, Bri Irvine, Eldean Ivri, Ken Kawall, Rene Nand, Ather Shabbar, Emily Spanton, Yuexin Wang, Councillor George Darte, Councillor Laura Ip

Thank you to all the community organizations and members that participated in the various engagement opportunities.

For more information, please contact:

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List of Definitions and Acronyms

Pride Crosswalk Outside
Niagara Region Headquarters



Bias	Disproportionate weight in favour of or against an idea, thing, or person
CIM	Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Discrimination	Negative behaviours or actions towards members of a group based on stereotypes and prejudice
Diversity	The presence of differences in the lived experiences and perspectives of people
Equity	When everyone receives fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement in all areas of life
Inclusion	The creation of welcoming spaces and opportunities for everyone to participate and succeed
Intersectionality	Each person is unique and multi-layered; based on different aspects of a person's identity, individuals may experience different levels of power or discrimination in various situations
LAMs	Local area municipalities (Fort Erie, Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne, St. Catharines, Thorold, Wainfleet, Welland, and West Lincoln)
Marginalized	A group or individual that is treated as insignificant, put on the edges of society, made to feel powerless, or less important compared to the group in power
Niagara region	Refers to Niagara as a geographic entity or community
Niagara Region	Refers to Niagara Region as an organization
Prejudice	A judgement of opinion formed before all facts are known
Stereotype	An over-generalized belief about a group of people



Message from Regional Chair

One of the defining characteristics of this term of Regional Council is our commitment to building a Niagara that is as welcoming and inclusive as possible, while also responding to the ever-evolving world.

Since joining the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities in 2020, we have taken steps to demonstrate our commitment to change and growth. We established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, hired staff resources dedicated to this important work, and have done more engagement in the last four years than the previous decade.

For our part, we have engaged with subject matter experts with lived experience to provide practical education and training to Regional Councillors, helping us to better understand the world. I want to thank everyone who has taken time over the last few years to share their time and stories with members of Regional Council.

The events of the past two years have demonstrated that elected officials at every level cannot afford to ignore the growing need for change. While I know there is much work still left to be done, I believe that we have made some real progress that I am eager to capitalize on as we move forward together.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Bradley". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Jim Bradley, Chair
Niagara Region

Message from the Chief Administrative Officer

When I think of Niagara, I envision a place where everyone is welcome and included; a place that reflects a rich diversity of thought, background, and understanding. My desire is that staff at the Region feel accepted and valued at work, and provide services that are inclusive and meet the needs of the residents of Niagara.

The results of the thorough research conducted by the DEI Team supported by the DEI Advisory Committee, and many other staff and community members, reveal that we are doing well in some areas, but have far to go in other areas. The negative experiences of staff and community members reveal that discrimination and bias exists in Niagara, although it may be hidden in some communities.

I am confident that as we work together, we will be able to create an inclusive workplace culture; increase understanding and humility through learning; and, have a diverse workforce that is reflective of Niagara's community. We will be able to make progress in providing programs and services that meet the needs of everyone, address discrimination, and provide inclusive communication that reflects the people of Niagara in accessible ways.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Tripp'.

Ron Tripp,
Chief Administrative Officer
Niagara Region

Message from the Chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

It was a historic first step when the Region created the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee. The goal of the Committee was to address biases and discrimination, mitigate negative impacts, and enhance the quality of life for diverse communities across Niagara.

The 12 individuals that served on the first DEI Advisory Committee came with unique backgrounds, experiences, and education. Their goal was to promote and foster better understanding and inclusion in Niagara. They brought forward issues facing multiple groups, including perspectives from Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC), 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals, people from various religions, and people with visible and hidden disabilities. They provided examples of their experiences of discrimination and barriers to accessibility, in employment, healthcare, and housing. We worked collectively to support the development of the DEI Action Plan to ensure it reflects Niagara Region's commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion within the organization and the community.

The work of challenging racism and discrimination, and providing opportunities for community members from all backgrounds to have a voice is just beginning. I am confident that the Region's commitment to improving the experiences of diverse communities will result in healthier, more equitable policy solutions and service delivery in housing, health, transit, policing, education, employment, and the labour market for the greatest number of people across Niagara.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sabrina Hill'.

Sabrina Hill, Chair
Niagara Region Diversity, Equity,
and Inclusion Advisory Committee



The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan is an aspirational living document.

It should be continually referred to, discussed, evaluated, and adapted to meet the current context and needs of diverse staff and community members. It reflects the experiences, insights, and recommendations of Niagara Region staff and community members who participated in consultation and feedback opportunities at a particular point in time (2020-2022). It does not include every voice in Niagara but instead, serves as a significant starting point for work and discussions long overdue in Niagara.

Those involved in the creation of the DEI Action Plan collaborated alongside individuals with diverse lived experiences in its development. The Region recognizes the complexities and challenges embedded in DEI work and is committed to continual learning while engaging in deliberate discussions with the community. The Region hopes, in the development and implementation of this plan, that it communicates a renewed commitment to reducing barriers for staff and community members, in order to make Niagara a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

The Region recognizes the complexities and challenges embedded in DEI work and is committed to continual learning while engaging in deliberate discussions with the community.

Migrant Worker in Niagara



Executive Summary

Young Child in Front
of Niagara Falls



Many individuals in Niagara face barriers and exclusion due to their race, immigrant status, disability, religion, gender, sexuality, and age, among other factors. Individuals have unique and overlapping identities. These intersecting aspects of identity result in some people experiencing more discrimination than others in areas such as health care, employment, and housing.

Niagara Region recognizes its important role in addressing these barriers both as an employer and as a service provider. The Region is aware that reducing barriers for Regional employees involves ensuring that its workforce reflects the current diversity within Niagara. The aim is for employees to experience a work environment that is accepting, respectful, and inclusive, where they are able to perform their jobs safely and effectively.

The Region acknowledges its important role as a municipality in leading diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work in Niagara, alongside the local area municipalities (LAMs). The Region is committed to co-ordinating with local community organizations to ensure that services offered in Niagara are inclusive, welcoming, and free from discrimination.

Niagara Region and the 12 LAMs joined the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities in 2020. The first Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan has been developed through research and collaboration with many staff and community members, including the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee.

This includes a vision, mission, scope, focus areas, goals, actions, key performance indicators, and timelines. Niagara Region staff conducted 28 focus groups with 110 staff members and 82 community members, a staff survey with 1,670 completed surveys, and a community survey with 1,599 surveys analyzed. This report details the finalized Action Plan items.

- **Vision:** Niagara region is welcoming and inclusive, where diversity and equity are reflected and valued
- **Mission:** The people of Niagara advance equity; build welcoming, inclusive communities and workplaces, while eliminating barriers and forms of discrimination
- **Scope:** This project includes Niagara Region as an organization, the LAMs, and the Niagara region as a geographic entity and community

Six focus areas have been identified to accomplish the mission of advancing equity, building welcoming, inclusive communities and workplaces, while eliminating barriers and forms of discrimination.

- A. Inclusive workplace culture, leadership, and accountability
- B. Increased understanding through education
- C. Diverse workforce reflective of Niagara community
- D. Programs and services meet the needs of everyone
- E. Addressing discrimination
- F. Inclusive communication

There are six internal goals, six external goals, 22 internal actions, 21 external actions, all corresponding with the six focus areas. Detailed frameworks that include key performance indicators, and timelines for each area of focus are provided within this report. The DEI Action Plan will be implemented with the support of staff, municipal councils, advisory committees, and community organizations. Reports will be provided annually, with a mid-term review in 2025.

The Business Case for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Downtown St. Catharines



The business case for incorporating DEI continues to grow.

A diverse workforce with true equity and inclusion strengthens the reputation of the organization and the region, attracting talent and more diverse professionals. When a company has a positive culture of inclusion with a respectful workplace, people want to come to work and collaborate. They feel like they are part of a team, which increases employee engagement and improves retention rates.

McKinsey is an international organization that reviews the performance of companies across the world based on the diversity of their executive teams. Their 2019 analysis found that companies that have a balance of men and women on their executive teams were more profitable than companies that were dominated by one gender. Companies that were the most gender diverse were 48 per cent more profitable than the least gender diverse companies. They found that companies that were the most ethnically diverse were 36 per cent more profitable than the least ethnically diverse.¹

Research has found that diverse and inclusive workplaces are able to shift directions and come up with creative solutions, produce quality and effective products and services, and are more likely to meet or exceed financial targets.² Diverse teams have greater productivity and problem solving ability. Diverse people bring a variety of perspectives, experiences, ways of thinking and understanding of a situation. Employees that feel valued and included are more likely to have open conversations, share their ideas, and collaborate with one another which leads to increased effectiveness.³ In this way, reducing barriers for marginalized groups is not only beneficial for staff and community members but also results in organizations that are more profitable and effective.

Diversity and inclusion is important in communities.⁴ Welcoming communities that are free from discrimination lead to positive health and well-being for all residents and visitors. Discrimination, language or accessibility barriers, and micro-aggressions towards residents, newcomers, or visitors have negative impacts on their physical and mental well-being.⁵

- 1 Hunt, V., Prince, S., Dixon-Fyle, S., & Dolan, K. (2020). Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters. McKinsey & Company.
- 2 Bourke J. (2016). Which Two Heads are Better Than One? How Diverse Teams Create Breakthrough Ideas and Make Smarter Decisions. Australian Institute of Company Directors.
- 3 Bohnet, I. (2018). What Works: Gender Equality by Design. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- 4 Guo-Brennan, M., & Guo-Brennan, L. (2019). Civic Capacity and Engagement in Building Welcoming and Inclusive Communities for Newcomers: Praxis, Recommendations, and Policy Implications, *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, 11(2), 31-42.
- 5 Vargas, S. M., Huey, S. J., Jr., & Miranda, J. (2020). A critical review of current evidence on multiple types of discrimination and mental health. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 90(3), 374–390.



There are direct impacts in terms of access to health care,⁶ housing,⁷ and employment,⁸ as well as indirect impacts on sense of belonging,⁹ and participation in civic activities. Overall, diversity, equity, and inclusion is important for individuals, groups, and organizations and is necessary in order to make Niagara more welcoming, where people want to live, learn, work, and play.

- 6 Varcoe, C., Browne, A.J., Bungay, V., et al. (2022). Through an equity lens: Illuminating the relationships among social inequities, stigma and discrimination, and patient experiences of emergency health care. V. Health Inequities in U.S. Emergency Health Services. 52(2), 246-260.
- 7 Auspurg, K., Schneck, A., & Hinz, T. (2019). Closed doors everywhere? A meta-analysis of field experiments on ethnic discrimination in rental housing markets, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 45(1), 95-114.
- 8 Waite, S. (2021). Should I Stay or Should I Go? Employment Discrimination and Workplace Harassment against Transgender and Other Minority Employees in Canada's Federal Public Service, Journal of Homosexuality, 68(11), 1833-1859.
- 9 Daley, A., Phipps, S. & Branscombe, N.R. (2018). The social complexities of disability: Discrimination, belonging and life satisfaction among Canadian youth, SSM - Population Health, 5, 55-63.

Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities

Niagara Region and the LAMs have a central role to play in building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. Their commitment to achieving change was signaled on September 18, 2020 when Niagara Region and Niagara's 12 LAMs (Fort Erie, Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne, St. Catharines, Thorold, Wainfleet, Welland, and West Lincoln) joined the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities. The three objectives of the Coalition are to improve municipal practices to promote social inclusion, establish policies to eradicate racism and discrimination, and promote human rights and diversity. A major part of honouring these commitments requires critically reflecting upon the current practices of municipalities in Niagara and working towards making changes. Niagara Region's first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan describes the actions that the Region intends to implement in the next five years.



Mayor Walter Sendzik signing the joint declaration to join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities

Dimensions of Diversity

Indigenous Drumming Circle



Diversity encompasses many differences and similarities between people. There are endless dimensions of diversity that can be used to categorize individuals and groups of people. For the purpose of the DEI Action Plan and research conducted in preparation of this work, 12 dimensions of diversity were utilized. These dimensions were identified as areas of particular interest based on local research and feedback from staff and community members.

It is important to understand that individuals are unique and within each dimension of diversity people have multiple identities. There are multiple ways that their identities overlap between dimensions, also referred to as intersectionality. These unique and intersecting identities lead individuals

and sub-groups of people to experience discrimination and bias differently depending on the situation.

The dimensions of diversity, in combination with representation from all municipalities in Niagara, were used to help identify community organizations and community members to include in focus groups and target for the community survey.

Actions specifically related to Indigenous communities and Indigenous community members are the focus of a separate Indigenous Action Plan, and will not be discussed within this DEI Action Plan. Niagara Region is working simultaneously with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples and groups in Niagara to create an Indigenous Action Plan.

12 DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY

Francophone

Indigenous

Ethnocultural

New Immigrants

2SLGBTQIA+

**People with
Disabilities**

Older Adults

**People with
Low Income**

**People Experiencing
Homelessness**

Youth

Gender

Faith



DEI Action Plan Process and Timeline

Niagara College Students



September 2020 – November 2020

Creation of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team and Working Groups

A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program Manager and two Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Interns (one full-time and one part-time) were hired to lead this work. Various working groups were created to help support the work of DEI staff: the DEI Working Group, DEI Interest Group, and the LAM DEI Working Group.

The DEI Working Group is comprised of 15 staff members from across various departments within the Region. This group meets on a monthly basis and is closely involved in DEI initiatives and planning. These members have dedicated hours in their work schedule designated to support DEI work.

The DEI Interest Group is a 30-member group comprised of staff members across various departments in the Region that have a strong passion for DEI work. Due to the nature of their roles, they do not have designated hours to support DEI work but are committed to serving as champions for DEI initiatives within their departments and teams.

The LAM DEI Working Group features representatives from across the LAMs. This group was established to ensure effective co-ordination, planning, and rollout of DEI initiatives across the LAMs.

November 2020 – March 2021

Environmental Scan

An environmental scan was conducted to understand the current context in Niagara and in other municipalities relating to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), as well as researching current best practices through academic and non-academic literature. This scan identified existing gaps along seven themes related to DEI both internally at the Region, as a workplace and service provider, and externally, for diverse community members and the community as a whole. Based on these gaps, six quick start projects were selected from four of the theme areas. The scan also informed the content for the focus group and survey questions.

DEI Action Plan Process and Timeline

Woman Participating
in a Virtual Meeting



April 2021 – June 2021

DEI Advisory Committee

Regional Council appointed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DEIAC) to work with Regional and municipal staff and the Niagara community to provide Regional Council with recommendations to address bias, racism, and discrimination, and promote understanding and inclusion. Staff from the Region selected eight members from the 83 applications received from community members interested in participating in the Committee. Representatives from the Women's Advisory Committee and the Accessibility Advisory Committee also sit on the DEIAC, along with two members of Regional Council. The DEIAC held their first meeting in June 2021. The DEIAC has been instrumental in providing feedback, direction, and support in the development of the DEI Action Plan.

May 2021 – September 2021

Focus Group Sessions and Analysis

To get a thorough understanding of experiences and perspectives of diverse staff and community members, 17 focus groups were conducted with 110 Niagara Region staff members and 11 focus groups were conducted with 82 community members. The focus group sessions were transcribed and analyzed into key themes. These themes were combined with the analysis of the staff and community surveys.

September 2021 – January 2022

Staff and Community Survey Implementation and Analysis

Staff and community surveys were conducted online to get a broader understanding of the current demographics of Niagara Region staff, and receive input on experiences, and perspectives of diversity, discrimination, and potential actions from a larger number of staff and community members.

Niagara Region launched a voluntary staff survey on September 20, 2021 to a total of 3,884 active employees. The survey closed on October 8, 2021. The survey was administered by TalentMap, an external company. A total of 1,670 surveys were completed, representing a 43 per cent overall response rate.

Niagara Region's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Community Survey was open for three weeks in December 2021 with a total of 2,304 responses. After removing response sets that answered fewer than six questions and response sets which were found to have unrelated responses to questions asked, a total of 1,599 surveys were included in analysis.



DEI Action Plan Process and Timeline

Colleagues Engaging
in Group Discussion



January 2022 – March 2022

Finalizing Reports

DEI staff used the analysis from the environmental scan, surveys, and focus groups to write multiple reports.

- Environmental Scan Report
- Staff DEI Experiences Report
- Community DEI Experiences Report
- Opportunities for Change Report
- Data Summary Report

The Data Summary Report is a summary of the other four reports, focusing on the best practices, successes, gaps, barriers, and opportunities for action in the seven theme areas identified in the opportunities for change report. All of the reports can be found on the Niagara Region website, DEI project page.¹

March 2022 – June 2022

DEI Strategy Development

Niagara Region, in collaboration with facilitator Sandra Summerhayes, hosted two Strategy Sessions designed to co-develop Niagara Region's draft DEI Action Plan. Using insights from the reports, a combination of Niagara Region staff, members of the DEIAC, representatives from other LAM DEI related advisory committees, and community members were involved in co-developing the vision, mission, goals, and actions.

The DEIAC advocated for both a corporate and community focus and helped develop the Action Plan framework. The information that emerged from the strategy sessions were summarized by DEI staff. DEI staff presented the proposed vision, mission, goals, and actions to over 180 staff and community members from across Niagara. This included a Niagara Region staff town hall, a public information session, and a feedback survey open for staff and community input. DEI staff incorporated the feedback received into the final version of the Action Plan.

¹ <https://niagararegion.ca/projects/diversity-equity-inclusion/default.aspx>



Who Was Involved

A total of 3,391 people participated in focus groups and online surveys to provide input for this DEI Action Plan.

Table one provides the diversity dimensions and total focus group participants per dimension. Each focus group was organized around a specific diversity category, however individuals participating in one focus group may also identify as members of other diversity categories, and were encouraged to bring those different perspectives to the discussion.

Table 1: Focus Group Participants

Diversity Category	Number of Staff Participants	Number of Community Participants
Race/Ethnicity	7	6
Born Outside of Canada	5	5
Gender	6	9
2SLGBTQQIA+	5	7
People With Disabilities	3	20
Religious/Spiritual Affiliation	5	N/A
Francophone	4	5
People Experiencing Homelessness	N/A	5
People With Low Income	N/A	12
Older Adults	N/A	6
No defined category	75	7
Total	110	82

Parents and Children Enjoying Their Time Together

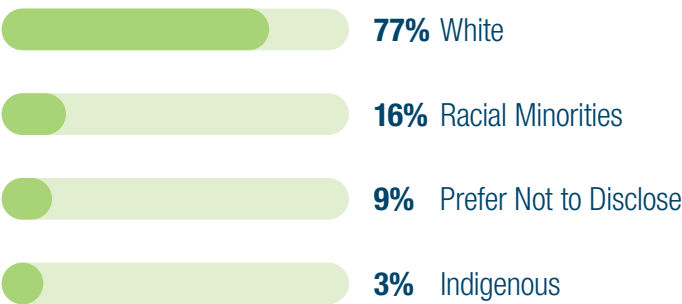
Table 2: Staff Survey Response Rates by Department

Internal Strategic Actions	Surveys Sent	Surveys Completed	Response Rate (RR)
Community Services	1,806	757	42%
Corporate Administration & Governance	104	82	79%
Corporate Services	257	182	71%
Planning and Development Services	46	38	83%
Public Health & Emergency Services	1,175	424	36%
Public Works	496	187	38%
Total	3,884	1,670	43%

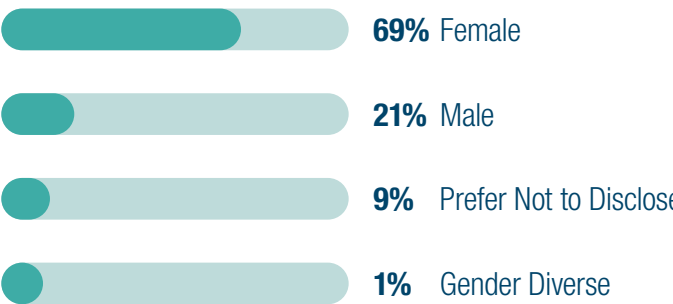
Who Was Involved

Niagara Region staff responded to six demographic questions at the end of the staff survey.

Race or Ethnicity¹



Gender²



Sexuality

7%
identified as
part of the
2SLGBTQIA+
community³



Physical or
Mental Health
Challenge⁴

39%
Identified that they
live with one or more
physical or mental
health challenge



Religion

6%
identified as
Religious
Minorities⁵



Immigration

14%
have lived
in Canada for
25 years or less

- 1 Participants could select more than one answer. Racial minorities includes Black, Latin American, south Asian, east Asian, south-east Asian, biracial or multiracial, Arab, west Asian, Pacific Islander, or prefer to self-describe. Indigenous includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.
- 2 Participants could select more than one answer. Gender diverse includes non-binary, questioning, transgender, transmasculine, transfeminine, and two-spirit.
- 3 The 2SLGBTQIA+ community includes aromantic, asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer, questioning, and two-spirit.
- 4 Participants could select more than one answer. This includes mental health challenges, chronic conditions, hearing loss, learning challenges, vision loss, physical conditions, addictions, developmental conditions, and prefer to self describe.
- 5 Religious minorities includes Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Wiccans, and those of Indigenous spirituality, as well as Pagan, Agnostic, Taoist, Orthodox, Jehovah’s Witness, and/or a mix of beliefs.



Who Was Involved

Demographic Profile of Community Survey Respondents

Thirteen demographic related questions were asked at the end of the DEI Community Survey.

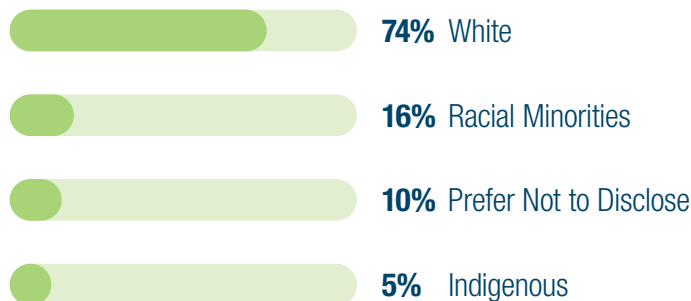
Table 4: Survey Responses by Municipality

Municipality	Survey Count	Survey Per cent	Region Per cent
Fort Erie	81	7%	7%
Grimsby	54	5%	6%
Lincoln	51	4%	5%
Niagara Falls	183	16%	20%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	53	5%	4%
Outside of Niagara	7	1%	N/A
Pelham	48	4%	4%
Port Colborne	52	5%	4%
St. Catharines	367	32%	30%
Thorold	62	5%	4%
Wainfleet	17	2%	1%
Welland	104	9%	12%
West Lincoln	41	4%	3%
Prefer not to answer	29	3%	N/A
Total	1,149	100%	100%

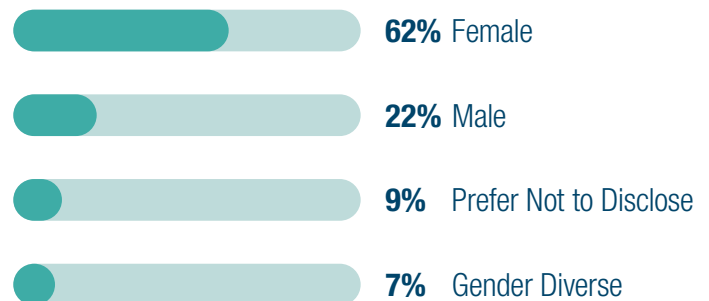
Who Was Involved

The participants responded to 13 demographic questions at the end of the community survey.

Race or Ethnicity¹



Gender²



Sexuality

19%
identified as
part of the
2SLGBTQIA+
community³



Physical or Mental Health Challenge⁴

54%
Identified that they
live with one or more
physical or mental
health challenge



Housing

20%
were not living in
long-term, stable,
and safe housing



Languages

40
unique first
languages
spoken

- ¹ Participants could select more than one answer. Racial minorities includes Black, Latin American, south Asian, east Asian, south-east Asian, biracial or multiracial, Arab, west Asian, Pacific Islander, or prefer to self-describe. Indigenous includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.
- ² Participants could select more than one answer. Gender diverse includes non-binary, questioning, transgender, transmasculine, transfeminine, and two-spirit.
- ³ The 2SLGBTQIA+ community includes aromantic, asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer, questioning, and two-spirit.
- ⁴ Participants could select more than one answer. This includes mental health challenges, chronic conditions, hearing loss, learning challenges, vision loss, physical conditions, addictions, developmental conditions, and prefer to self describe.



Key Findings

Grandson and Grandmother
Looking at a Tablet

Discrimination in Niagara

Diversity in Niagara continues to increase – particularly regarding Indigenous communities, visible minorities, linguistic diversity, and individuals with disabilities.

However, there has not always been the same increase in inclusivity. Discrimination, barriers, and a lack of appropriate support in organizations remain for a variety of marginalized groups.

According to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Community Survey conducted throughout Niagara in December 2021, 66 per cent of participants indicated that they had experienced discrimination and 77 per cent indicated that they had witnessed discrimination.

The top five types of discrimination experienced by community survey participants as prohibited under the Ontario Human Rights Code were: gender (41 per cent); age (30 per cent); mental health (25 per cent); ethnicity (24 per cent); and ability/disability (23 per cent).

Twenty-four per cent of survey participants added that they experienced discrimination related to their “vaccination status”. However, according to the Ontario Human Rights Commission¹, vaccination status alone does not meet the definition of discrimination prohibited under the Ontario Human Rights Code and therefore it was not included in the final top five list. Under the Code, those who are unable to receive the COVID-19 vaccine for medical or disability-related reasons are to be reasonably accommodated unless it would significantly interfere with peoples’ health and safety.

¹ Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2021). OHRC Policy statement on COVID-19 vaccine mandates and proof of vaccine certificates. Found at https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/ohrc-policy-statement-covid-19-vaccine-mandates-and-proof-vaccine-certificates

The top five types of discrimination experienced were:

1. Gender

“So many landlords will not rent to males and it makes it impossible to find an affordable place to live! Every time I find something in my budget the ad specifically states “females only” super discriminatory, especially when they would have rented to me prior to my transition but now won’t because I present as male? I’m the same person, gender doesn’t determine how good of a tenant you are.”

– Community member

2. Age

“The discrimination against seniors is incredible. I’ve been told ‘I am just an old person, go home’ ... told I am entitled, go to [the] back of line. I’ve been told to get off the road, I am going the speed limit.”

– Community member

3. Mental health

“For me, when I go in [to the hospital] and I have a physical ailment as opposed to a mental health [problem] then they treat me differently.”

– Community member

4. Ethnicity

“People from the BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, People of Colour] community in Niagara often face microaggressions in the community, education and workplace. A dichotomy of us versus them is still unfortunately prevalent.”

– Community member

5. Ability/disability

“The discrimination that I have experienced are related to access. I have had trouble getting into stores, older shops in the area because they are small and do not accommodate a person with physical disabilities or uses a wheelchair.”

– Community member

Key Findings

The top five types of discrimination witnessed by community survey participants as prohibited under the Ontario Human Rights Code were: ethnicity (60 per cent); mental health (48 per cent); race (47 per cent); ability/disability (47 per cent); and gender (42 per cent).

1. Ethnicity

“I feel like people who have lived here for a while are very intolerant and treat newcomers and especially [ethnically] diverse people badly.”

– Community member

2. Mental health

“When people have mental health problems which you can’t always see and employees or employers should be educated to not discriminate against them.”

– Community member

3. Race

“I live in Niagara-on-the-Lake – I have witnessed multiple incidents of harassment and abuse towards seasonal farm workers, actors from the Shaw (whom people in town have assumed do not “belong” there).”

– Community member

4. Ability/Disability

“Individuals supported sometimes have not been able to access services or resources because they have a developmental disability.”

– Community member

5. Gender

“You’re a man, you shouldn’t do that.”

– Staff member



Only 19 per cent of the respondents who experienced discrimination and 18 per cent of respondents who witnessed discrimination reported the incident to their employer, the police, the media, or another place. The top three reasons people did not report incidents were that they felt their complaint would not be taken seriously, their report would not have a good outcome, or they feared problems for themselves.

Among Niagara Region staff, 79 per cent feel that their immediate manager creates an inclusive work environment, and 69 per cent of staff agree that diverse identities, ideas, and ways of thinking and working are valued at their organization. Less than a quarter (23 per cent) of staff responded that they do not know how to report an incident of discrimination at Niagara Region. The majority of staff (68 per cent) agreed that they would feel comfortable reporting an incident of discrimination that they experience or witness. The top reasons why staff would not feel comfortable reporting an incident of discrimination are the fear of problems for themselves, and the fear of being identified.

Key Findings

Current Successes

Research for the DEI Action plan identified multiple areas of success relating to DEI in Niagara, both in the Niagara Region as the organization, and in the community. Some of these items were identified during the environmental scan and focus groups, while others were quick start projects that were identified during the environmental scan that were implemented by the end of 2021. These selected items are linked to each of the six focus areas, however this list does not include everything that is happening in the region.

Inclusive workplace culture, leadership, and accountability

- All Non-Union People Leaders at Niagara Region have a shared performance objective related to DEI in 2022
- Eighteen per cent of Niagara's 45 largest employers had clear DEI plans available, with clear DEI-related goals, while 38 per cent mentioned DEI on their external facing websites

Increased understanding and humility through learning

- A total of 4,549 Niagara Region staff have participated in DEI related trainings as of December 2021 (not all unique staff, some may participate in more than one training)
- Multiple community organizations provide DEI-related training to their employees or community members

Diverse workforce reflective of Niagara's community

- Completion of a Human Resources Best Practices Guidebook: How to Increase Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment, Hiring, and Promotion
- Niagara Region conducted two staff surveys that collected demographic information (2020 and 2021)

Programs and services meet the needs of everyone

- Community consultation is a standard part of most planning processes at Niagara Region
- There are 10 DEI-related advisory committees to Council that include people with lived experience who are consulted for input on some programs and services at Niagara Region and four of the 12 LAMs

Addressing discrimination

- Niagara Region has a formal complaints process for staff experiences of discrimination or harassment
- Sixty-four per cent of staff that responded to the survey agreed that they knew how to report an incident of discrimination or harassment that they may experience at Niagara Region
- Niagara Region Police Service established an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Unit, that investigates all police reports involving discrimination

Inclusive communication

- Niagara Local Immigration Partnership Anti-Racism campaigns are positive examples of inclusive communication
- Over 20 internal and external DEI-related communications from Niagara Region related to a calendar of significant dates in 2021 and 2022
- Niagara Region updated the land acknowledgement in 2021

DEI Action Plan

The DEI Action Plan is comprised of a vision, mission, scope, guiding principles, and six areas of focus.

For each area of focus there is an internal goal with associated internal actions and an external goal with associated external facing actions. The internal goals and actions focus on work for Niagara Region to implement as an organization. These actions may require input from community members, and can be mirrored and advanced in other organizations. The external goals and actions are focused on the community, and require collaboration and coordination with community organizations, advisory committees, and community members to ensure their success.



Parents and Child Playing
on a Walk in the Park

Vision, Mission, and Scope

Vision:

Niagara region is welcoming and inclusive, where diversity and equity are reflected and valued.

Mission:

The people of Niagara advance equity; build welcoming, inclusive communities and workplaces, while eliminating barriers and forms of discrimination.

Scope:

This project includes Niagara Region as an organization, the local area municipalities, and Niagara region as a geographic entity and community.

Guiding Principles

There are six guiding principles that are the foundation of this work.

All Hands In,
Symbolizing Teamwork



Accountability	Niagara Region is committed to achieving the goals set out in this Action Plan and holding staff at all levels accountable for the multiple initiatives.
Collaboration	Niagara Region is committed to working in collaboration with the local area municipalities, community organizations, and community members to achieve the desired outcomes of this Plan. The collaboration of all diverse groups is essential for the success of this work.
Community Expertise	Niagara Region recognizes that people with different lived experiences are the experts in understanding the barriers they experience, have creative solutions, and are essential partners for achieving the desired outcomes of this Action Plan.
Evidence Informed	Niagara Region is committed to using evidence from other municipalities, academic sources, best practice guides, and community expertise to inform all work associated with the DEI Action Plan.
Humility	Cultural humility is the cornerstone of this work, to achieve true equity and inclusion. We must all be willing to humbly accept that we do not have all the answers. Niagara Region commits to life-long learning, critical self-reflection, challenging power imbalances, developing mutually beneficial partnerships, and maintaining institutional consistency and accountability.
Transparency	Niagara Region commits to providing transparent, clear, and accurate reports on the progress of this Action Plan on a regular basis.



Focus Areas

Father and Daughter Playing
Together on their Driveway

Through consultations and discussions,
six priority areas were identified.



Focus Area A

Inclusive workplace culture, leadership, and accountability

Enabling an organization where leaders are accountable and provide an environment where staff and community members feel heard and respected



Focus Area D

Programs and services meet the needs of everyone

Providing evidence-informed best practices and resources to incorporate DEI principles into Niagara Region programs and services



Focus Area B

Increased understanding and humility through learning

Providing knowledge, skills, and learning opportunities for staff, Councillors, volunteers, and community members to increase their ability to understand and use DEI principles and demonstrate cultural humility



Focus Area E

Addressing discrimination

Reviewing and revising policies and processes, in partnership with diverse communities, to address and reduce discrimination experienced in Niagara



Focus Area C

Diverse workforce reflective of Niagara's community

Using evidence-informed best practices to recruit, hire, retain, and promote a more diverse workforce



Focus Area F

Inclusive communication

Providing clear, inclusive, representative communication for staff and community members to showcase significant dates, provide key information, and recognize leaders that advance DEI

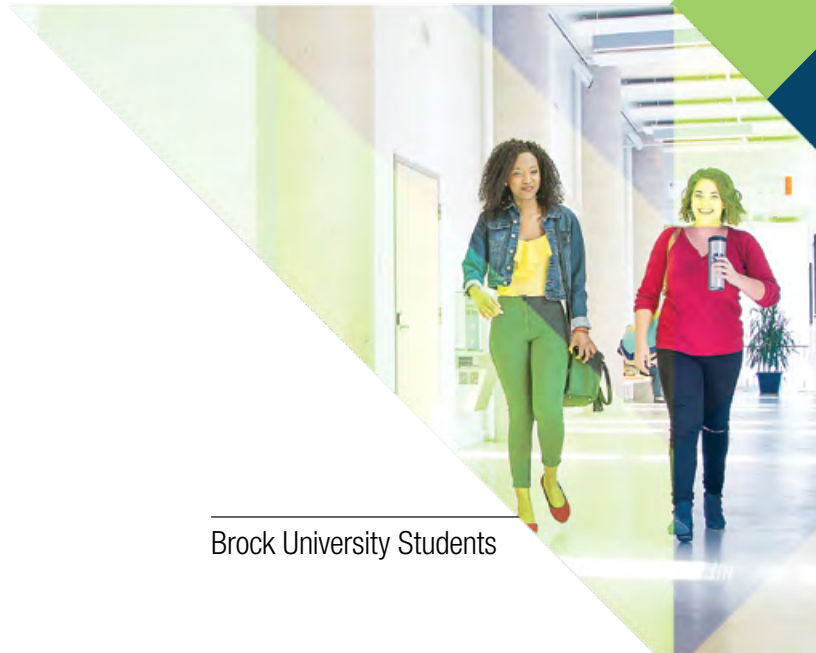


DEI Action Plan Framework

This section outlines the DEI Action Plan framework, including the goals, actions, and how each focus area will be measured.

It includes the internal and external goals, their sources, and if possible the baseline measurement. At the time of publication, some proposed sources are new or yet to be developed and therefore no baseline measurements currently exist.

The strategic actions within each focus area are provided, along with one key performance indicator (KPI), and the target timeline for engaging with each action. As the project progresses and measuring structures are put in place, some of these KPIs or timelines may be modified, and additional KPIs may be added.



Brock University Students



Focus Area A: Inclusive Workplace Culture, Leadership, and Accountability

Internal Goal: Increase per cent of Niagara Region staff who report that they feel heard, respected, and valued by their managers by five per cent

Source: Staff survey, currently 79 per cent of staff agree that their immediate manager creates an inclusive work environment where they feel heard, respected, and valued

Internal Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
AI1. Measure and report baseline results of workplace culture	Per cent of staff who complete the survey	2022
AI2. Create program that recognizes staff who advance DEI	Number of staff recognized	2023
AI3. Develop and promote a DEI handbook	Number of downloads of the DEI Handbook from the website	2024
AI4. Develop a diversity mentoring program	Number of mentors and mentees active in the program	2025

External Goal: Increase per cent of community members that feel they are reflected and heard by locally elected officials by 20 per cent

Source: Community survey, currently 35 per cent of respondents agreed that elected officials reflect the communities they identify with; 36 per cent of respondents agreed that elected officials listen to the communities they identify with

External Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
AE1. Create and promote a DEI Charter	Number of organizations that sign on to the DEI Charter	2023
AE2. Establish and lead DEI Community of Practice	Number of members in the DEI community of practice	2023
AE3. Increase engagement opportunities between Councillors and diverse community groups	Number of opportunities provided for diverse people to engage with Councillors	2024
AE4. Increase opportunities for diverse people to participate and be included in Council meetings	Per cent of community members that feel they are heard by locally elected officials	2025
AE5. Create program that recognizes community members who advance DEI	Number of community leaders recognized	2025





Focus Area B: Increased Understanding and Humility Through Learning

Internal Goal: Increase the knowledge, skills, and competencies of staff, Councillors, and volunteers to be equipped to support the diverse population of Niagara by 10 per cent

Source: Pre-post training session's surveys

Internal Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
BI1. Develop DEI learning curriculum with learning paths for staff, Councillors, and volunteers	Number of trainings available	2022
BI2. Deliver DEI learning for all staff, Councillors, and volunteers	Per cent of Regional Councillors, staff, and volunteers who have successfully completed DEI training	2023
BI3. Implement inclusive leadership development	Increase in percentage of Niagara Region staff who agree that senior leaders lead by example to promote a respectful and inclusive workplace	2024

External Goal: Increase the knowledge, skills, and competencies of training participants in the community regarding DEI and cultural humility by 10 per cent

Source: Pre-post training session's surveys

External Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
BE1. Develop a resource about human rights, addressing hate crimes, and interacting with police	Number of downloads of the resource from the website	2024
BE2. Partner with community organizations to develop and deliver DEI learning curriculum for community members	Number of community organizations involved in developing one or more aspects of learning curriculum	2025
BE3. Support community events with advisory committees on DEI topics	Number of community events supported	2025



Focus Area C: Diverse Workforce Reflective of Niagara's Community

Internal Goal: Use a variety of inclusive strategies to hire, retain, and promote the workforce of Niagara Region to reflect the region's diverse population based on the Canadian Census

Source: Staff survey demographic questions, compared to 2020 Census data

Internal Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
CI1. Increase capacity and resources committed to DEI related staff at the Region	Number of DEI focused staff	2022
CI2. Implement best practices to eliminate barriers in recruitment, hiring, and promotion processes	Per cent of new staff who recognize their interview panel had diverse representation	2023
CI3. Create outreach strategy to expand diverse candidate pool	Number of applicants from minority groups	2024
CI4. Monitor, report, and celebrate the diversity of workplace composition	Per cent of minority groups employed in leadership positions	2024

External Goal: Increase percentage of people that believe employers in Niagara do a good job of attracting, retaining, and promoting people of diverse backgrounds to leadership positions by 20 per cent

Source: Community survey, currently 47 per cent of respondents believe employers in Niagara do a good job of attracting people of diverse backgrounds, 42 per cent of respondents believe employers in Niagara do a good job promoting people of diverse backgrounds

External Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
CE1. Promote the HR Guidebook: How to Increase Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment, Hiring, and Promotion	Number of downloads of the HR Guidebook from the website	2024
CE2. Promote the business case for DEI	Number of locations where the business case is promoted	2024
CE3. Provide learning opportunities for community organizations regarding DEI recruitment, hiring, and promotion best practices	Number of community partners that attend learning opportunities	2025
CE4. Partner with community organizations to expand intern and co-op opportunities	Number of new intern and co-op opportunities created annually in collaboration with the Region	2025





Focus Area D: Programs and Services Meet the Needs of Everyone

Internal Goal: One hundred per cent of Niagara Region Divisions have incorporated diversity, equity, and inclusion principles into their work

Source: Survey on Niagara Region programs and services

Internal Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
DI1. Improve the process for complaints within Niagara Region programs and services relating to bias or discrimination	Number of complaints received by people identifying in each diversity dimension	2023
DI2. Review and revise Niagara Region programs using the DEI handbook	Number of programs and services that have incorporated DEI handbook principles	2025
DI3. Improve procedure for providing accommodations (accessible, religious, gender) for programs and services	Number of community members included in review of procedure for providing accommodations	2026

External Goal: At least 70 per cent of program participants believe that the Niagara Region programs and services are meeting their needs

Source: Survey on Niagara Region programs and services

External Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
DE1. Report on periodic community DEI surveys that include evaluating the impact of Niagara Region programs and services	Number of participants who completed the survey	2024
DE2. Expand opportunities to work with communities on program and service planning and evaluation, incorporating people with lived experience	Number of programs and services that are engaging people with lived experience for program and service planning and evaluation	2025





Focus Area E: Addressing Discrimination

Internal Goal: Increase the DEI score for Niagara Region employees by five per cent

Source: Staff survey, composite score of six DEI-related questions, current score is 75 per cent

Internal Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
EI1. Publish a formal anti-discrimination acknowledgement statement	Number of communication platforms where statement is communicated	2023
EI2. Review staff complaint process for incidents of bias, discrimination, or harassment	Per cent of staff that agree that they would feel comfortable reporting an incident of discrimination they experienced or witnessed	2024
EI3. Incorporate DEI impacts as part of reports to Council and Corporate Leadership Team	Per cent of Council reports that incorporate DEI impacts	2024
EI4. Review Niagara Region policies and procedures using the DEI handbook	Number of policies reviewed	2025

External Goal: Decrease the per cent of people that experience discrimination in Niagara by 20 per cent

Source: Community survey, currently 66 per cent of survey respondents have experienced one or more types of discrimination

External Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
EE1. Facilitate Town Hall dialogues with diverse communities on discrimination issues	Number of Town Hall dialogues	2024
EE2. Partner with community organizations to host anti-discrimination community engagement sessions and provide anti-discrimination public education	Number of community engagement sessions	2025
EE3. Ensure Niagara Region programs and facilities are safe spaces for all people regardless of identity/diversity	Per cent of program participants who believe Niagara Region facilities and spaces are safe spaces	2027



Focus Area F: Inclusive Communication

Internal Goal: Ninety per cent of Niagara Region staff feel represented and included in DEI-related communications and initiatives

Source: Staff survey

Internal Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
FI1. Review and update internal DEI website (VINE) to provide relevant information and resources for staff	Number of visits to the Vine site	2023
FI2. Publish a community calendar of significant dates	Number of dates in calendar	2023
FI3. Work with diverse staff to recognize and showcase significant dates	Number of significant dates chosen to showcase	2024
FI4. Ensure diverse staff are recognized	Number of stories published	2024

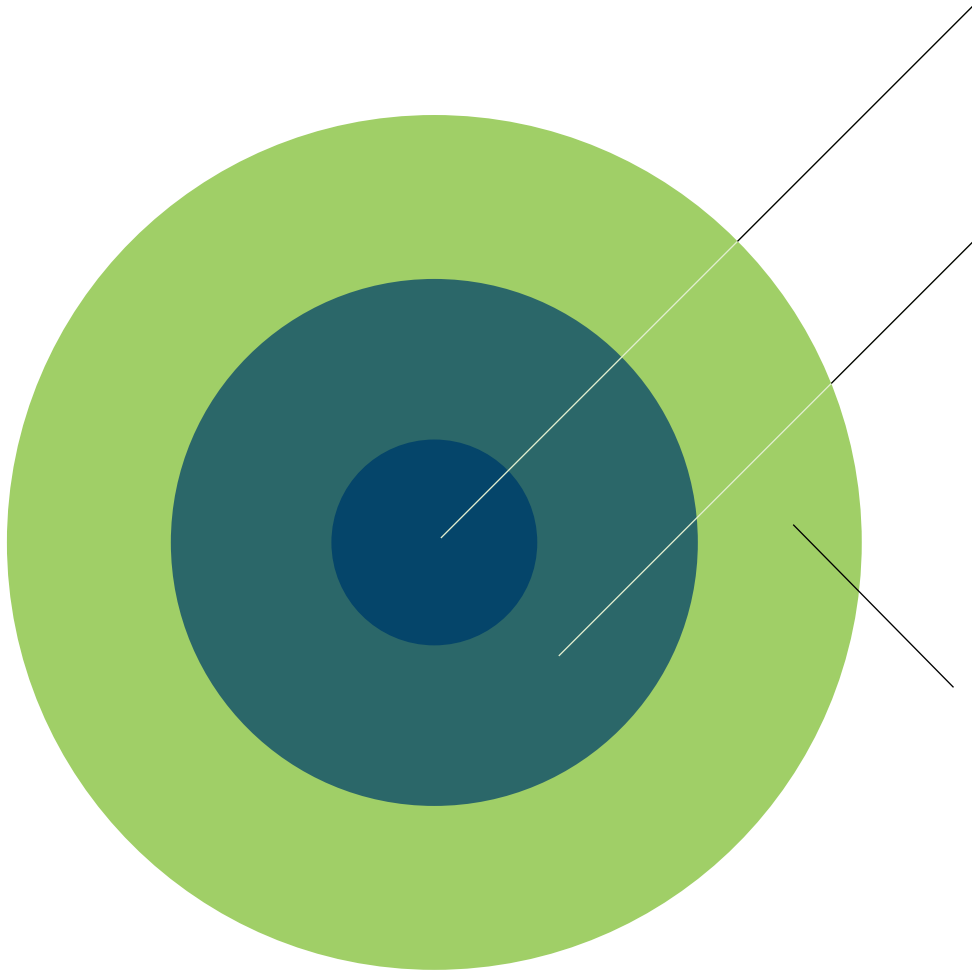
Internal Goal: Eighty per cent of Niagara Region's communication platforms are inclusive and accessible for all community members

Source: Community survey

External Strategic Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Target Timeline
FE1. Support events with community partners to recognize special days and events showcasing diversity	Number of collaborative events held	2024
FE2. Ensure all Niagara Region communication platforms are inclusive and accessible	Per cent of communication platforms that are inclusive and accessible	2025
FE3. Ensure all materials are presented in plain language, are culturally appropriate, and depict the diversity of Niagara	Per cent of materials that depict the diversity of Niagara	2026
FE4. Ensure signage in Niagara Region facilities is accessible	Per cent of signs in Niagara Region facilities that are accessible	2026

Strategy Governance and Implementation Mechanism

To ensure the action items are implemented, supported, and that there is accountability at multiple levels of Niagara Region, the following groups will be involved at three levels. Reporting on the DEI Action Plan will occur on an annual basis, with a mid-term review taking place in 2025.



Support and Accountability:

- Corporate Leadership Team
- Regional Council

Implementation:

- DEI Staff Team
- DEI Staff Working Groups
- Niagara Region
- People Leaders
- Niagara Region Staff
- LAM DEI Working Group
- Community Organizations

Input, Advice, Support Implementation:

- DEI Advisory Committee
- Women’s Advisory Committee
- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- LAM Advisory Committees
- Community Members

Risks and Risk Mitigation

As with any large scale strategy or plan, there are multiple risks that may affect the successful implementation of the actions.

Potential risks associated with the DEI Action Plan include:

1. Insufficient resources or budget allocation
2. Lack of staff and community buy-in and support
3. Change in Council or leadership priorities with municipal elections and staff turnover
4. Loss of credibility with public if action items are not delivered as planned
5. Resistance and opposition from internal staff, community organizations, or community members

To mitigate these potential risks, the following steps will be implemented. They do not necessarily align with the corresponding number related to the risks.

1. Extensive communications describing the plan, its outcomes and the important role of staff and community for the success of the plan
2. Develop and promote the business case for DEI with staff and Council to raise awareness of the significance of this work and the importance of supporting the work with allocated budget and staff time
3. Multiple opportunities for staff and community member input throughout the implementation of the plan
4. Report regularly on progress of the plan and showcase accomplishments
5. Establish broad community and political consensus based on a long-term vision for the DEI Action Plan
6. Create supportive structures and policies to ensure sustainability for DEI work regardless of political changes or opposition



Family at Home Eating
Outdoor Meal Together



Niagara  Region

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan

Corporate Strategy and Innovation
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

niagararegion.ca

June 2022

April 17, 2024

Dear Members of the Niagara Region DEI Advisory Committee,

At the request of the DEI Advisory Committee chair and members I have attached these resources for their consideration. They also requested I share the recommendations I spoke about in my presentation and is shared below in this email:

1. Advisory committee members, as well as members of Council and staff, should educate themselves about Palestinian history, culture, identity, *and the rightful struggle against occupation*. This will help dispel misconceptions that often fuel APR (Anti-Palestinian Racism) narratives in Canada while also recognizing Palestinians' inherent rights to resist oppression by any means necessary under international law (specifically The Geneva Conventions). Encourage educational institutions at all levels (elementary schools through universities), as well as public libraries, **to include accurate information on the Palestinian struggle for liberation** within their curricula or collections respectively (even though they are under different governance than the Region). Specifically the ACLA's (Arab Canadian Lawyers Association) paper titled "Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations" is a great resource to begin understanding this topic.
2. Advocate for the adoption of a more nuanced definition of antisemitism that distinguishes between legitimate criticism against Israel's policies towards us (Palestinians), from actual anti-Jewish racism - thus ensuring freedom of speech without fearing false accusations under IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) guidelines or similar frameworks.
3. Work closely with local organizations and activists who are committed to fighting APR in our region, such as the Niagara Palestine Coalition (NPC), Independent Jewish Voices (Canada), and the Niagara Region Anti-Racism Association among others - collaborating on joint initiatives aimed at raising awareness about this issue while promoting solidarity between different communities.
4. Encourage local media outlets to provide balanced coverage of events related *to the Palestinian struggle for liberation* and avoid perpetuating stereotypes or misinformation regarding Palestinians, our history, culture, identity - ensuring that all voices are heard without fearing censorship due to political pressure from pro-Israel groups.
5. Advocate for the implementation of policies aimed at protecting Palestinian Canadians against hate crimes and other forms of APR within your jurisdiction; this includes working closely with the appropriate bodies of the state on training programs designed specifically around recognizing, preventing, *and defending against* acts committed by Zionist forces or settlers in violation of international humanitarian laws.
6. Support initiatives that promote dialogue between different communities living here - fostering understanding through open communication channels rather than allowing fear-mongering narratives to divide us along ethnic or religious lines. This can be achieved by organizing public forums where people from diverse backgrounds come together, share their stories and experiences while learning about each other's cultures in a safe space free of judgment or prejudice - including the rightful struggle against occupation as part of our collective history.

7. Encourage local businesses not only within the Niagara region but also across Canada to divest themselves financially from companies that are associated with the genocidal Zionist regime, *support Palestinian run businesses* through economic means, and sanction the Zionist state and all those who violate international law.
8. Advocate for Canadian government officials, including those representing our own community here in the Niagara region, not only to condemn acts of violence and oppression committed by Zionist forces but also hold them accountable under *international humanitarian laws* - ensuring that Canada's foreign policy aligns with its commitment towards human rights protection globally.
9. Work closely with other Canadian municipalities who have already taken steps against APR such as Edmonton, sharing best practices on how to effectively combat this form of systemic racism within our communities while promoting solidarity between different groups based upon mutual respect and understanding - ultimately fostering a more inclusive society for all.

In addition I also recommend the Niagara Region recognize Al-Nakba, May 15th, as a Day of Significance in the calendar for such days, as is recognized by other governments near Niagara. <https://indonesia.un.org/en/230267-nakba-day>.

May peace be upon you,

Gabriel Gebril (St. Catharines)



Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

ARAB CANADIAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
PREPARED BY DANIA MAJID
4-25-2022

WHAT IS ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM?

Anti-Palestinian racism is a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives. Anti-Palestinian racism takes various forms including: denying the Nakba and justifying violence against Palestinians; failing to acknowledge Palestinians as an Indigenous people with a collective identity, belonging and rights in relation to occupied and historic Palestine; erasing the human rights and equal dignity and worth of Palestinians; excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians and their allies; defaming Palestinians and their allies with slander such as being inherently antisemitic, a terrorist threat/sympathizer or opposed to democratic values.

Acknowledgements

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INTRODUCTION

Since its formation in 2005, the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA) has been immersed in anti-racism advocacy with the Arab community in Canada, and in equity discourse within the legal profession. While Arabs in Canada, and elsewhere in the west, have always experienced both systemic and overt forms of racism, the post-9/11 context made more explicit, a malicious and deeply politicized form of racism targeting Arabs and Muslims.¹ Palestinians, however, also face a unique and distinct form of racism that specifically targets Palestinians and those who advocate for Palestinian human rights (hereinafter referred to as “advocates”). This is commonly referred to as anti-Palestinian racism (“APR”).

Whether through ACLA or in our personal capacities, during our collective decades as Palestinian human rights defenders we have directly experienced or witnessed hostility or prejudice when we or others expressed our positions on Palestine or are known for our views on Palestine. ACLA is also continuously consulted on complaints related to Palestine arising from incidents on campuses, government rhetoric and political stances, negative media depictions or omissions, or discrimination within the legal profession and other workplaces.

“Without doubt, Indigenous and Black movements have had a profound impact on the Palestinian solidarity movement...”

As legal professionals, academics and activists the responses to such complaints usually involved well-reasoned submissions outlining the position on Palestine. The arguments made were grounded in domestic and international laws and legal principles to demonstrate the validity and justness of the arguments made in respect to Palestine. Despite the energy, resources and good faith efforts poured into these responses, too often the Palestinian narrative is ignored, denied or dismissed by the recipients.

In more recent times, the silencing, defaming and wilful exclusion of Palestinians and advocates has escalated and become more punitive.² When a Palestinian or advocate is targeted, these incidents are more likely to play out publicly – shared on social media and progressive media, and occasionally reported in the mainstream media. ACLA follows these cases, social media engagements and publications and has noticed a shift in how Palestinians and advocates are responding to disinformation on Palestine or the maligning of Palestinians or advocates. Responses increasingly name racism and situate the issues within settler-colonialism.

The past few years have seen a transformative societal and institutional shift around the understanding of anti-Black racism and settler-colonialism. North American Indigenous liberation movements,³ along with the Black Lives Matter movement have led to a collective reckoning on racism and settler-colonialism on an individual, organizational and societal level. These movements have prompted society-wide reflections, conversations, responses and actions to confront the historic and present-day harms of anti-Black racism and settler-colonialism on Black and Indigenous communities.

Without doubt, Indigenous and Black movements have had a profound impact on the Palestinian solidarity movement,⁴ and Palestinians from North America to Palestine have supported and been engaged in these movements from near and afar.⁵ The exchange of knowledge, strategies, demands and lessons between movements has strengthened social justice activism on all fronts.⁶ Palestinians, particularly the newer generation of activists, well-versed in theories of anti-racism and settler-colonialism have shifted their approaches for confronting racism against Palestinians and their narratives. They are naming racism against Palestinians; contextualizing their experiences within an anti-racism and settler-colonial framework; and accordingly, they are demanding accountability and redress for these acts.⁷

The events of May 2021 played a pivotal and transformative role in the understanding and engagement of Palestinian solidarity. The ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Jerusalem, the unity uprising against police brutality and racism faced by Palestinian citizens of Israel and the Israeli missile strikes on Gaza were broadcasted unfiltered, in real time, on social media platforms by activists on the ground. Scenes from Palestine that played on screens across the globe resonated with the earlier scenes from American and Canadian streets – mass protests for Black Lives Matter and for Indigenous rights, and the acts of the violence that sparked these protests.

What was striking about May 2021 timeframe was not only the sheer number of people who were sharing and engaging with the content of Palestinian activists; but the number of people and organizations who for the first time expressed publicly their solidarity with Palestinians, and doing so by rooting their Palestinian solidarity within the broader anti-racism and anti-settler-colonialism movements. It is no surprise that many of the examples of APR described below are connected to this period of time.

The Palestinian community and its allies are no longer solely engaging in political or legal debates to justify their existence and perspectives. While legal and political responses still play a vital role, Palestinians and advocates are also confronting offensive behaviour when it appears and calling it what it really is – racism.

RECENT ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM EXAMPLES

In the west, along with the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the United States, Canada is also regarded as an especially hostile place for Palestinian advocacy.⁸ In the past two years, several scandals related to Palestine emerged in the public sphere and garnered international attention and condemnation. These high-profile controversies have a few things in common: they obstructed freedom of expression on Palestine; they did so in a public way; they galvanized the Palestinian solidarity community; and they were viewed by the community as anti-Palestinian racism.

Another commonality is that these examples did not involve Palestinians as the primary target of APR – rather it was non-Palestinians who expressed support of Palestinian human rights. As discussed later in the report, Palestinians still consider incidents involving non-Palestinians as APR because it still harms Palestinians and the silencing serves to uphold the settler-colonialization of Palestine.

While the examples below all occurred within public institutions, ACLA also recognizes that APR transpires in the private sector. There currently is no reporting mechanism or formal data collection for APR in Canada. However, anecdotally and through our own

“Most people do not report these incidents because of a fear of reprisal in their workplace or their profession...”

experiences, ACLA is aware of situations, for example, where job candidates or employees are questioned about their views on Palestine; have been denied opportunities or declined opportunities because of their views; are subjected to micro-aggressions and negative comments about their Palestinian identity; or their workplaces hosted or sponsored anti-Palestinian events.⁹ Most people do not report these incidents because of a fear of reprisal in their workplace or their profession; there is no trusted internal or external mechanism for reporting; legal challenges are too onerous, and most believe prospects of success for a complaint is very low.¹⁰

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

On August 2020, CBC Radio program The Current deleted the word “Palestine” from the online record and later broadcasts of the episode where the guest host used the word “Palestine” in his interview with graphic journalist Joe Sacco.¹¹ The following day, the program also issued an on-air apology for using the word “Palestine” in reference to Palestinian territory. Palestinians and solidarity groups disturbed by the program’s actions filed complaints with the CBC and its Ombudsman,¹² and undertook direct actions at CBC’s building in Ottawa and hosted online email campaigns.

This was neither the first or last conflict regarding the CBC's reporting on Palestine. A few months later in April 2021, the CBC came under harsh criticism over its refusal to cover Human Rights Watch's ground-breaking report "A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution."¹³

Weeks later in May 2021, CBC found itself embroiled in another controversy over its coverage of Palestine. In an unprecedented move, hundreds of Canadian journalists signed an open letter to Canadian newsrooms calling for fair, nuanced and contextual reporting on Palestine and for the inclusion of Palestinian voices.¹⁴ The signatories drew parallels with the tough conversations happening in newsrooms around Black Lives Matter and Indigenous experiences. CBC journalists who signed the letter later reported the CBC had barred them from working on stories related to Palestine-Israel.¹⁵ Leaked emails from CBC management to all staff asked them to refrain from using "Palestine" even in casual conversations.¹⁶

The University of Toronto, Faculty of Law International Human Rights Program

In September 2020, an international scandal erupted at the University of Toronto (U of T), Faculty of Law over their hiring of a new Director for the International Human Rights Program (IHRP). The faculty rescinded a job offer to Dr. Valentina Azarova after Justice David Spiro, a sitting Canadian judge and former director of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), used his influence as a donor to relay CIJA's concerns over Dr. Azarova's hiring because of her scholarship on Palestine/Israel.¹⁷

The U of T scandal was a watershed event in broadening public discussion and understanding of APR and its patterned manifestations.¹⁸ The fallout reverberated globally, and it mobilized thousands to speak out against the curtailing of academic freedom on Palestine.¹⁹ Most notably, the scandal resulted in the extraordinarily rare move by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) to censure the university.²⁰ The censure was amplified by a successful campaign coordinated by Censure U of T, which resulted in dozens of statements of support from individuals, faculties and associations.²¹ It also saw many others turn down speaking engagements at the university and the cancellation of events. In the fall of 2021, the censure was lifted and campaign suspended after the university relented and re-offered Dr. Azarova the position of Director of IHRP.²²

In addition to co-authoring an open letter on academic freedom on Palestine,²³ ACLA, as well as other academics and organizations, filed a complaint with the Canadian Judicial Council (CJC) regarding the conduct of Justice Spiro.²⁴ ACLA also prepared a submission to the Cromwell Review into the U of T IHRP hiring that outlined the manifestation and harms of APR,²⁵ and ensured that the Palestinian narrative was centred in media coverage on the

scandal.²⁶ ACLA joined the other complainants in a judicial review of the CJC's decision not to discipline Justice Spiro, which was heard in April 2022.²⁷

It should also be noted in May 2021, the Faculty of Medicine also faced its own scandal related to Palestine after an eminent doctor and social justice and anti-oppression educator in the faculty, Dr. Ritika Goel, posted a message of support for Palestinians on social media. Dr. Goel was then falsely accused of antisemitism in a letter penned by students, residents and educators in the faculty that called for her dismissal.²⁸

Toronto District School Board

In May 2021, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) suspended Javier Davila, an equity advisor, after he shared resources on Palestinian human rights with TDSB educators to help students understand the events taking place in Palestine at the time.²⁹ His materials were described as antisemitic by a right-wing columnist in a local newspaper, by pro-Israel groups and a TDSB trustee on twitter. In addition, senior elected officials including the Mayor of Toronto and Premier of Ontario also condemned Davila's Palestinian resources as antisemitic.

Thousands rallied behind Davila online, in the media and through petitions directed at the TDSB demanding Davila's reinstatement. After completing their undisclosed investigation, Davila was reinstated.³⁰

In September 2021, TDSB retained anti-Black racism activist and journalist Desmond Cole to provide several talks on racism to TDSB staff. In the course of his first two presentations, Cole raised Davila's mistreatment by TDSB and drew parallels between those who oppose the calls of "Free Palestine" and "Black Lives Matter."³¹ The predictable backlash ensued.³² During his last two presentations, when Cole said "Free Palestine" several TDSB executives and superintendents repeatedly interrupted him to interrogate his use of "Free Palestine", and even went as far as to interpret the phrase as meaning the destruction of Israel.³³ After Cole's presentation, TDSB director Colleen Russell-Rawlins released an internal statement to staff apologizing for the "harm" that may have been caused by Cole's presentations.³⁴

Along with other public school boards, TDSB has a long history of silencing Palestinian students and educators³⁵ and even hosts anti-Palestinian content on their website.³⁶ The Board has stated they are committed to addressing Islamophobia and antisemitism at the TDSB, and have retained the National Council of Canadian Muslims and CIJA to create educational resources. However, when it comes to APR, TDSB trustees rejected the report by the Integrity Commissioner, which found that a trustee's tweet equating Davila's pro-Palestinian materials with antisemitism and terrorism may perpetuate dangerous and

harmful stereotypes against Palestinians and Muslims; and this was discriminatory within the meaning of the Ontario Human Rights Code and TDSB policies.³⁷

Palestinian students at the TDSB, and their families have started mobilizing around APR, and the students at Marc Garneau Collegiate staged a walk-out in November 2021 to call for an end of anti-Palestinian racism at TDSB.³⁸

Green Party of Canada Leadership Crisis

Despite the Green Party of Canada's relatively measured policy stance on Palestine³⁹, anti-Palestinian racism played a role in the party's internal conflicts and poor showing in the 2021 federal elections. In May 2021, Noah Zatzman, a senior advisor to then leader Annamie Paul, used his social media to accuse a range of political figures of antisemitism for supporting Palestinian rights and condemning Israeli air strikes on Gaza. This included MPs from the Green Party, who he vowed to help defeat in the upcoming elections.⁴⁰ Despite the Green party's federal council passing a motion calling on Paul to repudiate Zatzman for his attacks on Green MPs, Paul refused to condemn Zatzman for his comments or even acknowledge the controversy when asked about it on the campaign trail.⁴¹

Paul's stance caused deep divisions in her party and among its members. Jenica Atwin, a Green MP targeted in Zatzman's post, crossed the floor and joined the Liberals.⁴² David Suzuki, Canada's most renowned environmentalist, expressed concern over Paul's handling of the controversy.⁴³ After a poor federal election showing, Paul eventually resigned in 2021.⁴⁴

NAMING ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM

In the resulting fall-out from these scandals, ACLA noticed increasingly that more Palestinians and advocates were using the phrase 'anti-Palestinian racism' and the lens of racism to describe these incidents and the accompanying harms - ACLA included. Anti-Palestinian racism was the basis of the ACLA complaint to the CJC and was further developed for the Cromwell Review into the U of T IHRP hiring scandal.

Drafting the Cromwell Review submissions started ACLA on this path to explore the need and role of naming APR. This scandal indeed involved unethical donor interference and a serious infringement of academic freedom, however, it was imperative that the root of the scandal – the exclusion, smearing and punitive measures against an academic who upheld Palestinian human rights in her work – was not erased, downplayed or swept aside.

The consensus was if Dr. Azarova had written about any human rights crisis other than Palestine/Israel, she would be the current director of the IHRP at the Faculty of Law. The basis of this scandal was her legal position on Palestine/Israel, which was uncontroversial in mainstream academic discourse on the subject, yet still led to her de-hiring.

For ACLA, the underlying motives behind the reprisals against Dr. Azarova, as well as those of our colleagues in academia, law, the arts and activism, is a form of racism that is specific to the Palestinian experience. Like other forms of racism it sets out to silence, dehumanize and “other” its targets; and it results in similar harms and trauma to those who experience it. It has also resulted in the

“Like other forms of racism it sets out to silence, dehumanize and ‘other’ its targets; and it results in similar harms and trauma to those who experience it.”

loss of employment, opportunities, income and defamation of character and reputational damage. As such, in ACLA’s many responses to the scandal, ACLA characterized the events of Dr. Azarova’s de-hiring as anti-Palestinian racism because racism against Palestinians provoked a backlash against her even though she is not Palestinian.

After using the term ‘anti-Palestinian racism’ in our responses to the scandal, ACLA embarked on a process to better understand the term and its use.

METHODOLOGY

ACLA’s February 2021 written submission for the Cromwell Review into the U of T scandal centred anti-Palestinian racism in academia and the legal profession and provided an analysis of the de-hiring of Dr. Azarova from an APR lens. The joint submission between the ACLA and Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV) included a working draft definition of APR that was drafted by ACLA and its advisors, and reviewed by other legal academics who provided constructive feedback on the submission.

This working draft definition was then the basis of a community consultation on anti-Palestinian racism. The following outlines the consultation process for the naming of APR and a description of an APR framework.

Framing versus Defining Anti-Palestinian Racism

The process for this report began with an attempt to create a definition of APR for ACLA’s submissions to the Cromwell Review. As legal professionals and scholars we instinctively relied on the customary approach for legal analysis - the submission first named APR and

then provided a draft definition of APR, which was then used to analyse the de-hiring of Dr. Azarova. After our submissions were sent in, ACLA then began the work to critically understand the role of definitions in anti-racism discourse, and community perspectives on APR and the usefulness of a definition in their work.

While it is beyond the scope of this report to fully weigh in on the debate around definitions, the following shares some insights gained during ACLA's consultations and research. Ultimately, users of this report can determine how they wish to use the report's contents to support their work in their contexts or engage in APR discussions.

There is broad agreement among those consulted for the need to name anti-Palestinian racism as a distinct form of oppression faced by Palestinians and those advocating for Palestinian rights.⁴⁵ Naming APR provides the community with the ability to situate their experience within racism, discrimination and settler-colonialism frameworks. It validates their experience as a collective one unique to Palestinians and provides an impetus to confront APR.⁴⁶

"Racism is mutable and opportunistic. It is the output of past and present colonial ambitions."

The debate then becomes: if APR is named and accompanied by a framework, is a formal definition necessary? The debate stems from growing controversies and push-back around the redefinition of antisemitism to capture political critiques of the Israeli state, as well as the redefinition of discrimination to halt critical race theory in education.⁴⁷ Recently, the University of Toronto decided against relying on any of the available definitions of antisemitism for their antisemitism working group.⁴⁸ Further, a critical race theory analysis highlighted how definitions can be manipulated in a harmful manner when they are treated as definitive and restrictive by their interpreters.⁴⁹

In light of this context and insights on the construct of racism and its dismantling, many conclude that formalized definitions are not needed by movements to fight oppression and much of this work is done without relying on one.⁵⁰ Instead, anti-oppression movements are centred on challenging varied and complex intersections of power. They name and describe lived experience and illustrate the violence enacted through particular systems, structures, events, activities and decision-making.

Racism is mutable and opportunistic. It is the output of past and present colonial ambitions.⁵¹ By focusing on naming and framing APR as a form of racism and understanding it through the lens settler-colonialism, instead of creating a formal definition, the APR framework remains fluid, contextual and adaptable to various and diverse circumstances. This approach is more inclusive, comprehensive, and responsive to

different contexts and communities – a need highlighted in the survey responses. It also ensures the focus remains on understanding the systems and structures of oppression faced by Palestinians and other racialized and Indigenous communities. It also avoids the definition distracting from this work or limiting our experiences.

There are instances where members of the Palestinian community have approached ACLA looking for a definition of APR. The requests were mostly prompted by their work with school boards, campuses and governments who were updating their anti-racism policies, and they wanted APR to be included in these documents along with other definitions.⁵²

“The description of APR is a starting point to help identify, understand, analyze and challenge APR.”

While other prevalent forms of racism are well-established and widely accepted, APR and its discourse is still relatively unknown, ignored or denied by most institutions. ACLA observed that institutions typically fail to recognize APR; address APR under Islamophobia; or improperly characterize APR (ie as a political issue).

When needed, the description of the APR framework (hereinafter referred to as the “description”) included in this report may be used, altered or contextualized where a definition of APR is sought. The analysis required for such a task is strengthened when it comes from those directly affected. The description of APR is a starting point to help identify, understand, analyze and challenge APR.

As a start, APR should be recognized along with other prevalent forms of racism and covered by existing laws, policies and guidelines set out to fight hate, racism and oppression; and those that promote diversity, inclusion and freedom of expression. It should also help foster understandings and co-solidarities with other anti-racism and settler-colonialism struggles.

Research and Drafting

In preparing the initial description of the APR framework for our Cromwell Review submission (February 2021), ACLA started by researching references of APR in the media and academic articles. While ACLA and others were using this term in our work or writings, our research at that time did not reveal any resources that explained the term itself or analysed its framework.⁵³ The few articles we located referenced the term ‘anti-Palestinian racism’ to describe incidents and experiences but did not provide the analytical rubric we sought for the submissions.⁵⁴

Consequently, for the purposes of our submission, ACLA authored a working draft definition of APR based on the experiences that have come to us from academia, employment, human rights discourse, government policies, the arts sector and ACLA's 2018 survey of the Arab community in Ontario. ACLA also reviewed the glossary descriptions for other forms of racism and discrimination.⁵⁵

In formulating our first working draft description of APR, ACLA aimed to create a description that was representative of the experiences faced by Palestinians and non-Palestinian advocates. ACLA also wanted it to be easily understood by all potential users (activists, students, educators, workers etc). The U of T scandal itself was a useful guide as it possessed many of the hallmarks of APR.

ACLA's submission also analysed the conduct of Justice Spiro and the university from an APR lens and provided additional commentary about the pervasiveness of APR in academia, the importance of defending academic freedom on Palestine on campuses and the harms that result when an academic institution fails to do so.

Consultation and Survey

Unlike our CJC complaint, ACLA and IJV did not post our Cromwell Review submission publicly in February 2021. The reason being was that ACLA did not want to unilaterally impose a definition or framing of APR on the community, and the tight timeline to make submissions for the Cromwell Review did not afford us an opportunity to workshop the working draft with members of the Palestinian solidarity community.

Before making this document public, even as a working draft, ACLA wanted to first determine a few key questions including: Does the Palestinian and solidary community want a definition of APR? Is a definition helpful to the community? Could it be harmful or undermine solidarity work? Is this working draft description accessible? Is it comprehensive? Are there significant omissions or concerns? Is there a definition or framework that already exists in another jurisdiction?

In the spring of 2021, ACLA prepared a short online survey to seek responses to these questions from a cross-section of respondents (see Appendix 1).⁵⁶ Respondents were only provided the working draft APR description (see box below) without any accompanying commentary to ensure that ACLA did not influence any responses and that the survey captured respondents' authentic first impressions.

Approximately 60 individuals and organizations received the survey link - a mixture of organizations and stakeholders including activists, youth groups, scholars on Palestine, legal academics and legal professionals. They were both Palestinian and non-Palestinians and located in Canada, the US, Europe and Palestine. ACLA decided to consult with those

outside of Canada to ensure we were not duplicating or undermining efforts elsewhere and to better understand the experiences of APR in other jurisdictions.

Approximately half responded to the survey, others sent emails or scheduled calls. Almost all the respondents were supportive of the creation of an APR definition, and thought the working draft proposed was “good” or “a good start” (see Appendix 1).

Working Draft Anti-Palestinian Racism Description (Version 1, February 2021)

Anti-Palestinian racism involves attacking, smearing, silencing or stereotyping of Palestinians. This racism can be implicit, overt, or systemic and can be perpetrated against Palestinians and non-Palestinians. Anti-Palestinian racism takes various forms, including: violence or the justification of violence against Palestinian lands, property or persons; failing to acknowledge Palestinians as a people with a collective identity, belonging and rights in relation to occupied and historic Palestine; excluding or pressuring organizations, governments or individuals to exclude Palestinians or Palestinian perspectives; denying or causing to be denied the human rights and equal dignity and worth of Palestinians; and smearing Palestinians with tropes such as being antisemitic, terrorist sympathizers, or opposed to shared national/democratic values.

Revising the First Working Draft Description of Anti-Palestinian Racism

Based on the constructive feedback received through the survey, ACLA felt confident to continue its work on naming and framing APR. ACLA incorporated the feedback received on the working draft into a revised version of the description of the APR framework, and wrote an accompanying commentary that addressed the feedback shared by respondents along with added context and explanations for the revised description.

While ACLA tried to capture all the comments received on the revised APR description, we appreciate differences may still remain. As ACLA proceeded to finalize this report, we aimed to balance both the community’s timely need for a clear framing of APR with the need for meaningful consultation with community. ACLA also welcomes the valuable contributions of others to the discussion on APR and recognizes that terms, descriptions, manifestations will evolve over time. Ultimately, the use and usefulness of this description of the APR framework will be determined by the users.

WHAT WE HEARD: SURVEY FEEDBACK

ACLA received responses from a range of individuals and representatives of organizations on the working draft of the description. In addition, ACLA had numerous discussions with legal experts, scholars, organizers and artists about APR. Note that the APR description was initially called a “definition” in the survey so for consistency the term “definition” will be used in this section to describe the respondents’ feedback.

Approximately 90% of the respondents said an APR definition would be useful to their work, and that the definition was “good” or a “good start.” Approximately half of the respondents provided additional substantive comments regarding the definition, which are summarized below.

Several respondents wanted to see an explicit mention of Nakba denial in the description. The Nakba (“catastrophe” in Arabic) refers to the ethnic cleansing of Palestine that led to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.⁵⁷ The term is also used to describe the ongoing persecution, expulsion and occupation of Palestinians. As an extension of Nakba denial, some respondents also wanted mentioned the denial of the Palestinian right of return to their homes as a form of APR.

Related to the above, a few respondents thought the description should include the denial of Palestinians as an Indigenous people of Palestine, and that as Indigenous people they were ethnically cleansed from their land, they are a people with a collective identity, and a people with a right to self-determination and a right to return.

One respondent wrote of the importance of characterizing APR as a form of dehumanization of Palestinians in addition to silencing, stereotyping and erasure of Palestinians. They also saw political violence as a form of violence perpetrated against Palestinians and part of the dehumanization process.

Other respondents mentioned adding that APR most commonly occurred when Palestinians speak or write about the Palestinian struggle in the public sphere. A few others noted the Orientalization of Palestinians, which they described as Palestinians seen to be inferior or biased, and institutions and governments making unsolicited decisions on behalf of Palestinians without consulting them or allowing Palestinians to speak for themselves. Others built upon this premise by highlighting the erasure of Palestinians who are not invited by institutions or the media to speak on issues related to Palestine; or the media’s tendency to invite Israelis to speak on the issue and regard them to be the only authoritative or objective party on the subject. Biased reporting in media was also raised by several respondents.

Several respondents commented on the opening line of the working draft of the definition. They suggested it needed to state clearly what APR *is* before setting out what it involves.

Similarly, others thought that an introduction was needed before describing the manifestations of APR. Another respondent thought the opening was too general and could describe any racialized group.

A couple of respondents wanted clarification on elements of the working definition including: the inclusion of non-Palestinians; the meaning of national/democratic values; specifying the territory of occupied and historic Palestine and stating the definition applies to Palestinians in Palestine and here; explaining implicit, systemic, overt; explaining what is meant by “attacking”, “violence” and “excluding”; expanding on the “terrorism sympathizers” reference.

A few respondents recommended that examples accompany the definition. They also suggested adding that the examples are “not limited to” to ensure people knew the definition is non-exhaustive. Suggestions of examples included the six Palestinian human rights organizations listed as terrorist organizations by Israel; and examples of Palestinians being denied opportunities in the public sphere i.e. in employment or academia.

In addition to the supportive feedback and constructive suggestions for improvement, the survey elicited two critiques from respondents outside of Canada about the creation and use of an APR definition. To summarize, the first commentary thought that the efforts to create an APR definition was mirroring the controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism and would instrumentalize identity politics in the same way the pro-Israel lobby has done with the IHRA definition. They also cautioned that positions set out in the definition could also be political judgments that may be motivated by factors other than racism. The second respondent on behalf of a group of organizations also assumed that the development of the working draft APR definition was a response to the IHRA definition and stated they preferred an approach of building allies across anti-racism movements rather than relying on a definition of APR.

These comments are helpful reflections for those who use this report or other definitions and it should be emphasized that an APR description is not to be weaponized to shut down bona fide political or academic discourse. To further clarify, by proceeding with this report ACLA is neither minimizing nor disregarding these critiques, which in fact helped inform our move towards a naming and framing approach for APR.

In working through the feedback received on the text of the draft description, ACLA also considered the respondents’ comments on the ease of understanding, accessibility and length of the description. The majority of the respondents thought the definition was comprehensible and accessible, however a couple respondents preferred a shorter definition.

Using the feedback provided, ACLA made revisions to the working draft APR description and prepared an accompanying commentary in response to the comments received to provide the clarifications specified by the respondents.

NAMING ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM VERSION 2 (APRIL 2022)

Anti-Palestinian Racism Description (Version 2, April 2022)

Anti-Palestinian racism is a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives. Anti-Palestinian racism takes various forms including: denying the Nakba and justifying violence against Palestinians; failing to acknowledge Palestinians as an Indigenous people with a collective identity, belonging and rights in relation to occupied and historic Palestine; erasing the human rights and equal dignity and worth of Palestinians; excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians and their allies; defaming Palestinians and their allies with slander such as being inherently antisemitic, a terrorist threat/sympathizer or opposed to democratic values.

COMMENTARY ON THE APR FRAMEWORK

The following commentary on anti-Palestinian racism is for informational and contextual purposes to help users better understand the description of APR framework.

Palestinians Experience a Distinct Form of Racism

Anti-Palestinian racism, which is an extension of Orientalism, anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia, is a distinct and pervasive form of racism that persists in a range of institutions both in Canada and internationally and permeates their culture. APR presents as a form of respectable racism that is commonly perpetrated by those in positions of privilege and power.⁵⁸ This racism can be implicit, overt, institutional or systemic.⁵⁹

The term “anti-Palestinian racism” is the most commonly term used by Palestinians to describe discriminatory and racist acts against Palestinians and advocates.⁶⁰ Its use likely evolved from the Palestinian solidarity movement being founded on the principles of anti-racism,⁶¹ and the connections between the Palestinian solidarity movement and other anti-racism and anti-settler-colonial movements.⁶²

Racism is an appropriate construct for describing the experiences of Palestinians. Israel's treatment of Palestinians – both in the occupied territory and in Israel – is widely accepted as apartheid, which at its essence is predicated on the superiority and dominance of one group of people over another.⁶³ This dominance and supremacy is racism – it is ideological and it permeates the Israeli state, its institutions, its society and individual adherents – and the preservation of this superiority is used to justify discriminatory and violent practices.⁶⁴

This racism is not restricted to Palestine/Israel. Abroad, defenders of the state of Israel uphold and justify Israel's treatment of Palestinians by targeting its detractors. Over time, the efficacy of this defence of Israel has resulted in the othering, racialization⁶⁵, stereotyping, dehumanization and discrimination of Palestinians and advocates in Canada and elsewhere. It also has led to the "Palestine Exception", where rights upheld for other individuals and groups are routinely denied to Palestinians and advocates i.e. freedom of expression or freedom of association.⁶⁶

Making APR difficult to name and confront is the ever-expanding characterization of Palestinian critiques of Israel as antisemitism. The highly controversial IHRA working definition of antisemitism, which describes criticisms of Israel as antisemitic, has been weaponized to suppress the speech and activities of Palestinians and advocates across North America and Europe.⁶⁷ False charges of antisemitism both prioritizes Jewish suffering in the discussion and debases Palestinian narratives by labelling the person or group as disseminators of hate against the Jewish people.⁶⁸ As gatekeepers contort themselves to create an illusion of 'fair and balanced' discourse, they ignore the fact that Palestinians are routinely bullied for speaking for their rights.

Efforts to address antisemitism should not be used to perpetuate and further entrench anti-Palestinian racism. This institutional failure puts both communities at risk to experience more hate and discrimination. Moreover, as discussed below, APR should not be conflated with Islamophobia, and cannot be addressed through the provision of anti-Islamophobic education. Unless APR is specifically named, discussed and addressed, the conflation of Palestinians and Muslims further perpetuates Arab and Muslim stereotypes and mischaracterizes the roots of the conflict as a religious struggle, instead of a struggle against settler-colonialism.

Anti-Palestinian Racism Impacts Palestinians and Non-Palestinians

APR is experienced by: Palestinians; those perceived to be Palestinians or inherently pro-Palestinian; and non-Palestinians who express support for Palestinian rights. APR usually targets those who publicly speak in support of Palestinian rights or share Palestinian narratives or openly criticize the state of Israel for their treatment of Palestinians.

It is undisputed that when the target of APR is Palestinian the harms to them are far greater and longer-lasting – and in many cases life altering.⁶⁹ For example, Professor Steven Salaita was de-hired and his academic career ended due to the pressures of the pro-Israel lobby; and Palestinian feminist organizer Rasmea Odeh was deported by the United States.⁷⁰ Palestinians cannot escape APR even if they conceal their identity. The APR Palestinians experience is life-long and it impacts their dignity and self-worth. Palestinians live with an ever-present fear or readiness for backlash as the Palestinian in the room. APR not only impacts the individual but also their community who see one of their own being targeted.

“The stereotypes faced by a racialized person, coupled with APR, can intensify their experience of targeting as well as the harms.”

There was overall consensus among Palestinians that non-Palestinians can experience APR, although the experiences and outcomes may differ. Palestinians are still impacted whenever their identity and their narratives are maligned, and they also experience the resulting harm including silencing, fear, exclusion and dehumanization. Moreover, the targeting or silencing of non-Palestinian advocates is in service to upholding settler-colonialism in Palestine and the oppression of Palestinians. Furthermore, for many Palestinians the solidarity movement is their community and when one member is targeted, irrespective of their ethnicity, the community feels targeted – as witnessed in the examples above.

It is important to note that racialized advocates, especially racialized women, bear the brunt of the targeting of advocates.⁷¹ Racialized advocates can experience an intersectional form of APR, which also leverages other forms of racism or discrimination against its target. For instance, Brown and Black communities are subjected to similar stereotypes as Palestinians such as being more prone to violence or antisemitism, which may be used to discredit or smear them. The stereotypes faced by a racialized person, coupled with APR, can intensify their experience of targeting as well as the harms. The precarious nature of the positions of employments held by racialized advocates are exploited to instil fear over their job security or advancement. This leaves them feeling further isolated, vulnerable and unsupported. For more senior racialized advocates they deal with harassment, complaints and scrutiny of their work.

In some instances, racialized advocates may be targeted in order to deter anti-racist solidarities from forming between Palestinians and other groups such as Black communities. For example, Black Lives Matter and prominent Black civil rights advocates including Angela Davis, Marc Lamont Hill and Cornel West have been labelled antisemitic

and have had awards rescinded, positions terminated and tenure denied over their public advocacy on Palestine.⁷² In Canada, TDSB's alarm over Cole's presentation came after he connected Black and Palestinian experiences.⁷³

Naming Anti-Palestinian Racism Addresses the Erasure and Exclusion of Palestinians

Palestinians experience a form of racism that is not only unacknowledged but also widely condoned. Often when Palestinians try to raise their concerns or provide their perspective their issues are deemed "controversial", "political" or "complicated" and dismissed. APR arises repeatedly for many Palestinians, from their time in school, and through the course of their education and careers. In addition, Palestinians are collectively exposed to APR through mainstream and social media, culture and political rhetoric.

Until recently, Palestinians and advocates experiencing or witnessing anti-Palestinian acts did not have a commonly accepted term to describe the vilifying or exceptionalizing of Palestinians and its related harms. While legal principles are useful, they alone cannot provide the redress sought for the dehumanizing aspect of anti-Palestinian incidents, which takes a mental and physical toll on individuals and their communities.⁷⁴

"The frequency and predictability of this backlash against those speaking on Palestinian rights results in a chilling effect on the open discourse on Palestine, and fear to participate in or openly support Palestinian initiatives."

With deepening solidarity between anti-racist movements and greater understanding of the interplay between various forms of oppression, Palestinians and advocates have increasingly expressed a need for a framework to describe the mistreatment they experience when sharing Palestinian narratives. By naming APR and placing it within an anti-racism structure Palestinians may be better placed to address the harms of racism on them and their communities.

At its core, APR aims to censor and erase Palestinians and their narratives from the public sphere either directly through punitive measures or indirectly by eliciting fear of punitive measures to deter anyone from sharing Palestinian narratives. Tactics take many forms depending on the context and often involve, but not limited to: defaming a person's character and reputation; falsely accusing them of promoting hate, violence or antisemitism; denying or threatening to deny a person opportunities or advancement;

dehumanizing Palestinians and negating their experiences; and/or portraying Palestinians as inferior people.

The frequency and predictability of this backlash against those speaking on Palestinian rights results in a chilling effect on the open discourse on Palestine, and fear to participate in or openly support Palestinian initiatives. APR, or fear of APR, deters or shuts down engagement on Palestine or only permits a narrow acceptable form of engagement (i.e. normalization). For example, potential hosts, speakers, and even venues, are reluctant to participate in Palestinian events; speakers or events centring Palestinian narratives face calls for their cancellation or censorship or disruption; and allies are fearful of attending events, signing open letters or posting messages of support on their social media; or funding or publication proposals for works related to Palestine are denied.

Another impact of APR is racialized harm and trauma, which is experienced by those who are directly targeted by APR, as well as their family, networks and community (i.e. vicarious trauma).⁷⁵ As intended, APR deepens the fear and anxiety of Palestinians of openly identifying as Palestinian or participating in Palestinian related activities, and has a chilling impact on allies as well. This anxiety results in some Palestinians concealing their identity to avoid being targeted for attack – however doing so can trigger other harmful effects including depression and feeling demoralized and isolated.

Anti-Palestinian Racism Description is Not Exhaustive

While the APR description and commentary aims to capture the most prevalent experiences and manifestations of anti-Palestinian racism, it cannot capture every expression that may arise in different contexts. As such this description must be attuned to the complexity of APR. The diversity of Palestinian people means their experiences with APR are diverse as well. As such, the above description establishes a starting position for inquiry. Intersectionality of identities, and the varying contexts where APR manifests may require a broader application of the definition. For example – women and queer Palestinians or advocates may experience APR that is also misogynistic or homophobic in nature. The description of APR is not exclusive or exhaustive and therefore those with differing or expanded views than what is included in the description must also be considered.

The forms of APR described here reflect some of the most predominant expressions of APR observed through ACLA's work in community, survey respondents and reports. The following elaborates on how APR is expressed and perpetuated.

NAKBA DENIAL includes: claims that there are no such people called Palestinians or no state of Palestine exists; that Palestinians do not originate from a land called Palestine; denial that Palestinians were ethnically cleansed (along with accompanying crimes) to

create the state of Israel; rejecting the inalienable rights of Palestinian refugees including the right of return; appropriation of Palestinian history and culture without recognizing their origins; erasure of Palestinians' connections to the land (i.e. emotional, historical, ancestral, cultural, economic).

JUSTIFICATION OF VIOLENCE includes: equating the oppressed with the oppressors or blaming the oppressed for the actions of the oppressor or rationalizing the use of violence against Palestinians. The violence can be against Palestinians in Palestine or Israel or in the diaspora and can be committed against Palestinian lands (i.e. seizing lands, damaging natural resources), property (i.e. vandalizing or demolishing homes, businesses, religious centres), and persons (i.e. physical and psychological harms).

FAILING TO ACKNOWLEDGE PALESTINIANS AS AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE includes: denying the existence of Palestine and Palestinians as a people; denying the settler-colonialization of Palestine; appropriating the culture, architecture, language, traditions, clothing, cuisine, music, arts etc. of Palestinians without acknowledgement of its origins; erasing Palestinian ancestral and present-day ties to their land and communities and denying their right to return; benefiting from, or complicity with, the removal of Palestinians from their lands; blocking redress of Palestinians in pursuit of their rights.

ERASING HUMAN DIGNITY OF PALESTINIANS includes: devaluing Palestinian life and well-being; denying Palestinian agency to advocate for their rights; interfering or demonizing Palestinians for pursuing their rights; characterizing Palestinians as a people that are inhumane or lack value for human life or basic human emotions; excluding or smearing those who support or participate in Palestinian movements (i.e. BDS movement); upholding a Palestine exception to fundamental rights (i.e. support free speech rights but deny Palestinians from expressing their views); threatening physical or sexual violence.

EXCLUDING PALESTINIANS AND ALLIES includes: barring the hiring or appointment of Palestinians or others who support Palestinian human rights and movements; denying funding or sponsorship for projects that include Palestinian narratives; denying proposals or submissions for projects or works related to Palestine; erasing mention of Palestine or Palestinian narratives in mainstream media; excluding Palestinians from speaking opportunities on topics related to Palestine; onerous requirements for hosting Palestinian events; omitting references to Palestinian identity or cultural contributions.

DEFAMING PALESTINIANS AND ALLIES includes: dehumanizing stereotypes that aims to "other" Palestinians in mainstream Western or Canadian society; depicting Palestinians as inherently hateful, violent, antisemitic, as terrorists, uncivilized, unintelligent, backwards, homophobic, misogynistic, Islamic extremists, anti-democracy, untrustworthy, biased; and claiming Palestinian movements are motivated by hate or antisemitism. Advocates are

either discredited or smeared by these anti-Palestinian stereotypes (i.e. they are a terrorist sympathizer or antisemitic for holding pro-Palestine views).

Naming and Framing Anti-Palestinian Racism as an Anti-Oppression Tool

Naming anti-Palestinian racism, as a specific form of racism, can serve as a resource for Palestinians and advocates. It provides a framework to identify, articulate and address negative, hostile or discriminatory conduct experienced when they identify as Palestinians, as their allies, or engage in Palestinian narratives. Consultations on the description of APR revealed overwhelming support for the creation of a framework to name APR to serve this purpose. Naming APR will allow those who experience APR to give their experience a name, validate that their APR experience is real and provide a starting point to address APR directly and challenge this prevalent form of racism when and where it arises. This framework is not static, and it is expected to evolve and adapt to address different circumstances.

Anti-Palestinian Racism Framework is Not a Weapon

Naming APR is not to be weaponized or be used to impede good faith discussions on Palestine/Israel. It is recognized that racialized communities ultimately bear the brunt of censorship. Developed through a consultative process, the adoption of the term and its framework aims to capture the lived experiences of Palestinians and advocates and provide them with an anti-racism framework they can use to address incidents of APR. A suspected incident of APR still requires further inquiry to determine whether the incident is in fact motivated by racism.

To further clarify, an APR framework does not protect or absolve an individual supportive of Palestinian rights who expresses their views in a manner that is antisemitic or discriminatory (i.e. predicated on stereotypes). Such views are unwelcome and should be addressed because they are harmful to both communities and counter-productive to anti-racism and solidarity actions.

THE PROBLEM WITH CONFLATING ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

Many incorrectly view Palestine-Israel as a religious conflict – Muslims versus Jews. As a result, Muslims may experience APR over their perceived support for Palestine. Palestinians may experience Islamophobia, irrespective of their religion. While there may be intersections between the two, APR and Islamophobia are distinct conceptual categories. Failure to differentiate them raises problems of over-inclusiveness and under-

inclusiveness; perpetuates stereotypes of Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims; and denies Palestinians redress.

Scholars and activists have rightly pointed out the problematic nature of conflating APR with Islamophobia.⁷⁶ First, it ignores the fact that Palestinians are not all Muslim, and erases the identity of Christian Palestinians.⁷⁷ Second, the conflation reduces a settler-colonial conflict to a matter of mere religious belief. Reducing the conflict, and the experience of APR, to a religious war between Judaism and Islam perpetuates stereotypes and a falsehood against Muslims, Arabs, Palestinians and Jews - namely that these groups are committed to a preordained belief system that programs them to hate one another, and therefore makes peace between them impossible.

It is widely accepted that Palestine-Israel is fundamentally a settler-colonial struggle where Palestinian lands are seized and occupied by Israel in accordance with their political ideology of Zionism.⁷⁸ The implementation of this ideology targets Palestinians, their land, their culture and identity in order to maintain Jewish supremacy and accompanying narrative across Palestine. Palestinians in effect are being erased from the landscape.

"...ACLA is concerned that elected officials, academic administrators, equity offices, media and the broader policy community are relying on anti-Islamophobia commitments to avoid addressing APR."

Falsely depicting the oppression of Palestinians as a religious conflict hinders the decolonization and liberation efforts of Palestinians, and restricts their ability to resist and testify against their injustices. Significantly and erroneously, this false reduction prohibits the possibility that Palestinian self-determination and Jewish self-determination are not mutually exclusive.

Increasingly, ACLA has noticed a tendency for institutions to conflate APR with Islamophobia when faced with an APR-related complaint and avoid addressing the APR issue. Tragically, due to a spike in violent hate crimes against Muslims in Canada, combatting Islamophobia has, relatively speaking, gained mainstream institutional acceptance. Recently, ACLA has observed that several responses to APR complaints outlined the respondent's interactions or consultations with Muslim groups or their organization's anti-Islamophobia policies and initiatives, but were silent on the APR concerns raised. While such commitments are commendable, ACLA is concerned that elected officials, academic administrators, equity offices, media and the broader policy community are relying on anti-Islamophobia commitments to avoid addressing APR. This

serves to ignore and downplay the specificity of APR and incorrectly conflates APR with Islamophobia.

For example, TDSB's response to complaints of APR relating to their scandals involving Davila and Cole and the Garneau student protest was to commit to providing resources and raising awareness on Islamophobia. The Tax Court of Canada's response to Justice Spiro's role in the Azarova hiring scandal, was to (inappropriately) bar him from hearing cases involving Muslim parties. Similarly, the CJC's decision found Justice Spiro had good ties with the Muslim community so there was no concern for an apprehension of bias against Muslims, Arabs and Palestinians - without addressing the specific concerns of bias against Palestinians raised in the complaints.⁷⁹

These examples, among others, present a worrying trend that whenever Palestinians and advocates raise APR, rather than investigating these complaints and taking accountability for their actions, institutions are obfuscating and avoiding APR entirely by instead pledging to take action on Islamophobia. The effect, once again, is to silence Palestinians and disregard their experiences, discourage Palestinians from reporting APR incidents, signal that this form of racism is acceptable, and enable APR and its accompanying harms to continue to be perpetuated against Palestinians and advocates.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING THE HARMS FROM ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM

Whether the Palestinian community explicitly names APR or uses this description of APR, the impacts of APR need to be addressed by institutions and workplaces. This is especially true in educational and academic settings where many reports of APR arise, and for the most part, these institutions continue to fail to protect their students and educators.⁸⁰

For many from Palestinian and Arab communities, the recent examples of APR described in the introduction strongly resonated with their own experiences of fear, exclusion, anxiety or targeting because of their identity or views. These examples confirmed what many Palestinians already suspected – that Palestinians and advocates are being silenced for testifying to the atrocities being committed against Palestinians at a time when these testimonies are needed most.⁸¹

The harms from APR can manifest itself in a range of negative and cumulative experiences such as: being subjected to negative stereotypes or witnessing violence against Palestinians in the media or public sphere; dealing with microaggressions at school or workplaces; not being believed or supported when smeared or falsely accused of promoting hate; facing criticisms, discipline or scrutiny or being denied sought-after opportunities or

advancements because of a Palestinian identity or supportive views on Palestine; or being treated, as controversial, divisive, primitive or inferior and dismissed because of work on Palestine.

This kind of targeting of Palestinian identity and narratives, the loss of opportunities and negative treatment can trigger racial trauma for Palestinians and some advocates.⁸² Racial-trauma is similar to post-traumatic stress disorder and can take a serious toll on Palestinians and advocates' mental health, self-esteem and physical health. Those who experience APR report feelings of fear, anxiety, self-doubt, depression, low self-esteem, hypervigilance, insecurity and isolation among other negative emotions.⁸³ These symptoms may also present physically (i.e. insomnia, headaches, body pain, loss of appetite etc.).

This trauma may be exacerbated for Palestinians who may also experience inter-generational trauma passed down to them from parents or grandparents. In addition, Palestinians or advocates might experience vicarious trauma as a result of systemic APR around them or bearing witness to the APR experienced by members of their community.

"As a result of trauma or fear of retaliation, many Palestinian students, educators and professionals feel the need to hide their identities or views in order to advance in their education or careers – this too can take a toll on a person's self-worth."

As a result of trauma or fear of retaliation, many Palestinian students, educators and professionals feel the need to hide their identities or views in order to advance in their education or

careers – this too can take a toll on a person's self-worth.⁸⁴ Many are dissuaded from pursuing research or work in Palestinian fields or getting involved with their community because they are concerned that this will bar them from future opportunities or subject them or their work to criticisms. Many have reported having to take health-related leaves from school or employment as a result of APR. Furthermore, many of those who experience APR are reluctant or discouraged from seeking redress through formal channels because they worry they will face reprisals, they will be blamed for the situation or their complaints will be ignored.

The harms of APR are felt by both Palestinians and advocates, particularly those that are racialized. The intensity of an APR experience and subsequent impacts can vary based on a person's identity(ies) and the positions they hold. For example, those in senior or high profile positions may face public condemnations, intense internal pressures or formal investigations. Advocates from racialized or other equity-seeking communities may

experience APR that is reinforced with other forms of hate such as anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, Islamophobia, homophobia, misogyny etc. The vulnerability of Palestinians and racialized advocates exposes them to greater harms because of job precarity or their lack of deep networks or supports.

The experience of being the target of a smear campaign over their critique of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism was described in an article by a racialized professor at Osgoode Hall Law School.⁸⁵ After his comments were taken out of context, he became the basis of a petition by a pro-Israel organization to stop him from teaching human rights courses at the law school. This campaign triggered a flurry of racist messages directed at him. The failed petition was followed by a complaint to the Law Society of Ontario, which was dismissed. The experience was made worse because he did not receive public support from his university and faced this harassment and reputational harm largely on his own.⁸⁶

Harms of Anti-Palestinian Racism on Campus

While there are many documented incidents of APR in the public and private sector, a significant number of the reports of APR ACLA received and observed are related to incidences on campuses – in Canada and abroad. This is likely due to discussions on Palestine/Israel happening more frequently in academic settings and subjected to more targeting, and educators and students are increasingly more aware of APR and willing to speak out against such treatment.

Academics, educators and students have reported to ACLA that they feel stressed in their classrooms because they sense that they are being monitored and scrutinized over their identity, the content of their lectures or discussions, their scholarship, their participation in events or their social media comments. Some educators reported they were subjected to internal or human rights complaints from students or faculty who opposed their views on Palestine/Israel. In addition, many increasingly reported that students were making “accommodation” requests to be transferred out of their class or tutorial because of discomfort with the instructor’s identity or views on Palestine/Israel. Students and educators have been doxed or blacklisted on the Canary Mission website.⁸⁷

Scholars that are not tenured feel particularly vulnerable because of their work on Palestine, especially racialized scholars. As described above, educators reported experiences or concerns associated with the denial of opportunities including hirings, tenure reviews, contract renewals, appointments, project funding and publication submissions.

Educators also felt that administration did not protect them against false allegations of hate. They also felt administration prolonged investigations into vexatious allegations or

over-scrutinized their work or conduct. This caused serious stress to targeted educators and left them feeling stigmatized and their reputations tarnished among their peers.

Many student organizers also felt targeted and harassed by internal and external pro-Israel groups and by university administration. Organizers experienced threats, accusations of being antisemitic or supporting terrorism, intimidation, harassment and disruption of their events.⁸⁸

“Diversity initiatives tend to neutralize anti-racism work to protect the status quo, thus harming those it claims to support.”

Palestinian solidarity groups were also subjected to their university's threats to deny their organization funding because of their organizing work.⁸⁹ In addition, Palestine-related events were frequently labelled as “controversial” by administration and subjected to additional inquiries before room bookings were confirmed, and sometimes added costs were required for campus security or police presence. These security costs can be prohibitive, and police or security presence may turn events into intimidating spaces for racialized attendees, and can reinforce the stereotype that Palestinians are dangerous.

Unsurprisingly, students and educators who went to their equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) offices with their APR experience reported largely negative interactions. Diversity initiatives tend to neutralize anti-racism work to protect the status quo, thus harming those it claims to support.⁹⁰ Complaints regarding EDI offices' handling of APR matters ranged from treating the concerns as a personal mental health issue; long delays for responses or no acknowledgement received of the complaint; proposing dialogue sessions with perpetrators of APR; referring people to anti-Islamophobia initiatives; and dismissing concerns or suggestions for redress. Even more troubling, some reported that their EDI offices or faculties were disseminating APR by offering antisemitism training that depicted Palestinians, their campaigns, and/or criticism of Israel as antisemitic.

The acts described above are not only meant to intimidate and silence their target but also send a warning to others who speak publicly in favour of Palestinian human rights. Institutions have also faced pressure to adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. If adopted on campuses this type of censorship and harassment would be expected to intensify.⁹¹ It is well documented, including by the definition's primary author,⁹² that the IHRA working definition has been weaponized to silence Palestinians and their supporters, including Jews who support Palestinian rights.⁹³ By labelling criticism of Israel as antisemitic, the definition is used to exclude those who are critical of Israel from participating in public engagements and partnerships or holding valued positions.⁹⁴ The aim of this chilling effect is to curtail academic freedom on Palestine/Israel and protect

Israel's settler-colonialization of Palestine.⁹⁵ To date, at least 40 faculty associations in Canada have rejected the adoption of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.⁹⁶

Academic institutions have a duty to uphold academic freedom and protect the ability of academics, educators and students to teach, research, study and debate a range of perspectives on challenging topics. To do so, universities must openly engage in difficult topics as an integral part of the academic and educational process.⁹⁷ Any topic has the potential to make a cohort of students uncomfortable because of their personal beliefs – but discomfort does not equal hate.⁹⁸ If a university restricts academic freedom on Palestine to avoid some students feeling uncomfortable in the classroom, then inevitably the same recourse will be demanded for a range of other subjects.

Universities must resist interference from external groups, donors, or individuals using their privilege to dictate what is studied, taught or researched at universities, regardless of the subject. Otherwise, academic freedom followed by public trust in our academic institutions will irrevocably erode.

CONCLUSION

Whether it is smear campaigns against an individual or attempts to cancel an event, anti-Palestinian racism is not only meant to intimidate and silence its target but also send a warning to others considering engaging in Palestinian human rights. The personal toll on an individual may harm their physical and mental well-being. The collective toll on a community is an acute chill that permeates the culture and deters those from saying Palestine in public spaces. Silence in the face of APR exacerbates the resulting harms, erases Palestinian narratives from public discourse, and shamefully casts them as controversial or hateful. If APR is not acknowledged and addressed it will continue to be seen as an acceptable practice and be perpetrated unabated against Palestinians and advocates. This report aims to start these difficult conversations and empower Palestinians and allies to speak without fear.

NEXT STEPS

Palestinian organizations, advocates and individuals are welcome to rely on the report as they see fit in the course of their work. It may be adapted to address how APR manifests in their particular contexts. It may also be a tool to help understand and validate the experiences of many Palestinians and advocates. It may help them to create a space to

speak about their experiences and know they are not alone. It can also be used to help foster co-solidarities with other communities resisting racism and settler-colonialism.

For administrators in the private or public sector, educators, EDI offices and media, this report is a resource to help better understand APR, their role in perpetuating APR and its impacts on Palestinians and advocates. APR should be understood as part of a broader anti-racism discourse and be a part of their anti-racism work. Freedom of expression on Palestine must be upheld in their settings, and those who choose to speak on Palestine should not be subjected to harassment, defamation, punitive measures or exclusion.

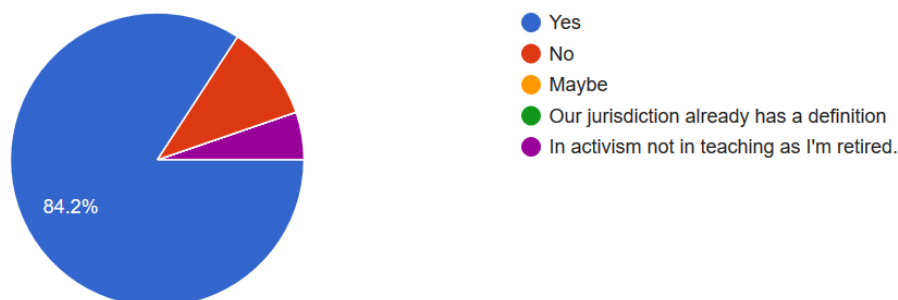
ACLA is developing and hosting an APR/anti-Arab racism self-reporting form on its website (canarablaws.org) that will allow individuals to document their experiences with racism. This quantitative and qualitative data will allow us to track experiences and trends within our communities and raise further awareness on APR.

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

Note: Not all respondents completed the survey. Some responses were received by email. Those who completed the survey were not required to answer every question. Some respondents provided their feedback in text boxes that followed the questions or did not respond to questions if they provided their views in an earlier question.

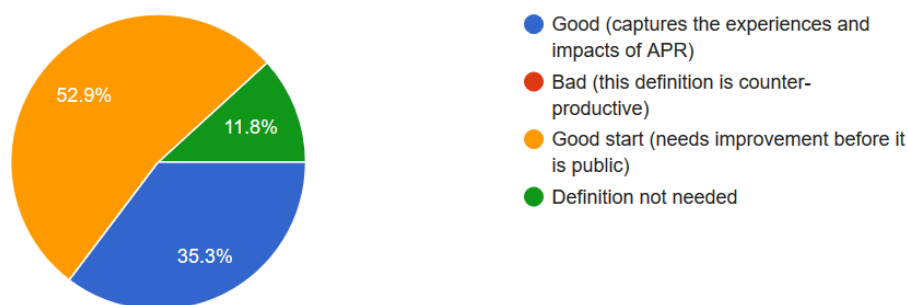
Would an APR definition be of assistance in your work?

19 responses



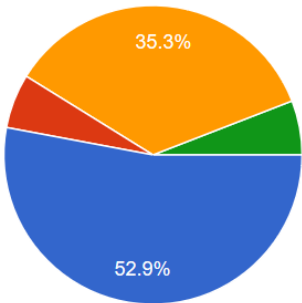
What are initial thoughts on the draft APR definition?

17 responses



Is the APR definition easy to understand for the average person?

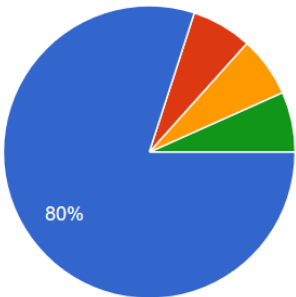
17 responses



- Yes (the average person can read, understand and apply the definition)
- No (only academics and lawyers can understand this definition)
- Somewhat understandable (generally yes but some parts are confusing)
- Yes. I think stereotype in the last sentence would be better than trope.

Is the APR definition written in sufficiently plain language?

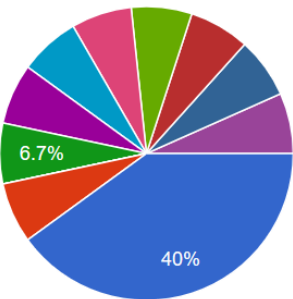
15 responses



- Yes (it is free of jargon and complex terminology)
- No (it has too many legal terms and jargon)
- Somewhat (overall plain language but some jargon present)
- If the definition is to be endorsed at institutional levels then a certain level of Jargon will have to be there, which will certainly have to be deciphered by tho...

Is the APR definition an appropriate length?

15 responses

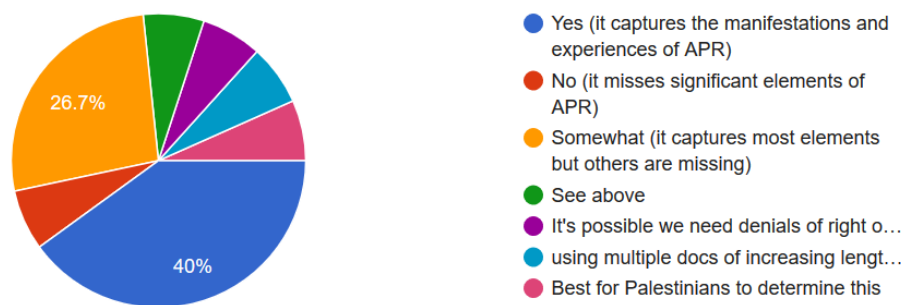


- Yes (good length)
- No (too long)
- No (too short)
- I'm not keen on having a definition of...
- Shorter is better, but I can't think of wh...
- I think it would be OK if it were slightly...
- should prepare a much longer report t...
- just suggesting one more line to begin...

▲ 1/2 ▼

Is the ARP definition comprehensive?

15 responses



ENDNOTES

¹ Reem Bahdi, "No Exit: Racial Profiling and Canada's War against Terrorism." *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 41.2/3 (2003): 293-317, online: *Osgoode Digital Commons* <http://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/ohlj/vol41/iss2/>; Salaita, Steven. *Anti-Arab Racism in the USA: where it comes from and what it means for politics today*, ed (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2006) at chapter 2, online: *JSTOR* <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt18fsb1b>; S.H. Razack (2007), "'Your Client has a Profile:' Race and National Security in Canada After 9/11", Sarat, A. (Ed.) *Studies in Law, Politics and Society (Studies in Law, Politics, and Society, Vol. 40)*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 3-40, online: *Emerald Group Publishing* [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1059-4337\(06\)40001-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1059-4337(06)40001-6). Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, "Marginalized and Misunderstood: Survey on Attitudes on Arabs and Anti-Arab Racism in Canada," (28 October 2021), online: *CJPME* <https://www.cjpme.org/survey2021>.

² The perception of escalation may also be a result of the increased use of social media platforms by Palestinians and advocates to highlight discriminatory experiences.

³ For example: Idle No More, Wet'suwet'en land defenders, Six Nations of the Grand River land defenders, Mohawks of Tyendinaga land defenders, Standing Rock Sioux water keepers, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women rights movement, Residential School Survivors and Truth and Reconciliation calls to action.

⁴ Shree Paradkar, "The Surprising Bonds That Link Palestinian, Black and Indigenous Liberation Movements", (30 May 2021), online: *Toronto Star* <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/2021/05/30/the-surprising-bonds-that-link-palestinian-black-and-indigenous-liberation-movements.html>; Chandni Desai (2021) Disrupting Settler-Colonial Capitalism: Indigenous Intifadas and Resurgent Solidarity from Turtle Island to Palestine, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 50:2, 43-66, online: *JPS* https://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/attachments/jps-articles/RPAL_A_1909376_O.pdf; "Special Issue: Black-Palestinian Transnational Solidarity," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (2019) 48:4, online: *JPS* https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/journals/explorer?f%5B0%5D=field_special_issue%3A12434; Noura Erakat, "Geographies of Intimacy: Contemporary Renewals of Black-Palestinian Solidarity." *American Quarterly*, vol. 72 no. 2, 2020, p. 471-496, *Project MUSE*, [doi:10.1353/aq.2020.0027](https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2020.0027); Palestinian BDS National Committee, "We can't breathe until we're free! Palestinians stand in solidarity with Black Americans", (30 May 2020), online: *BDS Movement* <https://bdsmovement.net/news/we-cant-breathe-until-we-are-free-palestinians-stand-solidarity-with-black-americans>; Palestinian BDS National Committee, "From Standing Rock to Occupied Jerusalem: We Resist Desecration of our Burial Sites and Colonizing our Indigenous Lands", (9 September 2016), online: *BDS Movement* <https://bdsmovement.net/news/standing-rock-occupied-jerusalem-we-resist-desecration-our-burial-sites-and-colonizing-our>; Idle No More, "Idle No More Stands in Solidarity with Palestinian people", (May 2021), online: *Idle No More* <https://idlenomore.ca/idle-no-more-stands-in-solidarity-with-palestinian-people/?fbclid=IwAR1gLxfi83FdUUQ6zSSH5zU6C-EEUMGdDCNLIa9EKPqoI4GKLAQf6dwlLpk>; Black Lives Matter. "Black lives Statement of Solidarity with Palestinians", (17 May 2021), online: *Twitter*

<https://twitter.com/Blklivesmatter/status/1394289672101064704>. <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/2021/05/30/the-surprising-bonds-that-link-palestinian-black-and-indigenous-liberation-movements.html>

⁵ It should be noted that the solidarity between movements is not new and were also seen during anti-imperialist struggles of the 1960s. Michael R. Fischbach, *Black Power and Palestine Transnational Countries of Color*, ed (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019); Salam Awad, "A Visual History of Black-Palestinian Solidarity", (18 October 2021), online: *Middle East Eye* <https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/palestine-black-lives-matter-solidarity-pictures>; Desai, *ibid*.

⁶ Paradkar, *supra* note 4.

⁷ This evolving anti-racism response to derogatory or discriminatory treatment of Palestinians was widely witnessed online during the Spring 2021 Palestinian uprising, attack on Gaza and Jerusalem expulsions.

⁸ Larry Haiven, "'Cancel culture' and the pro-Israel lobby", (10 July 2020), online: *Canadian Dimension* <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/cancel-culture-and-the-pro-israel-lobby>; Radheyen Simonpillai, "Canadian artists fear backlash for speaking on Israel-Palestine", (9 June 2021), online: *NOW Magazine* <https://nowtoronto.com/culture/canadian-artists-fear-backlash-for-speaking-on-israel-palestine>; Mary-Jo Nadeau & Alan Sears (2010) The Palestine Test: Countering the Silencing Campaign, *Studies in Political Economy*, 85:1, 7-33, DOI: [10.1080/19187033.2010.11675033](https://doi.org/10.1080/19187033.2010.11675033).

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of 'Apartheid' against Palestinians", (1 February 2022), online: *CBC/Radio Canada* <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1998410819545>.

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²⁸ Andrew Mitrovica, "A doctor's oath and occupied Palestine", (30 May 2021), online: *Al Jazeera* <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/5/30/a-doctors-oath-and-occupied-palestine>.

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³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

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³⁷ Toronto District School Board, "TDSB Board Member Code of Conduct Complaint Investigation Report Naming Trustee Alexandra Lulka", (8 December 2021), online: *TDSB* <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Agenda-Minutes>.

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⁴⁵ Yasmeen Abu-Laban & Abigail B Bakan, "Anti-Palestinian Racism: Analyzing the Unnamed and Suppressed Reality", (21 September 2021), online: *Project on Middle East Political Science* <https://pomeps.org/anti-palestinian-racism-analyzing-the-unnamed-and-suppressed-reality>; Beinart, Peter. "It's Time to Name Anti-Palestinian Bigotry", (16 July 2021), online: *Jewish Currents* <https://jewishcurrents.org/its-time-to-name-anti-palestinian-bigotry>.

⁴⁶ Validation is important for the Palestinian community and its advocates because for so long they have been repeatedly made to feel they are the problem when they speak on Palestine. This results

in self-doubt, self-questioning, self-blame of their experiences of APR. See *infra* note 74 regarding racial trauma. See also Nestle, *infra* note 69.

⁴⁷ American Association of University Professors, "Legislative threats to academic freedom: Redefinitions of antisemitism and racism", (March 2022), online: AAUP https://www.aaup.org/report/legislative-threats-academic-freedom-redefinitions-antisemitism-and-racism?link_id=3&can_id=2b0041e853787fc9da748e8e273fc25f&source=email-new-statement-challenges-redefinitions-of-antisemitism-and-racism-2&email_referrer=email_1488521&email_subject=new-statement-challenges-redefinitions-of-antisemitism-and-racism; Palestine Legal, "Distorted definition: Silencing advocacy for Palestinian rights", online: *Palestine Legal* <https://palestinelegal.org/distorted-definition?fbclid=IwAR3nBbryjv1UAtpU7escPvtax5kyJifZmPjgmaEY2G4Ejlhl-x3RXsAJAY>.

⁴⁸ Anti-Semitism Working Group. "Report of the University of Toronto Anti-Semitism Working Group", (December 2021), online: *University of Toronto* <https://people.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Report-of-the-Anti-Semitism-Working-Group.pdf> see Recommendation 3.

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⁵⁹ This is in keeping with basic human rights principles. See *Quebec (Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse) v. Bombardier Inc. (Bombardier Aerospace Training Center)*, 2015 SCC 39 (CanLII), [2015] 2 SCR 789, <https://canlii.ca/t/gk9v> at para. 1: "Discrimination can take a variety of forms. Although some of them are easy to identify, others are less obvious, such as those that result from unconscious prejudices and stereotypes or from standards that are neutral on their face but have adverse effects on certain persons. The Charter of human rights and freedoms, CQLR, c. C-12 ("Charter"), prohibits the various forms of discrimination and creates a remedy for victims of discrimination." See also Ontario Human Rights Commission, "What is 'discrimination'", online: OHRC <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/iii-principles-and-concepts/2-what-discrimination>.

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Anti-Palestinian Racism in Canada:

CJPME's 2022 Report



**CANADIANS FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE
IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

December 2023⁹⁵

Anti-Palestinian Racism in Canada:

CJPME's 2022 Report

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www.cjpme.org

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Executive Summary

Anti-Palestinian racism (APR) is a widespread problem in Canadian society which goes almost entirely unrecognized and unaddressed. A non-exhaustive study of APR in Canada in 2022 by Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) identified 507 examples of this form of racism in online written content. The vast majority of these examples of APR came from non-profit organizations (67 percent), followed by right-leaning media organizations (33 percent).

CJPME identified examples of APR based on the description published in May 2022 by the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association, in a report entitled, “Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations.” These examples were drawn exclusively from online written content from 2022 from institutional Canadian sources known to be frequent purveyors of APR. The study deliberately excluded examples from social media, religious organizations, and various other sources. As such, it is necessarily limited in scope. This indicates that the problem of APR is likely much more serious than indicated here.

While APR can take many different forms, 354 of the examples of APR (70 percent) identified in the study included defamatory slander of Palestinians as being either 1) antisemitic, 2) terrorist sympathizers, or 3) anti-democratic. Of these three, slander of Palestinians as antisemitic was the most common subtype of APR at 293 examples (58 percent), followed by terrorist-sympathizer (118 examples, 23 percent) and anti-democratic (29 examples, 6 percent).

Of the examples in which Palestinians were slandered as antisemitic, it was most common for this to be justified based on their 1) criticism of Israel, 2) being ‘anti-Israel’, or 3) being anti-Zionist. These results suggest that the conflation of antisemitism with criticism of Israel is a driving force behind APR. Definitions of antisemitism which engender this conflation, such as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition (IHRA), should be recognized as purveyors of APR.

This report recommends that governments, companies and other institutions move quickly to adopt measures to incorporate APR in their equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) frameworks. The report also recommends that governments and institutions avoid adopting (and roll back the adoption of) any definition of antisemitism which itself promulgates APR (including IHRA). It is also recommended that governments incorporate APR into their anti-racist public awareness programs targeting not only the general public, but also law enforcement and other critical professions.

This report also recommends that Canadian media give special attention to their reporting on Israel-Palestine, as poor reporting can often be a source of APR, and also contribute to the popularity of racist ideas about Palestinians among readers. The report’s recommendations provide guidelines for how media can counter APR and be more inclusive of Palestinian perspectives – e.g. providing greater historic context in coverage of Palestine-Israel.

The report advises Palestinians and their supporters to highlight the problem of APR in Canada, and to oppose it vigorously.

While this particular study was focused exclusively on examples from 2022, the report notes that there has been a huge uptick of incidents of APR in Canada since Oct. 7, 2023. Among other things, many people in Canada have been warned, suspended, investigated or fired by their employers or academic institutions due to the expression of their views on Palestine. CJPME plans to undertake a report on the problem of APR in Canada each year, and expects that its 2023 report will highlight the growing and devastating impact of APR on Canadian society.

The need for a report on anti-Palestinian racism

For decades, Palestinians in Canada and elsewhere in the diaspora have faced a form of racism tied to their very existence. In the West, for a Palestinian, sometimes simply stating their place of origin can trigger a heated political or religious debate. Palestinians in the West have always been sensitive to the fact that openly discussing their background could have significant negative repercussions in their workplace or community. This is one aspect of a phenomenon which is increasingly named as “Anti-Palestinian Racism” (APR).

APR also prevents open discussion on Palestinian rights because it positions Palestine solidarity as something that is socially unacceptable.¹ People may be reluctant to participate in Palestine solidarity events, for example, due to the fear of negative repercussions for such involvement. This fear of retribution contributes to the marginalization of Palestinian narratives by discouraging people from speaking out in defence of Palestinian rights.²

Another major impact of APR is the harm and trauma caused by the targeting of the Palestinian racial identity. For Palestinians, social disapproval in the West intensifies the anxiety of being Palestinian and – as described above – can lead Palestinians to hide their identity for fear of persecution.³ This can result in isolation, depression and other mental health issues.⁴

Palestinians in the West haven’t had the luxury to think about the inherent racism they face. As a largely immigrant community, they’ve been focused on establishing their citizenship and place in society and ensuring the well-being and prosperity of their families. This is essential for a people whose status is often precarious, whether because they are officially refugees, because they are officially stateless, or because their status may be tentative or temporary in a foreign country. Because of this, Palestinians in the West are often resigned to the fact that others will try to deny their stories, their culture and their heritage.

As such, it is no surprise that it is only recently that Palestinian civil society and scholars have begun to formalize an understanding of the racism faced by Palestinians. A key step in this process was the publication of a report in May, 2022 by the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA) entitled, *Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing, and Manifestations*.⁵ The ACLA’s report represented a years-long effort – in consultation with dozens of civil society organizations and experts – to characterize the type of racism that Palestinians face. The ACLA’s description of APR enables Palestinians and their advocates to more easily identify the unjust, dehumanizing, exclusionary and discriminatory experiences they may encounter, as well as validate the harm caused by it.⁶ While the focus of the ACLA report’s analysis was Canada, the resulting description of anti-Palestinian racism (APR) would likely describe the challenges facing any Palestinian diaspora community in the West.

The ACLA’s description was intended to address the censorship and personal harm caused by APR, not to prevent discussions on Palestine-Israel by shutting down pro-Israel speech.⁷ The ACLA’s description provided a framework Palestinians and their allies can use to address incidents of APR, enabling more productive discussions on the issue of Palestine-Israel, and

averting attacks on the image and heritage of those involved.⁸ With the ACLA description of APR in hand, the Palestine Solidarity movement is tasked with finding concrete ways to spread awareness about the problem of APR and find ways to combat it. There has also clearly been a need to make the problem of APR more apparent to Western society as a whole, and to provide concrete evidence of it. This 2022 report on Anti-Palestinian Racism in Canada is CJPME's attempt to do just that.

Why the need to combat APR is more urgent than ever

The Oct. 7, 2023 attack by Hamas on Israel and Israel's subsequent war on Gaza have led to an explosion of incidents of APR, highlighting the urgency of the problem. Although there is increased discussion of APR in the media and public sphere, this is not a sign of better recognition and prevention; instead, it is a sign that Palestinians and their allies in Canada face even greater repression and threats to their civil liberties than ever before. To give a few examples of APR witnessed in recent weeks:

- Although there is no official statistic, since October 7, many people in Canada have been warned, suspended, investigated or fired by their employers due to the expression of their views on Palestine. *The Maple* published an article highlighting a sampling of cases that included educators, physicians, pilots, journalists, politicians, bureaucrats, and restaurant staff.⁹
- People in Canada have been assaulted for wearing a keffiyeh,¹⁰ threatened with violence for putting up posters about Palestinian children,¹¹ and verbally abused for displaying a Palestine flag on their car.¹² Relatedly, incidents of Islamophobia have also skyrocketed since Oct 7, with Muslim Canadians targeted in a record number of attacks.¹³
- There has been a widespread demonization of pro-Palestine demonstrations, which Ontario Premier Doug Ford referred to as "hate rallies."¹⁴ Those who participate in demonstrations in solidarity with Palestinians have faced calls that they be charged for supporting terrorism and/or be deported,¹⁵ been defamed in racist political cartoons which claim they support "killing Jews,"¹⁶ and have been referred to as "Tide Pod Taliban" by radio personalities.¹⁷
- In Calgary, a protestor organizer was arrested and charged with a hate-motivated crime for using the popular chant, "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." This is a simple call for freedom which has been grossly re-interpreted by critics as a call for violence. The charges were later stayed.¹⁸
- Horrifying acts of violence against Palestinians in the United States also affect the atmosphere in Canada. In Michigan, a 6-year-old Palestinian boy was stabbed to death by a man confronting him and his mother "about what was going on in the Middle East."¹⁹ In Vermont, three Palestinian university students wearing keffiyehs and speaking Arabic were shot and injured while walking near the university.²⁰

This dangerous escalation in APR, alongside a concurrent rise in Islamophobia, has created an unsafe environment for Palestinians in Canada which is described by experts as "much worse

than what we saw in the aftermath of 9/11.”²¹ While the spike in such incidents is associated with Israel’s war on Gaza, this report will demonstrate that APR is a widespread and prevalent problem even in “quiet” times.

State-sponsored APR: The IHRA definition of antisemitism

One of the most significant mechanisms of APR today is the controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism (“IHRA”). Pro-Israel organizations around the world have been pushing governments, institutions, and companies to adopt this definition, which threatens to suppress Palestinian perspectives. In Canada, IHRA has been adopted by the federal government as part of its federal anti-racism strategy, and by provincial governments including Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Alberta.

Critics have long warned that IHRA conflates antisemitism with criticism of Israel, and for that reason, it is seen by many as a threat to political expression about Israel, including forms of activism in support of Palestinian rights.²² This is because several of the examples listed on the IHRA website refer to criticism of the State of Israel and Zionism, rather than racism and discrimination against Jews as a group. For example, one of IHRA’s examples of antisemitism is “Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.” However, Israel has many policies and practices against the Palestinians which can be accurately described as racist, and which have been identified as “apartheid” by Palestinians and leading human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.²³ Many supporters of IHRA wish to use this definition in a way that labels these human rights groups as antisemitic and therefore shut down their criticism.²⁴ There are many documented cases in North America and Europe where IHRA was invoked in order to shut down political expression about Israel and Palestine.²⁵

For this reason, IHRA is opposed by a wide range of Canadian civil society groups including Independent Jewish Voices Canada, the BC Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the Canadian Federation of Students, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Confédération des syndicats nationaux, and over 40 faculty associations and academic unions.²⁶ Internationally, over 100 civil society organizations, including major international, Israeli, and Palestinian human rights groups, have asked the United Nations not to adopt the definition.²⁷

In Canada, CJPME is especially concerned about how IHRA is being implemented by government bureaucracies in a way that threatens to suppress speech. Departments are moving to require Canadian organizations to sign attestation forms in support of IHRA as a condition of receiving grant funding. This means that in order to receive government funding, Canadians of Palestinian, Arab or Muslim origin may lose their very right to discuss their own personal experiences and family histories of racism and dispossession as a result of the actions of the Israeli government. In early 2023, more than thirty Canadian civil society groups urged the Canadian government to abandon this requirement, warning that it “risks undermining the very anti-racism work the government seeks to support.”²⁸

Policies like the above which suppress Palestinian perspectives should be understood as a form of state-sponsored APR.

The crisis of racism in Canada: APR in context

In its ground-breaking 2022 report, the ACLA underlined that its analysis of anti-Palestinian racism was a product of “the exchange of knowledge, strategies, demands, and lessons between movements” that emerged thanks to multi-issue solidarity.²⁹ The trends since Oct. 7 suggest that APR is now in an upward trajectory, and cross-movement solidarity will be needed now more than ever if Palestinians and their allies are ever to see a reversal of this new tendency.

A review of historic racism in Canada is far beyond the scope of this document. Nevertheless, it is useful to highlight some key developments of the past several years which shape today’s Canadian discussions around APR. A good starting point for this contextualization would be the publication in 2015 of the final reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)³⁰ which published 94 “calls to action” to facilitate true reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples. The TRC placed the problem of racism on the Canadian policy agenda as never before, with piercing chapters like “Colonialism in the Age of Empire.”³¹ The TRC situated the problem of anti-Indigenous racism in a multi-issue context and propelled calls for an anti-racist transformation of Canadian society.

In addition to the inherent importance of the TRC on anti-racist discourse in Canada, it is also important to point out how the struggles of the Palestinian people are being recognized by Indigenous people as being not dissimilar to their own struggles. A petition signed by 132 Indigenous activists, artists and intellectuals released on Oct. 27, 2023 stated, “It has been heartbreaking and unsurprising to see the colonial powers in Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe line up behind [Israel’s] genocide [of Palestinians].”³² The petition also highlighted the “apartheid” and “settler-colonial” nature of Israel’s oppression of Palestinians. An excellent article in the *Toronto Star* in November, 2023 highlighted how Indigenous advocates across North America were “expressing solidarity and finding common ground with the Palestinian community.”³³ The article summarized how leading thinkers on Indigenous rights were seeing the parallels between what their peoples had gone through, and Israel’s violent colonization of the occupied Palestinian territories along with other Israeli state policies forcing Palestinians from their homes and lands.

One telling example is that of Ms. Wanda Nanibush, curator of Indigenous art at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in Toronto for seven years, and known for making the link between Indigenous peoples living in Canada and Palestinians. In a 2016 feature for *Canadian Art* magazine, entitled, “An Indigenous perspective on the contested land of Palestine,” Nanibush linked the experience of Indigenous peoples living in Canada to that of Palestinians.³⁴ Ms. Nanibush departed the AGO in November, 2023 in what was described as a “mutual decision” by the institution, apparently due to her criticism of Israel’s War on Gaza.³⁵ But news reports also made clear that the AGO had received pressure about Nanibush from pro-Israel

organizations, including the Toronto-based organization Israel Museum and Arts, Canada (IMAAC). IMAAC wrote, “We are exhausted and disgusted by [Nanibush’s] dedication to repeating that Israel is involved with genocide and colonialism.”³⁶

Beyond the affinity felt between Indigenous activists and Palestine solidarity activists, they often face the same racist forces. A multi-year study that was published in 2022 under the title, *Mapping Islamophobia’s Ecosystem in the Great White North*³⁷ described anti-Indigenous and anti-Palestinian forces within the same international hate networks.³⁸ The study was conducted by Jasmine Zine, a professor of sociology at Wilfrid Laurier University, who was inspired to study acts of far-right terrorism following the Quebec City Mosque Massacre of Jan. 29, 2017. The massacre had been a wake-up call about the online spread of hate for many researchers in Canada like Zine. In her study, Zine found that part of the backlash in Canada to Indigenous, Black, and immigrant-rights struggles was being conducted by what Zine called the “pro-Israel backlash industry.”³⁹ While Zine did not name *APR as such*, she traced it in practice across Canada’s far right.

Islamophobia

Even though the urgent problem of Islamophobia in Canada had been increasingly studied and debated in the period following 9/11 and the so-called ‘War of Terror,’ the Quebec City mosque attack of Jan. 29, 2017 finally put the issue of Islamophobia firmly on the Canadian radar. By coincidence, a motion from Liberal MP Iqra Khalid – Motion M-103 – had been deposited on December 5, 2016, and came up for debate in Parliament just weeks after the Quebec City attack. In parallel, a few candidates in the concurrent Conservative leadership race took highly polarizing positions on M-103. Some Conservative leadership candidates even denied that there was a specific problem of Islamophobia, despite the Quebec City attack just weeks prior.

Despite the controversy, Motion M-103 was ultimately passed, and resulted in a Parliamentary report on religious discrimination in Canada published in February of the following year. The report addressed not only Islamophobia, but other forms of religious discrimination in Canada. Like the TRC’s report, the Committee’s report made dozens of recommendations – a total of 30⁴⁰ – on how governments and civil society could address the problem of Islamophobia. Just days after the Parliamentary report was published, CJPME published the results⁴¹ of a public opinion poll conducted late in 2017, confirming the attitudes behind many of the trends reported yearly by Statistics Canada. Given the debate in February of 2017, CJPME’s survey shed light on 1) the negative attitudes toward Muslim Canadians and those perceived to be Muslims in Canada, 2) the severity of the problem of Islamophobia in Canada, and 3) the degree to which the contemporary political discourse on Muslims often misrepresented actual Canadian attitudes.

Islamophobia and APR will inevitably be confused and conflated for a number of reasons. For one, many Palestinians are Muslims, so prejudice against one identity will inevitably be confused with prejudice against the other. In addition to being a visible “other” in Western

society, the fact that Muslims are vocal against the repression of Palestinians makes them an even greater perceived threat among certain racist communities in the West. In fact, an article published by one of the Canadian purveyors of APR cited later in this report asserted that support for an independent Palestine was driven by Muslim religious ideology, at one point arguing, “Palestinianism is imbued with Islamism.”⁴²

Many Muslims – in Canada and elsewhere – take a keen interest in Palestine because many Muslim-Canadians have roots in the Middle East, and have concerns and affinities for the Palestinians. These Muslim Canadians realize how the West’s failure to address the legitimate grievances of the Palestinians has led to regional instability and excessive foreign interference. Muslims are also particularly sensitive to the injustices imposed upon the Palestinians – recognizing them as fellow Muslims – and thus feel a keen aversion to Western disregard for Palestinian life and liberation. Palestine – and Jerusalem especially – also hold a special religious significance for Muslims worldwide as they are the site of the Al Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam. As such, if any community is going to suffer discrimination for its support for Palestinian rights and liberation, it will be the Muslim community.

Horrific incidents of Islamophobia have continued to occur in Canada since 2018 – a notable incident being a car-ramming attack that killed a Muslim family in London, ON in June, 2021. Such incidents finally triggered a number of constructive and concrete steps by the Trudeau government, including the codification of the definition of Islamophobia by the government, the recognition of January 29 as a day of remembrance and action against Islamophobia, and the appointment of a Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia.

Especially since the Hamas attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, there is a clear sense that both Islamophobia and APR are growing in parallel in Canada. In fact, there are indications that increased Islamophobia frequently feeds into increased APR, and vice versa.⁴³

Anti-Arab Racism

In 2021, CJPME and partner organizations published the results⁴⁴ of a poll on anti-Arab racism in Canada. The sponsoring organizations had long observed that Arabs in Canada face insidious forms of systemic racism in Canada. The survey confirmed what the sponsors had long suspected about how anti-Arab racism manifests itself in Canada, including: 1) the general opposition to immigration from Arab countries, 2) the frequent racial profiling of Arabs in Canada, 3) the many barriers to the Canadian employment market for Arabs, and 4) the negative stereotypes about Arabs and Arab culture. Like with Muslims, racism against Arabs in Canada can often be tied closely to APR in Canada.

APR in relation to other forms of racism

Despite the associations mentioned above, APR is distinct from both Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. This is true even though individuals can simultaneously be the target of one or

more of these forms of discrimination. Palestinians are Arabs, so they often suffer discrimination in Canada for being Arabs, e.g. if they have an Arab-sounding name, if they have an Arab accent in English or French, if they use ethnic dress, etc. But in addition to this, they also face APR. For example, as noted above, they may be “shut down” when they talk about their family’s place of origin, or their views in support of Palestinian rights – as per the description of anti-Palestinian racism.⁴⁵

Religiously, Palestinians can be Muslim, Christian or Druze. Although a strong majority of Palestinians are Muslim, a disproportionate number of Palestinians in Canada are Christian.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, many Canadians mistakenly assume that all Palestinians are Muslim. As such, Palestinians in Canada – even the Christian and Druze ones – frequently face Islamophobia, whether because of their name, their place of origin, their cultural habits, etc. But again, Palestinians will face anti-Palestinian racism *in addition* to any racism they face because they are Muslim, or perceived as Muslim.

While Islamophobia is a malignant presence in Canada, using Islamophobia as a proxy for anti-Palestinian racism is unwise and unhelpful.⁴⁷ First, this strategy assumes that the only discrimination faced by Palestinians is Islamophobia, when of course Palestinians face additional forms of discrimination as Palestinians.⁴⁸ Second, this approach suggests that the Palestinian struggle is a global, religious-based struggle between Muslims and Jews rather than a regional Palestinian struggle against oppression and colonialism.⁴⁹ Both of these shortcomings misrepresent or ignore the destructive impacts of anti-Palestinian racism, and contribute to the broader suppression of Palestinian identity and narratives.⁵⁰

“While there many be intersections between [Islamophobia and APR],” the ACLA notes, “APR and Islamophobia are distinct conceptual categories.”⁵¹ Efforts to deny Palestinian distinctiveness and portray Palestinians as part of an amorphous Muslim (or for that matter, Arab) mass are themselves a quintessential form of Orientalist racism.⁵²

APR as backlash to Palestine advocacy

Over the past decades, there has been a huge increase in support for Palestine in Canada. The rise of the BDS movement, Israeli Apartheid Week, the May 2021 protests of support for Palestine, and now the post-Oct. 7 groundswell of support for Palestinian life and liberation, have each demonstrated the widespread popular sympathy for Palestinian grievances. Each of these reference points has pushed the Palestine solidarity movement to the forefront in highly prominent ways. At the same time, this rise in activism has been met with increased backlash. In *Mapping Islamophobia*, Zine highlighted the attack on Palestinians and their supporters as an urgent concern. “Globally,” she wrote, “countless scholars and pro-Palestinian activists have faced backlash for criticizing Israel, a situation that is exacerbated by [the] International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s [IHRA’s] working definition of antisemitism which includes as antisemitic a broad range of criticism of the state of Israel, particularly targeting decolonial and anti-racist critiques.”⁵³

Independent Jewish Voices Canada came to a similar conclusion in a report co-authored by Sheryl Nestel and Rowan Gaudet, under the title *Unveiling the Chilly Climate: The Suppression of Speech on Palestine in Canada*. Nestel and Gaudet joined in raising the alarm about the IHRA definition of antisemitism, which they identified as “an unprecedented attempt to frame criticism of the State of Israel or of the political ideology of Zionism as ‘antisemitism.’”⁵⁴

The emergence of the ACLA description of anti-Palestinian racism

The ALCA’s initial foray in identifying the problem of APR was made in 2022, when it used the phrase *anti-Palestinian racism* in its response to a hiring scandal at the University of Toronto (UofT). As the ACLA noted, the scandal at the UofT had provoked a wider discussion of how and why Canada was “regarded as an especially hostile place for Palestinian advocacy.”⁵⁵

Following the incident at the UofT, the ACLA invited Palestine solidarity activists and movements across Canada to be involved in consultations on how APR manifests itself. Ultimately, these invitations and consultations were widely embraced by the Palestine solidarity community, and the resulting discussions highly fruitful. “There is broad agreement among those consulted,” concluded the ACLA, “for the need to name anti-Palestinian racism as a distinct form of oppression faced by Palestinians and those advocating for Palestinian rights.”⁵⁶ By April 2022, the ACLA had developed and published a solid and defensible description of anti-Palestinian racism.

The ACLA’s description of APR reads in full:

“Anti-Palestinian racism is a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives. Anti-Palestinian racism takes various forms including: denying the Nakba and justifying violence against Palestinians; failing to acknowledge Palestinians as an Indigenous people with a collective identity, belonging and rights in relation to occupied and historic Palestine; erasing the human rights and equal dignity and worth of Palestinians; excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians and their allies; defaming Palestinians and their allies with slander such as being inherently antisemitic, a terrorist threat/sympathizer or opposed to democratic values.”⁵⁷

To CJPME’s understanding, the ACLA is the first organization in the world to develop a rigorous description of APR. As such, the ACLA deserves strong recognition and thanks. Nevertheless, the onus now falls on Palestine solidarity organizations 1) to capture incidents of APR, and then 2) to pressure institutions to reject APR in all its forms. The current report – which we hope will become an annual publication – is an attempt to tackle the first challenge. The second challenge must be addressed by painstakingly working with government institutions, corporations and civil institutions to incorporate APR into their equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) frameworks.

In one positive example, early in 2023, the Peel District School Board (GTA west) acknowledged the problem of APR and the frequent conflation of APR and Islamophobia.⁵⁸ In another positive step, the NDP highlighted the problem of APR in Canada in a statement in October, 2023.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, only once these two above steps have been fully funded and addressed over the long term will Canada make progress on combatting APR.

Methodology

Challenges to gathering data on APR

For a number of reasons, CJPME knew that gathering reliable data on APR was going to be a challenge. While self-reporting of incidents is often assumed to be one of the most effective ways to gather data on such racism, it has many issues in practice.

The problems with the self-reporting of racist incidents are very common. In its report examining systemic racism and religious discrimination published in 2018, Parliament's Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage found that under-reporting was a predictable and acknowledged challenge of addressing the root causes of racism, especially among Muslim-Canadians. Witnesses from both law enforcement and civil society acknowledged the problem. One of the witnesses from civil society stated that they encountered people daily who had been victims of hate crimes, but that "they will not come out and report it, that they do not feel safe to do so, they do not feel they would be supported if they did so, and they do not feel that anything would happen if they did so."⁶⁰ Another witness to the Committee suggested that "fear of engaging with the police" was another reason preventing some of her clients from reporting.⁶¹

In a report on police-reported hate crime in 2015, Statistics Canada suggested a number of possible explanations for the underreporting of hate crimes incidents. Many of the reasons related to the fact that individuals simply aren't aware that they could, or should, report such crimes. In parallel, many victims of such crimes aren't aware that there are protections – both in the workplace and in society at large – for people who face such crimes.⁶²

The ACLA self-reporting form acknowledged these challenges, asking respondents who had not formally reported the incidents why. The possible reasons included: fear of not being believed; fear of reprisal; lack of awareness of a complaint process; concern that the complaint wouldn't be taken seriously; and lack of trust in the reporting authority.

As such, victims of APR face all of these pressures to underreport. On top of this, while many Palestinian-Canadians know that they face various forms of discrimination, many are not even aware that APR has now been codified. For example, when CJPME spoke to students about APR in 2022, many knew that they had faced various forms of discrimination for being Palestinian, but none of them were aware of the ACLA's report. Even if they consider reporting it, Palestinian-Canadians may presume that the discrimination they face may simply have been a form of Islamophobia or anti-Arab racism.

Like other marginalized immigrant communities in Canadian society, many Palestinian Canadians prefer to "stay under the radar" when they face racism and discrimination, and not to cause trouble. Many are first- or second-generation immigrants trying to get established

economically, prepared to overlook racist affronts if it enables them to advance toward greater economic independence.

The Committee's study highlighted other problems with reporting hate crimes, all of which apply to the study of APR. For example, the lack of uniformity of reporting was cited, whereby different types of data are collected by multiple civil society organizations, or multiple law enforcement entities. This is certainly the case with APR, where in late 2023, there are at least three different national-level organizations⁶³ offering to collect data on discrimination faced by Palestinian Canadians. The issue of lack of uniformity of data is tied to the problem of the decentralization of the collection. The Committee heard a number of recommendations calling for the centralization of the collection of data on racist incidents. This too is a problem faced with reporting on APR.

Identifying concrete and verifiable sources of APR

Despite the lack of self-reported data, CJPME knew that incidents of APR are everywhere: hiding in plain sight. The CJPME team has long noted that many Canadian organizations consistently publish content – e.g. statements, opinion articles, “news” – which is full of APR. In fact, one could argue that some of these organizations literally exist to spread APR, ensuring that Palestinian narratives are demonized, excluded and silenced. CJPME chose to narrow the scope of its study by focusing exclusively on this type of published content.

The advantage of identifying these types of incidents of APR is that the incidents are public and permanent. That is, while a self-reported incident of APR is legitimate and horrifying, there are often limited witnesses, it is transient, and the interpretation of events may be subjective. In contrast, the documentation of online examples of APR provides a verifiable and permanent snapshot of the incident. Even if the institutional websites in question take down their racist entries, Internet tools like the WayBack machine still provide ready access to the page.

While there are literally dozens of institutional purveyors of APR, CJPME sought to focus on those institutions which were the “worst offenders,” where incidents of APR would be easy to identify and classify. CJPME quickly identified about a dozen such institutions, most of them non-profit organizations, and a few of them right-wing “media.” Apart from this core group of institutional purveyors of APR, there were a few independent purveyors of APR: e.g. right-wing columnists like Avi Benlolo, Barbara Kay, and others.

Needless to say, such an approach is far from exhaustive. However, since CJPME had very limited resources for this study of APR, it was forced to rigorously contain its scope in order to ensure a manageable study. Since the data collection includes only institutional online incidents, it necessarily excludes many other valid and observable forms of APR, both online and in-person.

In terms of defining the report's scope, the following rules were therefore applied in identifying and classifying online examples of APR for the study:

- **Scope limited to written-only online content.**
 - **Online content only.** The first implication of this scope decision was the exclusion of ad hoc examples of APR (e.g. The London school board’s decision to use the example of a “Free Palestine” t-shirt as an example of clothing which might “incite violence”⁶⁴), and focusing exclusively on online examples of APR.
 - **Written content only.** For both media and non-profit purveyors of APR, a decision was made to assess only written content for APR. Any broadcast – audio or visual – was excluded from the analysis. Exceptions were made only for video content directly amplifying written incidents of APR, as in the case of the slander against Archbishop Desmond Tutu cited in this report as an example of defamation.
- **Scope limited to verified Canadian-only online content.** Some online content and entities are non-specific in their geographic scope and targeting. A decision was made early on to include only content which could be specifically tied to a Canadian entity (media, non-profit, etc.) targeting a Canadian audience.
- **Scope limited to institutional content.** There are many purveyors of APR in Canadian society, but many do so outside the framework of any institution. CJPME wanted its analysis to focus on institutional sources of APR, given that institutional sources could be more readily held to account, and that the institutional sources would be more limited in number. (Realistically, individual purveyors of APR are so numerous that it would be impossible to document them).
- **Scope excludes social media content.** Related to the above point, CJPME considered it a futile exercise to try to document APR in social media. First, at the institutional level, much of the APR on social media would mirror the APR identified on the institution’s websites. And second, trying to document the potentially millions of social media posts, comments, stories, tweets, etc. would be an impossible task.
- **Scope excludes content from “religious” organizations.** While there are a number of Canadian evangelical Christian organizations which clearly reflect attitudes of APR, these attitudes are often conflated with religious text and interpretation. In practice, trying to parse out what are citations from racist religious scripture, vs. what are modern-day racist attitudes often becomes more arduous than it’s worth.

As such, this report only captures a small fraction of the APR that is present across Canadian society.

Development of the APR analysis framework

Once it was clear that it would be easy to identify large numbers of incidents of APR, the next step was to determine the best way to classify the various examples of APR. Naturally, CJPME looked to the ACLA description of APR for such a framework. While the ACLA’s APR description is introduced in paragraph form, it is actually a “laundry list” of many different ways in which

APR is manifested in society. As such, CJPME decided to parse the ACLA definition into a type of classification grid, as shown in the table below.

After reviewing the classification grid, and trying to apply it to online examples, three enhancements/clarifications were introduced into the analysis.

1. **Disambiguation of “defamation.”** First, CJPME realized that the issue of “defamation” appeared twice in the classification, first in APR type #5, and second in APR type #12. To remove ambiguity in the analysis, it was decided that type #5 (“defaming” generally) would be applied in cases of non-specific defamation against Palestinians as a group or class, and that type #12 (“defaming [...] with slander”) would be applied to distinct forms of slander, whether against specific Palestinians/allies, or for specific alleged incidents.
2. **Sub-classing of “defaming with slander.”** Next, for APR type #12, it was deemed useful to break “defaming [...] with slander” into three subcategories as suggested by the ACLA definition: a) slander as “inherently antisemitic,” b) slander as a “terrorist threat/sympathizer” and c) slander as “opposed to democratic values.” This decision was made because each type of slander was distinct, and would arise in highly varied circumstances. It was felt that providing this type of granularity would be useful.
3. **Sub-classing of antisemitic slander.** Finally, for type #12A, as the classification model was applied to online incidents of APR, CJPME realized that there were many justifications for which Palestinians and their allies were accused of being “inherently antisemitic.” For example, it could be because Palestinians/allies had criticized Israel, criticized Zionism, hosted Israeli Apartheid Week events, supported the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel, etc. And in some cases, Palestinians/allies were criticized as inherently antisemitic without any reason given. Therefore, item #12A of the model was eventually expanded to include 11 different subtypes.

Anti-Palestinian racism is a form of anti-Arab racism that
1. silences [Palestinians or their narratives],
2. excludes [Palestinians or their narratives],
3. erases [Palestinians or their narratives],
4. stereotypes [Palestinians or their narratives],
5. defames [Palestinians or their narratives] or
6. dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives.
Anti-Palestinian racism takes various forms including:
7. denying the Nakba and
8. justifying violence against Palestinians;
9. failing to acknowledge Palestinians as an Indigenous people with a collective identity, belonging and rights in relation to occupied and historic Palestine;
10. erasing the human rights and equal dignity and worth of Palestinians;

11. excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians and their allies;
12. defaming Palestinians and their allies with slander such as being
A. inherently antisemitic,
1. <i>[no reason provided]</i>
2. [for criticizing Israel], i.e. the criticism is framed as <u>inherently</u> antisemitic
3. [for being “anti-Israel”], i.e. the “anti-Israel” view is framed as inherently antisemitic
4. [for applying standards of behaviour on Israel], i.e. applying standards (“double-standards”) of behaviour on Israel is framed as <u>inherently</u> antisemitic
5. [for being anti-Zionist], i.e. the anti-Zionist position is framed as <u>inherently</u> antisemitic
6. [for “denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination”], i.e. any objection to Israel as a “Jewish state” is framed as <u>inherently</u> antisemitic
7. [for associating Israel with apartheid], i.e. associating Israel with apartheid is framed as <u>inherently</u> antisemitic
8. [for supporting BDS], i.e. support for BDS is framed as inherently antisemitic
9. [for associating Israel with colonialism]
10. [for associating Israel with occupation]
11. <i>[other]</i>
B. a terrorist threat/sympathizer or
C. opposed to democratic values.

While the above model was deemed the best possible framework by which to classify online incidents of APR, it was by no means perfect. As with any such model to assess racism, there is an unavoidable element of subjectivity. Especially as the model gets quite granular, it would be possible to have differences of opinion as to which type of APR had been observed. For example, it would easy to disagree as to whether an article were “silencing” Palestinian narratives, or “erasing” Palestinian narratives, or doing both.

In practice, under the model, most online incidents of APR exhibited multiple forms of APR. That is, most online incidents were so sloppy and “over the top” in their contempt for Palestinians and their narratives that several forms of APR were easily identified. As a result, most articles classified under the model have multiple APR boxes checked.

Examples of APR from the 2022 data

Silencing

A main function of APR is to silence Palestinians. Canadian examples range from support for attacks on Palestinian journalists to institutional pressure to shut Palestinian voices down.

One notorious Canadian purveyor of APR, a website called TheJ.ca, suggested that fatal violence is justified to silence Palestinian journalists. After prominent Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu-Akleh was killed by the Israeli Army in May, 2022, TheJ.ca suggested that Abu-Akleh deserved it.

TheJ.ca published a photo of Abu-Akleh's dead body with text dismissing any regret that she had been killed and her voice violently silenced. The killing of Abu-Akleh was not "unfortunate" or "regrettable," TheJ.ca declared: it was "the death of [an] antisemitic journalist."⁶⁵ In fact, TheJ.ca berated Israeli politicians who had expressed regret at the killing, and continued saying, "So I'll ask out loud what many of us are thinking: Is sadness really the appropriate Jewish response in this instance? Is Akleh's demise truly 'tragic'?"

Where it does not involve support for outright violence, APR still works to shut down Palestinian voices through defamation, slander, and institutional pressure. Any space that opens for Palestinians is open to APR attack. In October, 2023, the *Toronto Sun* targeted the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) for alleged "political indoctrination" on the grounds that schools in Canada's largest city had launched an initiative to discuss Palestinian experiences of APR "through the lens of 'anti-racism' and 'anti-oppression.'"⁶⁶

Purveyors of APR also seek to silence efforts to expose anti-Palestinian racism in Canada. Two major Canadian purveyors of APR – the newspaper *The National Post* and the organization B'nai Brith Canada – thus attacked the academic funding of a Canadian university researcher, Jasmin Zine, who addressed the issue of anti-Palestinian racism in her research on Islamophobia. The *National Post* demanded an end to such research – "Shut it down," wrote columnist Barbara Kay – and attacked Zine's report on Islamophobia in Canada as a "fatwa-lite document."⁶⁷ B'nai Brith attacked Zine's record as "antisemitic" and called for an end to financing for her research, a grave breach of the independence and integrity of academic research funding in Canada.⁶⁸

Examples of silencing through defamation, slander, and institutional pressure are cross-listed later in this report, since they operate through other forms of APR (e.g., the defamation of Palestinians as inherently antisemitic, or inherently terroristic, or otherwise unworthy of being heard).

Excluding

APR aims to shove aside or shut down Palestinian narratives by all available means. It attacks Palestinians as inherently bigoted, ignorant, and unworthy of attention. APR targets even the

Palestinian *reality of being Palestinian* for exclusion from Canada. For example, TheJ.ca suggests that Palestinian narratives are entirely fabricated and ahistorical, arguing: “The Arabs, who later named themselves ‘Palestinians,’ antisemites and one-sided critics of Israel have little interest, if at all, in historical facts and nothing can penetrate their veil of elected ignorance.”⁶⁹

The exclusion of Palestinian narratives is often attempted with the assertion that Palestine/Israel belongs to Jewish people and to Jewish people alone. The 2022 Amnesty International report documenting Israel’s system of “apartheid” against Palestinians was thus a foil for a lot of Canadian APR. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), for example, dismissed Amnesty’s report because doing so “ignores the right of Jews to their ancestral homeland, where they have lived for thousands of years.”⁷⁰ The implication was that Palestinian human rights were irrelevant because Israeli domination and repression were necessary and justified. CIJA’s arguments emphasizing an over-riding “right of Jews to their ancestral homeland” is a typical argument of such groups, and is often used to exclude Palestinian experiences of discrimination.

Even factually undeniable Palestinian claims are attacked in this way. For example, 2022 saw a continuation of Israeli raids on Jerusalem’s al-Aqsa Mosque. Truthful Palestinian reports about these raids were challenged by purveyors of APR as inherently racist fictions, and even “blood libels.” For example, Honest Reporting Canada (HRC) argued that accurately describing the forceful actions of Israeli security forces in and around the Al-Aqsa mosque was “a modern blood libel that has the potential to fan the flames of antisemitism against Canada’s 400,000 Jews.”⁷¹ Nevertheless, Canadian media and civil society organizations were simply describing what was literally filmed and reported at the mosque.

Purveyors of APR are experts at leveraging hostile disinformation to undermine Palestinian reports of Israeli aggression in the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem. For example, TheJ.ca talked dismissively of what it considered the “‘Al-Aksa is in danger’ libel,” despite the fact that Israeli forces had literally entered the Al-Aqsa compound.⁷² In his crusade to stamp out Palestinian perspectives, Fegelman of HRC demanded that Canadian newspapers *de facto* endorse Israel’s annexation of Palestinian land and heritage. For example, although the Al-Aqsa Mosque is located in occupied Palestinian territory, not Israel, Fegelman writes, “Al Aqsa Mosque [i]s one of Israel’s holiest sites.” In doing so, Fegelman suggests that a Palestinian narrative of invasion or intrusion “inside one of Israel’s holiest sites” is pure fiction, and should be purged from news coverage.⁷³ Blind support for Israel’s occupation of Palestine seems to drive these attempts to literally deny facts occurring on the ground.

Racist efforts to exclude Palestinian truths from Canada can be as bizarre as they are oppressive. Wild falsehoods are imposed in the place of true Palestinian experiences. In a diatribe headlined “The Truth, And Nothing But The Truth,” the Canadian Antisemitism Education Foundation (CAEF) writes that “Jews come from Judea, Arabs come from Arabia, the Palestinian Arabs only usurped that name and identity in 1967 when encouraged to do so by the KGB working in cahoots with Yaser Arafat.”⁷⁴ In delegitimizing Palestinian history and

identity, CAEF is asserting that Israeli and pro-Israel stories are the only narratives worthy of inclusion in Canada.

Erasing

APR aims to erase Palestinians and to hand Palestinian land and history over exclusively to Israel. One way this works is through the misrepresentation of geography and population numbers.

Purveyors of APR are particularly energetic in their attempts to stamp out the use of the word “Palestine.” HRC campaigned to prevent any media from mentioning the very “existence of ‘Palestine,’” and the CAEF demanded the erasure of word.⁷⁵ The CAEF declared that Palestine is *as such* “a word of lies and an antisemitic campaign.”⁷⁶

For the same reason, CAEF attacked the presence in Canada of a few commercial products labelled “Made in Palestine,” campaigning to erase the word from the Canada Food Inspection Agency’s list of possible product origins. CAEF asserted that a product “cannot be produced in a country that does not exist. That is, even if the ‘Made in Palestine’ labels were supplemented with language stating, e.g., that the goods were ‘produced in an area administered by the Palestinian Authority,’ this description would *still* be false and misleading because the Canadian government does not recognize a ‘State of Palestine.’”⁷⁷ This broader drive to eliminate any references to Palestine amounts to the erasure of Palestinian narratives, history, and identity.

Many purveyors of APR suggest that “Israel” includes (or should include) more land than is internationally recognized by Israel’s pre-1967 borders – land intended for a Palestinian state. In its “*Terror Wave in Israel*” (italics added) alert which described developments in the West Bank and East Jerusalem – internationally recognized as Palestinian territory – CIJA simply “disappears” Palestine.⁷⁸

The “erasing” of Palestine and Palestinians by purveyors of APR was particularly evident following the February, 2022 publishing of Amnesty International’s report on apartheid in Israel. Many purveyors of APR consider all of historic Palestine to be geographically part of Israel, but reject the possibility of extending citizenship to Palestinians living in the West Bank. HRC – which considers “Judea and Samaria” (i.e. the West Bank) integral to modern Israel – is one such organization, yet it argues in parallel that only 21 percent of Israel’s population is Arab (i.e. only those with Israeli citizenship).⁷⁹ For these groups, the occupied territories belong to Israel but the population that lives there does not.

Stereotyping

Stereotyping Palestinians in various nefarious ways – e.g. as violent, antisemitic, etc. – is very standard practice among purveyors of APR. The *Toronto Sun* gives regular expression to anti-Palestinian stereotypes. In one April, 2022 article, the *Sun* falsely frames pro-Palestinian demonstrators in Toronto as Islamists engaged in “the cheering of civilians being fired upon

with chants of ‘Allahu Akbar.’” The same article uses the “Arab rejectionist” stereotype against Palestinians, arguing that Palestinians suffer deprivation not because of Israel’s oppression and apartheid, but because of “the desire by Palestinian leadership to continue hostilities, reject the two-state solution, and keep their people captive and impoverished.”⁸⁰

False and distorting stereotypes congeal around many themes of anti-Palestinian racism. Those Palestinians, and those allies of Palestinians, who insist on continued resistance to Israeli human rights violations are pathologized by purveyors of APR as “Arab forces that treasure their bloodlust against Jews,” in the words of the editor-in-chief of *The Suburban*, a Montreal-area newspaper notorious for its APR.⁸¹

Those in the Arab world who are willing to turn their backs on the Palestinian struggle for justice and human rights are in contrast celebrated as enlighteners and modernizers, engaged, in the words of TheJ.ca, in “a revolt against the religious extremism that the Arabs themselves exported to the rest of the Islamic world.”⁸²

As is always the case with stereotyping, fixed prejudices are used in the place of accurate depictions, and Palestinians and their allies are replaced by hostile caricatures.

Defaming

Purveyors of APR defame Palestinians, their narratives, and their allies, regardless of their targets’ integrity or moral authority. Often, purveyors of APR circulate images of Palestinians or their supporters alongside insidious attacks on their character. Archbishop Desmond Tutu – a global icon of the struggle for inclusivity and human rights for all – was attacked in this way by Canadian purveyors of APR.

Mike Fegelman of HRC defamed the Archbishop as a mouthpiece for “classical antisemitism” because he spoke out for Palestinian human rights. Soon after Tutu’s death, HRC published the defamation of Tutu with an accompanying video. The video’s visuals targeted the main South African icons of support for the Palestinian freedom struggle, showing Tutu holding hands with Nelson Mandela as representatives of the evil facing Israel.⁸³

“The Dark Anti-Israel Side of Desmond Tutu,” HRC’s video was advertised as saying, would stand “Exposed.” The HRC video, with flashes of flames and a swastika, attacked Tutu as a “bigot” because he had joined in condemning the Israeli collective punishment of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as “a gross violation of human rights.”⁸⁴ The fact that Israel *has* engaged in gross human rights violations is irrelevant to purveyors of APR, who defame all who speak accurately about the factual record.

Marty Gold, editor-in-chief of TheJ.ca, used similarly fraudulent logic to attack one of the most widely respected anti-racist writers in Canada, Desmond Cole, for “antisemitic tirades” – which had in fact been nothing but clear statements of principle on Palestine. Anti-Palestinian racism blended in this attack with TheJ.ca’s demonization of Black political self-assertion.⁸⁵ While the

html heading of TheJ.ca's attack on Desmond Cole read "Canadian nurses conference 'honoured' to host anti-Zionist," the website URL emphasized the defamation: "canadian-nurses-conference-honoured-to-host-antisemite."⁸⁶

All support for freedom for Palestine is defamed in this way. When Alexandre Boulerice of the New Democratic Party included the hashtag "#FreePalestine" in a Twitter post, CAEF defamed him for spreading "age old antisemitic lies" and "Jew hatred." It claimed the hashtag was enough: "#FreePalestine is generally a genocidal call to eradicate Israel," declared the CAEF: "It is unconscionable."⁸⁷

Dehumanizing

Animalistic imagery is sometimes used by purveyors of APR to depict Palestinians and their allies and to explain away their human outrage against Israel. *The Suburban* published an outlandish falsification of the facts that attacked all pro-Palestinian initiatives in Canada as "tentacles of the Muslim brotherhood." Palestinians feature in this metaphor as appendages of an Islamist octopus, its "tentacles" reaching into Canadian society in such forms as "the Boycott, Divest[ment] and Sanctions and Israel Apartheid Week libels."⁸⁸

TheJ.c, in its misrepresentation of the 1948 Nakba, portrayed "Arab civilians" in Jerusalem as comprising a "swarm of locusts" against which harsh action was necessary.⁸⁹

While the word "rabid" does not *only* refer to dogs, it was also used in a clearly prejudicial way by CIJA. The New Democratic Party leader, Jagmeet Singh, had responded to Israel's August 2022 bombing of Gaza with a moderate policy statement. CIJA countered that "the rabid Jew-hatred" of Palestinians is the cause of Palestinian suffering.⁹⁰

The representation of Palestinian children as a security threat to Israel, rather than as human beings, also veers towards dehumanization. Purveyors of APR downplay or deny the indisputable fact that Israel kills Palestinian children on a significant scale. What TheJ.ca dismisses as "the lies about Israelis killing Palestinian children" is backed up by the undeniable findings of the United Nations, Defence for Children International, and other reputable groups.⁹¹

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), which spends the vast majority of its budget on education and healthcare, was insidiously attacked by the so-called CAEF for "feeding and fueling" not *people* but "*the worst Jew hatred in the world.*"⁹² Palestinian children are presented as security threats systemically "taught how to kill Jews."⁹³ Canadian financing for UNRWA is attacked by TheJ.ca as support, not for refugees' basic needs, but for what the website smears as "the terror refugee industry."⁹⁴

Nakba denial

The fact that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were expelled from their homes in historic Palestine by Israel in 1948 can no longer be credibly denied. Palestinians refer to this event as the *Nakba* (“catastrophe” in Arabic), when their lands were expropriated violently and without compensation. There is copious Palestinian and international proof of this fact, along with declassified Israeli documents recording the systematic expulsion of Palestinians.⁹⁵ Leading Israeli politicians now invoke the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 as a precedent for their own anti-Palestinian policies.⁹⁶

Unfortunately, Nakba denialism is commonplace among purveyors of APR. TheJ.ca, for example, attacked Harvard University professor Derek Penslar for describing what Israel had done in 1948 as “ethnic cleansing.” Israel never, TheJ.ca falsely claimed, pursued “forced removal of an ethnic group from a territory.”⁹⁷ In this case, TheJ.ca didn’t even make the effort to substantiate the false myth that Palestinians left their lands voluntarily.⁹⁸ Instead, it advanced this fabrication in the hope that the true facts of the Nakba could be drowned in a falsified he-said/she-said controversy. In the phrase quoted by TheJ.ca: “You say Nakba, we say you fled, let’s call the whole thing off.”⁹⁹

While CIJA and B’nai Brith Canada don’t necessarily outright deny the Nakba, they minimize and marginalize it. For example, a CIJA statement suggested that demonstrations marking the Nakba were pointless, and were simply “wasting energy,” “threatening Jews,” and “[harming] the Palestinian cause.”¹⁰⁰ For an organization dedicated to the support of Israel, it certainly makes sense for CIJA to dismiss and deny the lasting harm inflicted by the events of 1947-1949.

Justifying violence

APR often manifests itself in assertions that, while violence against Palestinians is regrettable, it is nonetheless necessary. Sometimes the justification is minimal, and sometimes the justification is purely imaginary. In May, 2022, audiences around the world were horrified when Shireen Abu-Akleh’s funeral procession was attacked by Israeli police, who were recorded on film forcefully striking Abu Akleh’s pallbearers in the legs with batons. At one point, the beating is so intense that the pallbearers actually drop the coffin. Rick Firth of HRC shamelessly justifies this brutality, writing, “Police were forced to take action to ensure the safety of everyone participating in the funeral procession and to respect the wishes of the Abu Akleh family.”¹⁰¹ The falsehoods printed in the HRC post are contradicted by an article *two days earlier* that appeared in the Times of Israel, which quotes Abu Akleh’s brother and his account of what happened.¹⁰²

Like in the Abu Akleh example above, purveyors of APR will often try to justify literal, physical violence, like the beating, shooting, and bombing of Palestinians. But APR will often also attempt to justify institutional forms of violence, e.g. the erection of walls, the closure of Palestinian neighbourhoods, the establishment of checkpoints. Often the justification for the violence is the supposed prevention of Palestinian “terror,” even though the Palestinian

“terror” threat is extremely vague or misrepresented. This is the case when Rick Firth of HRC talks in the *National Post* about the necessity of Israel’s apartheid wall. The “security barriers that Israel has in place between the ‘West Bank’, Gaza and Israel,” he writes, “have always been about one thing only: protecting the lives of all Israelis; Jews, Muslims and Christians alike, from continual Palestinian terrorist attacks.”¹⁰³ Of course, for purveyors of APR, any measure – regardless of how disruptive and oppressive it may be for Palestinians – will be justified if it provides “security” for Israelis.

Some of the worst violence against Palestinians in 2022 was ignited by the Sheikh Jarrah crisis, arising from Israel’s forced expulsion of Palestinians in Jerusalem to make way for Israeli Jewish settlers. In this context, Honest Reporting justified the forced expulsion of Palestinians from their Jerusalem homes on the grounds that, in the words of HRC, those targeted for expulsion were just “deadbeat Palestinian tenants.”¹⁰⁴ HRC justified the violence of ethnically discriminatory expulsions with the language of landlord-tenant relations.

CIJA consistently justifies Israeli military assaults. In May 2021, Israeli provocations in Jerusalem – including the Sheikh Jarrah expulsions and the raids of Al-Aqsa Mosque – prompted retaliation from Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Israel responded with military operations that injured almost two thousand Palestinians, including six hundred children, and killed 265 (of whom 63 were children).¹⁰⁵ CIJA justified this violence against Palestinians as a “self-defensive war Israel was forced to wage” and as such, suggested that the United Nations need not investigate Israel’s killing of Palestinians.¹⁰⁶

Failing to acknowledge indigeneity

When Amnesty International released its report on Israeli apartheid, Shimon Koffler Fogel, CIJA’s president and CEO, attacked the human rights group for failing to dismiss Palestinian rights in favour of “Jewish indigeneity” in Palestine.¹⁰⁷ For purveyors of APR, indigenous Palestinians are not indigenous at all – or at least, they are not so indigenous to Palestine as Israeli Jews are. Purveyors of APR assert that Jewish settlers born in North America, Europe, or elsewhere be considered “indigenous” to Palestine. They also suggest that exposing the brutalization of Palestinians by these same settlers is to violate the settlers’ indigenous rights.

This denial of Palestinian indigeneity in favour of the overriding “idea that the Jewish people have the right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland,” as Fogel phrases it, is noxious and pervasive.¹⁰⁸ Sometimes it involves directly denying that Palestinians are from Palestine. For example, TheJ.ca made up the false fact that “most of the ancestors of the Palestinians entered Israel [sic] in the early 1900s as labourers for Jews who had purchased land.”¹⁰⁹

Purveyors of APR use the alleged primacy of Jewish over Palestinian indigeneity – whether the Israeli Jews in question are from the United States, or Europe, or any other part of the world – to justify the expulsion of Palestinians. How can settlers “expel” indigenous Palestinians if the settlers are more indigenous? “The term ‘Nakba,’” HRC asserts, “is a hateful phrase that serves to effectively erase the Jewish People’s three thousand years of history in their ancestral

homeland.”¹¹⁰ HRC says that Palestinians, far from indigenous, are part of “a string of multiple conquering colonialists.” The claim here is that the European Jews who founded Israel rescued Palestine from its Palestinian inhabitants in an indigenous war of liberation.¹¹¹

CAEF extends this war-of-liberation line from the mass expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 to settler attacks on Palestinians in today’s occupied West Bank. CAEF’s line is that since all of Palestine is Israel, and all expulsions are liberatory, the theft of Palestinian lands by West Bank settlers is a form of indigenous Israeli resistance to the Palestinian “occupation” of lands that are mystically Israel’s by right.¹¹²

This form of APR features an especially brazen twisting of words. The occupied West Bank becomes “Judea and Samaria,” Israeli settlers on Palestinian land become “Decolonized Judeans,” and basic norms of truth are attacked alongside indigenous Palestinians.¹¹³

Erasing human rights

The erasure of Palestinian human rights with APR sometimes takes the form of an attack on international law in general, and it sometimes takes the form of an attack on the application of international law to the oppression of Palestinians. For Barbara Kay of *The National Post*, Amnesty International ceased to be a credible organization when it was infected with a “rabid obsession with Israel,” losing “the moral high ground it once commanded.”¹¹⁴

For CAEF, anything that exposes Israeli abuses against the Palestinians is considered suspect or false. The result is that factual reports about Israeli human rights violations against Palestinians are transformed – in the words of CAEF – into “lies perpetrated by international bodies like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, or Michael Lynk, a Canadian professor with the ignominious title, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territories occupied since 1967.” CIJA would have the world believe that bigotry alone drives the publishing of human rights reports critiquing Israel’s abuses against Palestinians, “when the world can see the Arab population of Israel is wholly protected.”¹¹⁵

TheJ.ca likewise dismisses the import of human rights reports on Israeli abuses. For TheJ.ca, there’s only contempt for Palestinian human rights, since “[Palestinians] are discontented, ungrateful, insurgents, who have developed a society based on the hatred of Jews and the destruction of Israel.”¹¹⁶ TheJ.ca even denies there is an Israeli military occupation of the West Bank: the *fact* of several decades of Israeli military occupation reduces itself in TheJ.ca’s falsifications to “‘the big lie’ of ‘Israeli occupation.[.]’”¹¹⁷ For CIJA, there *is* an Israeli occupation, but there’s no reason to make a fuss about Israeli human rights violations against Palestinians because “occupation, by definition, is not illegal and a negotiated peace must come first.”¹¹⁸ Similarly, there’s no need to be concerned about the report on Israeli apartheid by Amnesty International, since they are simply “false allegations.”¹¹⁹

According to purveyors of APR, *to oppose apartheid* is all well and good. But *to oppose apartheid in Palestine* is to assert rights that do not exist, because Palestinians are undeserving

of them and Israeli human rights violations do not exist either. So we read from *The National Post* that applying the concept of apartheid to Palestine, as Amnesty International, Nelson Mandela, and many Palestinians have, is “an insult to the millions of victims of the real version.”¹²⁰

Pressuring to exclude

The pressure to exclude Palestinian perspectives from Canada is endemic to APR. The cruder purveyors of APR, like TheJ.ca, are wholly unhinged in their demand for “an all-out war against antisemitism *and the boycott movement [against Israel]*.” But pressure for the exclusion of Palestinians, their narratives, and their allies is exercised across the board by purveyors of APR.¹²¹

Applying pressure to exclude Palestinian perspectives from media coverage is the *raison d’être* of organizations like HRC. This involves Nakba denial as a constant matter of policy: HRC attacks what it calls the “false claim that Palestinians were ‘driven out of their country,’” and this advocacy group aims to replace true and documented facts (Palestinians *were* driven out) with discredited myths (e.g., Palestinians “left at the behest of Arab leaders who told them to vacate their homes and to make way for marauding Arab armies”).¹²²

HRC demands that the whole of Canadian civil society pledge itself to these falsehoods, as it stressed in its attack on a feminist magazine in Winnipeg that made space for a factual account of the Nakba. The demand is that Palestinian voices be shut down in favour of myths. In this case, HRC argued that rather than having been driven out by Zionist and Israeli militias, Palestinians were instead “threatened to leave by local Arab leadership” (a reprehensible fabrication), with the result that “Arabs have their leadership, not Israel, to blame for exiling them from the freest country in the Middle East.”¹²³

Worse, since a concern for the oppressed and for the truth *in general* may lead to concern about the oppression of the Palestinians and the situation in Palestine *in particular*, Canadian purveyors of APR demand an attack on anti-racist education as a whole. CAEF promotes this as a crusade “against woke ideology in the classroom, knowing it is the portal to *antisemitism*” (italics added). Ultimately, CAEF is arguing that struggles for justice and opposition to racism are antisemitic.¹²⁴

Pressure to degrade and suppress inclusive civic initiatives also comes from the largest and most prestigious purveyors of APR in Canada, like CIJA and the Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Education (FSWC). As discussed above, the IHRA definition of antisemitism is seen by many as a vehicle to muzzle criticism of Israel and Zionism. Efforts by pro-Israel organizations to impose the IHRA definition are very much strategies to exclude Palestinian concerns and narratives.¹²⁵

For example, CAEF wanted the IHRA definition to be used as a cudgel to punish the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art for hosting a panel including members who were critical of Israeli

abuses against Palestinians. The CAEF stated, “We call on the government to withhold funds from MAC [...] We call on all governments in Canada to uphold the federal commitment to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism [...]” Ultimately, by allowing criticism of Israel, the museum’s panel had, according to the CAEF, caused the museum to “defile” itself.¹²⁶

Defaming as antisemitic

The defamation of Palestinians and their allies as antisemitic is a lynchpin of APR. All who dare to support Palestinian rights and liberation are tarred with this brush.

Often, the accusations of antisemitism are rooted in the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and leverage to the widest degree possible the definition’s 11 examples. CJPME published a report – “IHRA’s True Intentions” – in December, 2022 analyzing the arguments of a letter endorsed by 180 pro-Israel organizations from around the world.¹²⁷ The letter, endorsed by both CIJA and B’nai Brith Canada, consistently used IHRA to attack criticism of Israeli human rights abuses, including criticism which used the terminology of “apartheid” or “settler-colonialism” to describe Israel’s oppression of Palestinians. To support its assertions, the document listed a series of tweets – including several from Canada – which contained these forms of political expression and claimed that they violate IHRA guidelines.

Ultimately, the position asserted by the joint letter left no doubt that the leading proponents of IHRA seek to conflate criticism of Israel with antisemitism. Not surprisingly, many of the examples identified in CJPME’s 2022 study on APR follow this same pattern, asserting that a criticism of Israel or Zionism is an example of antisemitism.

The CAEF is one of the principal purveyors of this type of APR, and regularly publishes what it calls, “End Jew Hatred” reports. In effect, CAEF and other frequent purveyors of APR interpret as antisemitic any exploration of Palestinian life, true speech about the Palestinian experience, or human rights commentary. These groups leverage the IHRA definition as widely and broadly as possible. When groups like HRC want to impose their view that “anti-Zionism is antisemitism” it is just a foretaste of how broadly they want to apply the antisemitic smear.¹²⁸

The defamation often uses extreme hyperbole, and is often highly personalized. In one example, CIJA attacked the Concordia Student Union for inviting a renowned Palestinian activist and journalist, Ali Abunimah. CIJA sought to defame both the student union and the speaker with a vague attack on “CSU’s decision to invite a documented antisemite to speak on campus.”¹²⁹ In the same statement, CIJA accused Abunimah of having made “repeated calls for the erasure of the world’s only Jewish state,” but only provided indirect support for its accusation based on its preferred rhetoric around Israel.¹³⁰ Abunimah message is indeed ominous for those who support Israel’s ongoing repression and domination, as Abunimah supports a single democratic state with equal rights for all in historic Palestine. Needless to say, the event was allowed to proceed, and was hosted without incident.

Defaming as terrorist threat or sympathizer

Purveyors of APR often presume in their language that anything Palestinian automatically has an association with elements of terror. This applies not only to Palestinian political movements, but also to groups as benign as humanitarian organizations. For example, purveyors of APR have for years sought to smear the UN aid agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) as having links to terror organizations, although the organization has been repeatedly audited by international donors and proven to be highly reputable.¹³¹ “CANADA FUNDS TERRORISM,” was nevertheless the headline of one bombastic CAEF article on Canadian funding for UNRWA.¹³² B’nai Brith Canada, for its part, has for years campaigned to end Canadian funding for UNRWA, despite the organization’s key role in providing education and healthcare services to Palestinian refugees.¹³³

This demonization of Palestinians extends to all walks of Palestinian life. TheJ.ca was also one of many groups in Canada to attack representatives of Palestinian civil society organizations as, in words borrowed directly from the Israeli government, “terrorists in suits.”¹³⁴ For Mike Fegelman of HRC, the entire Palestinian city of Jenin, is legitimately subject to Israeli military assaults because it is “a hotbed of terrorist activity.”¹³⁵ Extending this frame beyond the West Bank, the CAEF contends that Israel has faced “terror from inside and outside from Arabs for over 70 years.”¹³⁶

Many pro-Israel organizations boast that the fact that Israel accepts Palestinian citizens of Israel as members of its Parliament (the Knesset) demonstrates that Israeli society is not racist. Nevertheless, CAEF still associates “terror” with Arabs writ large, and so it defamed Palestinian Arab members of the Israeli Knesset as “terror-supporting Arab members.”¹³⁷

In another example, an op-ed by Avi Benlolo in the *National Post* about two courses on Palestine at the University of Toronto – “Rethinking Palestine” and “Modern Palestine” – attacked any sympathetic research on Palestine as inherently supporting terrorism. The mere offering of these two courses, Benlolo suggested, showed that the U of T had been “co-opted” to “push the agendas of terror groups here in Canada.”¹³⁸

Defaming as opposed to democratic principles

APR defames Palestinians as inherently opposed to democracy, since the myth of Israeli “democratic” vitality requires the denigration of Palestinian principles. Whereas “Israel is a multifaith country where all religions are respected,” claims the CAEF, the Palestinian menace to all things democratic is revealed in the dark politics of “the undemocratic terrorist regimes of Hamas and the Palestinian Authority.”¹³⁹

Palestinian citizens of Israel are tarred with the same brush. Protests by Palestinian citizens of Israel against discrimination by Israeli police and other authorities, and against the large-scale Israeli killing of Palestinians in the OPT, are reduced in an APR frame to “Arab violence in Israeli cities.” In the distorted language of APR, Palestinian citizens’ uprisings become “pogroms.” This

defamation featured lurid descriptions of how “Israeli-Arab citizens sided with Hamas” during Israel’s War on Gaza in May, 2021.¹⁴⁰ The contradiction is plain and striking. Palestinian citizens of Israel are tokenized as *evidence* of Israeli “democracy” when purveyors of APR find it convenient, yet attacked whenever they stand up for themselves in democratic action.

At issue, Avi Benlolo writes in *The National Post*, is a version of democratic life from which Palestinians are and must be excluded, since they supposedly scorn it. What is to be valued is not democratic rights for all, but a more strictly narrowed “western ideal of human rights.”¹⁴¹ And so the line is drawn. “The Jewish community,” for Benlolo – so far as it rallies for Israel as an expression of Western power – “is the vanguard of rebuffing threats to freedom and democracy.”¹⁴² And Palestinians, defamed by all available means, are cast out as beyond the pale.

Trends in the 2022 APR data

Total examples in the dataset

Overall, by combing through the websites of Canadian non-profits and media which have a reputation for expressing anti-Palestinian views, CJPME found a total of 507 examples of APR in 2022. As mentioned above, these online examples provide a verifiable and permanent snapshot of the problem of APR.

Non-profit organizations – several of them self-defined as pro-Israel – were the worst offenders, producing two-thirds (67 percent) of the recorded examples of APR. Media organizations were responsible for most of the remainder (33 percent), with statements from other miscellaneous purveyors of APR comprising the rest.

413 of the 507 examples (81 percent) included more than one form of APR, as per the evaluation matrix. 237 of the 507 examples (47 percent) had more than three different types of APR.

354 of the examples (70 percent) were defamatory, slandering Palestinians as either antisemitic, terrorist sympathizers, or anti-democratic. Of these three, slander of Palestinians as antisemitic was the most common subtype of APR at 293 examples (58 percent), followed by terrorist-sympathizer (118 examples, 23 percent) and anti-democratic (29 examples, 6 percent.)

As mentioned above, 67 percent of the total examples were from non-profit organizations, and 33 percent were from media outlets. Whereas most forms of APR studied in this analysis were shared more or less proportionately between organizations and media, there were a few interesting exceptions. Notably:

- Organizations were more likely than media sources to 1) deny the indigeneity of Palestinians, or 2) justify violence against Palestinians.
- The media sources were more likely than organizations to 1) stereotype Palestinians, or 2) accuse Palestinians of being opposed to democratic values.

Total examples related to antisemitism smears

As described above, the smear against Palestinians as antisemitic was one of the most prevalent forms of APR observed in the analysis – found in 58 percent of the examples. This is not a surprise, and is likely driven by pro-Israel groups leveraging the space created by the IHRA definition which 1) defines criticism of Israeli practices as antisemitic, and 2) defines criticism of Israel's founding ideology (Zionism) as antisemitic.

The analysis found 190 examples in which Palestinians were smeared as antisemites by advocacy organizations, and 102 examples where Palestinians were smeared as antisemites by

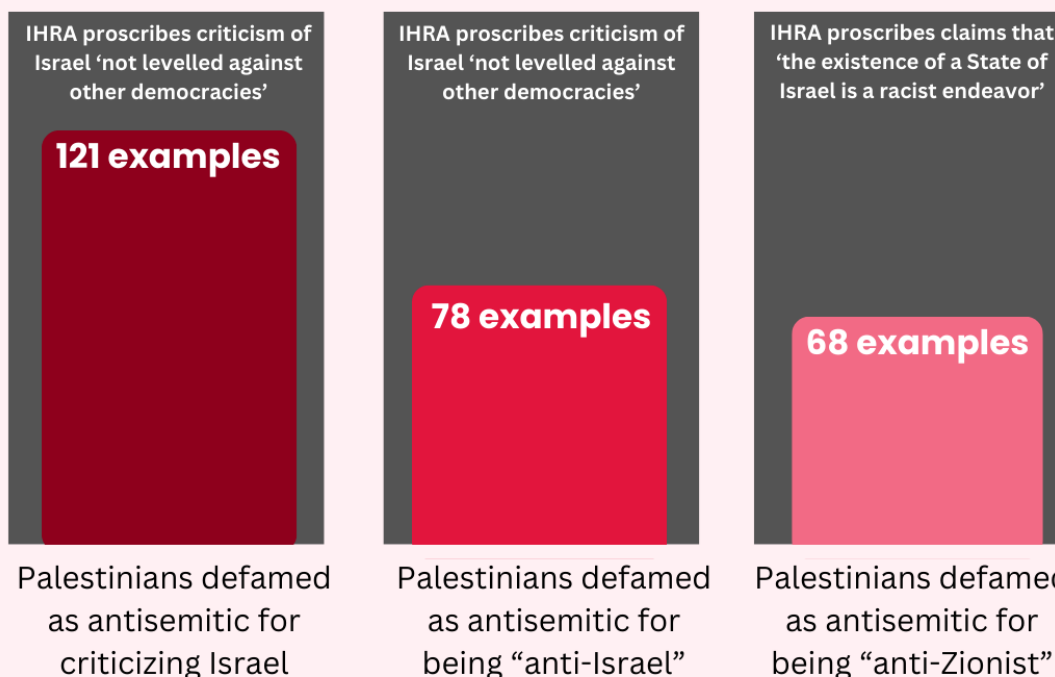
media organizations. As described in our methodology, the analysis had broken down the antisemitism smear into 11 different sub-categories, four of which emerged as most prevalent:

- **Antisemitic for criticizing Israel** was by far the most common antisemitic smear (found in 121 examples, 24 percent of all examples)
- **Antisemitic for being “anti-Israel”** was the second most common antisemitic smear (found in 78 examples, 15 percent of all examples)
- **Antisemitic for being anti-Zionist** was the third most common antisemitic smear (found in 68 examples, 13 percent of all examples)
- **Antisemitic for supporting BDS** was the fourth most common antisemitic smear (found in 64 examples, 13 percent of all examples)

These results – where criticism of Israel and Zionism figures so largely – clearly give credence to the argument that IHRA is a primary driver of APR.



Top forms of defamation against Palestinians correspond with speech proscribed by IHRA



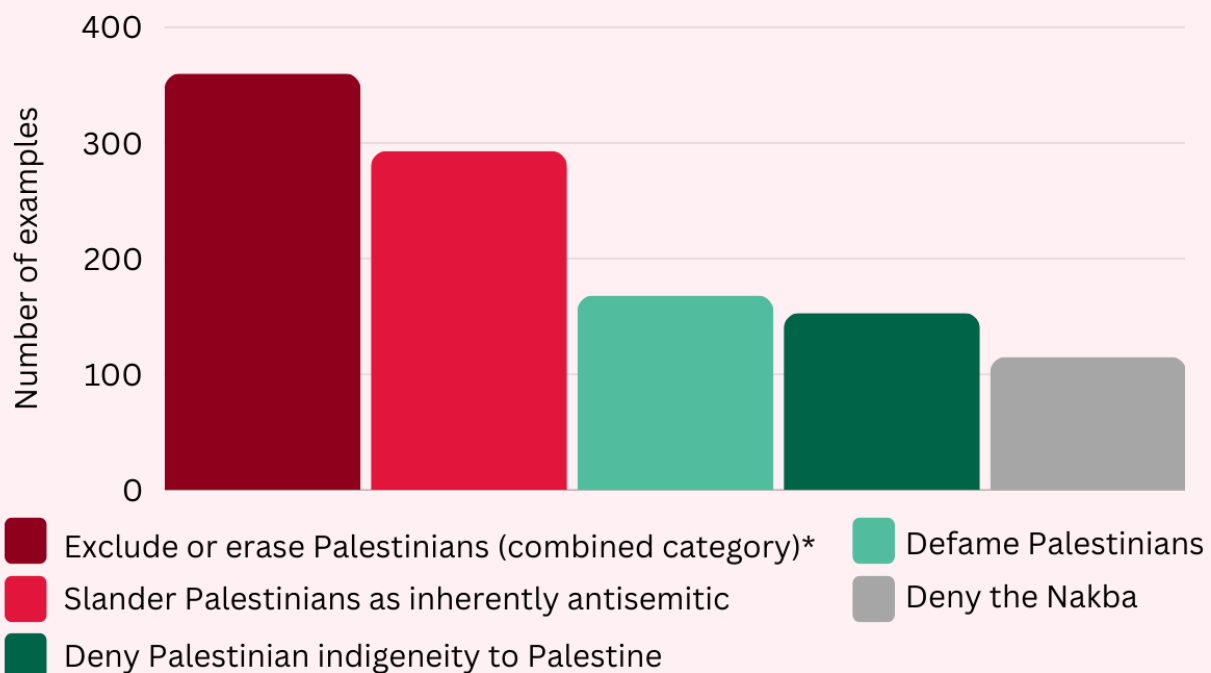
Other most prominent manifestations of APR

While defamation related to claims of antisemitism ranked prominently as one of the top forms of APR in the analysis, other forms of APR also stood out. The top five forms observed included:

1. **Forms of APR centered around erasing or excluding Palestinian and their narratives** was found in 360 examples (71 percent.) This category subsumed “excluding Palestinians [or their narratives]”, “erasing Palestinians [or their narratives]”, or “pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians and their allies”
2. **Slandering Palestinians and their allies as antisemitic** was found in 293 examples (58 percent)
3. **Defaming Palestinians generally** was found in 168 examples (33 percent)
4. **Denying Palestinian indigeneity to Palestine** was found in 153 examples (30 percent)
5. **Denying the Nakba** was found in 115 examples (23 percent)

As the top category, the tendency to exclude and erase Palestinians, their perspectives, their narratives and their allies represents a trend that CJPME had already observed anecdotally. Many pro-Israel groups and media seem intent on preventing any discussion or engagement about Palestine or Palestinians. Indeed, organizations like HRC and the CAEF seem to function as if this exclusion and erasing is their very *raison d'être*.

Top forms of anti-Palestinian racism (APR) based on examples identified by CJPME study



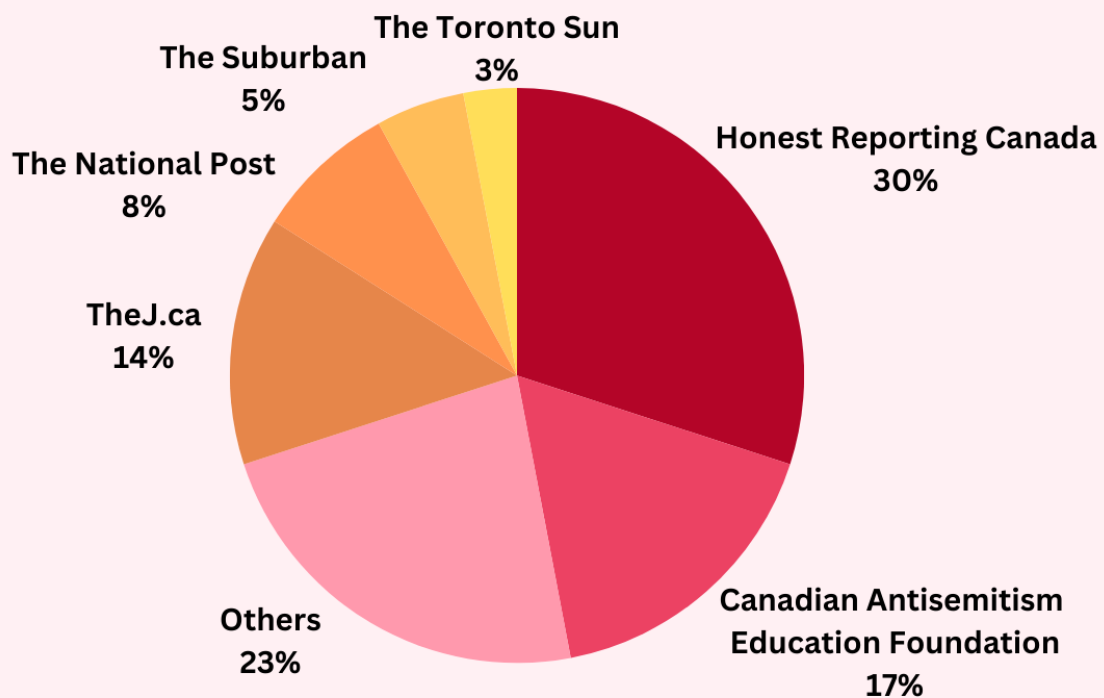
* Combined category, subsuming “excluding Palestinians [or their narratives]”, “erasing Palestinians [or their narratives]”, and “pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians and their allies”

Worst APR offenders

In terms of the consistency and severity of racist, anti-Palestinian views, one of the worst propagators of APR in the Canada of 2022 was a website called TheJ.ca. CJPME issued a separate report – entitled *Legitimizing Hate: Canadian Politicians Advertise on Racist Website* – about the racist attitudes resident on this "media" organization's website. Only a relatively modest 73 examples in this analysis' (14 percent) come from this website, but the website is a small operation, and its communications are thoroughly laden with racism and hate.

The most prolific purveyor of anti-Palestinian racism in Canada was HRC, whose media pressure tactics to attack and exclude Palestinian and pro-Palestinian perspectives comprise 151 (30 percent) of recorded examples. Second in line was the CAEF, which makes up for 87 (17 percent) of examples.

Breakdown of the purveyors of anti-Palestinian racism (APR) based on examples identified by CJPME study



Interesting findings vis-à-vis media organizations

The analysis confirms the widespread impression that right-wing, English-language newspapers are regular purveyors of APR. 43 (8 percent) of this report's 507 total examples come from *The National Post*, which regularly gives a platform to the extreme anti-Palestinian views of writers like Barbara Kay, Avi Benlolo and others. Another 14 (3 percent) of the examples come from the right-wing populist newspaper, the *Toronto Sun*.

While Palestinians, needless to say, bear the brunt of APR, the attack on support for Palestine is openly pursued as an attack "against woke ideology," in the words of Barbara Kay. Anti-racist researchers need to take APR seriously as a spearhead of the wider racist backlash.

Interesting findings with non-profits

Non-profit organizations on the right, like HRC and CAEF, were the most prolific institutional purveyors of APR in Canada. Their constant promulgation of APR is one example of how racism is interwoven into the political and media landscape of Canadian society.

The subtler but more influential APR of organizations like CIJA and the FSWC, however, is in many ways more troubling. While similar in tactics to HRC, CAEF, and TheJ.ca, they are organizations that many Canadians consider altogether reputable. This makes their promulgation of APR even more dangerous.

In fact, the APR expressed by more mainstream, institutionally influential groups, like CIJA, reveals APR in Canada to be as much a centrist as a right-wing problem.

A key point was made by Barbara Perry, one of Canada's leading anti-racist researchers, in comments in 2021 before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. Perry tried to dispel the stereotype that racism comes only from marginalized hooligans. In fact, Perry emphasized, the racist backlash is often the work of people with "a higher level of education, university degrees and advanced degrees in some cases."¹⁴³

As the ACLA explains, APR is "a form of respectable racism that is commonly perpetrated by those in positions of privilege and power."¹⁴⁴ To implement policies which combat attitudes of APR present among those in positions of power is not always easy. But that is precisely what makes it imperative.

Recommendations

This above analysis has demonstrated that anti-Palestinian racism is frequent and widespread. However, it has tended to be overlooked and ignored, and is rarely recognized as a form of racism. Due to the nature of these challenges, tackling APR will require significant action within various sectors of society.

Incorporate APR into EDI frameworks

Authorities at all levels of the Canadian government must name APR as a distinct form of oppression and make explicit opposition to it part of their anti-racist frameworks, including as part of their equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) frameworks. The ACLA definition of APR provides the substance for institutions to begin this process immediately.

Incorporating APR into EDI frameworks needs to happen at all levels of government – at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels, and especially in the nation’s school boards. In the days following Oct. 7, 2023, many politicians and government authorities made statements regarding developments regarding the Israel-Hamas war. While some of these statements were balanced and recognized both Israeli and Palestinian concerns and trauma, many featured common APR tropes: suppressing Palestinian narratives, assuming Palestinians were anti-democratic, and denying Palestinian indigeneity. Recognizing APR will be the first step for these institutions to avoid such missteps in the future.

School boards are another group of institutions which desperately need to acknowledge APR and adopt it into their EDI frameworks. While school boards did not figure largely in this analysis, they are often at the forefront of expressions of both APR and Palestine solidarity.¹⁴⁵ Despite many school boards making progress incorporating Islamophobia into their EDI frameworks, CJPME is only aware of the Peel District School Board in Ontario having in some way acknowledged APR.¹⁴⁶ Many educators were among those who were disciplined in some fashion for public statements and posts supporting Palestinian life and rights in the aftermath of the Oct. 7, 2023 attacks.¹⁴⁷

Incorporating APR into the EDI frameworks of the Canadian for-profit and non-profit sectors is also essential. Like with government authorities, many corporate leaders made statements soon after Oct. 7, 2023 which were extremely unbalanced. Exhibiting classic APR, many of these statements largely erased Palestinian history, justified violence against Palestinians, and erased the human rights and equal dignity of Palestinians. And in subsequent weeks, many employers suspended, dismissed and disciplined employees who spoke in opposition to Israeli violence against Palestinians.¹⁴⁸

Don't adopt a definition of antisemitism which promotes APR

As described in this analysis' findings, there seems to be a strong correlation between the many examples of Palestinians being slandered for criticizing Israel, being "anti-Israel," or being anti-Zionist, and controversial definitions of antisemitism such as IHRA which conflate criticism of Israel and Zionism with antisemitism. This aligns with the warnings that have been raised for years by many – including voices from within the Jewish community – that the IHRA definition of antisemitism would muzzle free speech around Palestine solidarity.^{149 150} It is indeed ironic that a definition advanced as a solution to one form of racism is designed in such a way that creates prejudice against another group. There are several other excellent working definitions of antisemitism which do not create any of the problems triggered by the IHRA definition, such as the Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism, and these definitions are and should be considered as alternatives.¹⁵¹

In June, 2019, the Canadian federal government incorporated the IHRA definition into its *Anti-Racism Strategy, 2019–2022*. The Strategy listed the IHRA definition in its "Terminology" section, and did not include the problematic IHRA examples. As such, it was not clear whether the examples were to be considered, and whether criticisms of Israel and/or Zionism would be conflated with antisemitism. CIJA and B'nai Brith, however, claimed that the definition had been adopted in its entirety by the government.¹⁵² Regardless, Heritage Canada now requires recipients of Heritage funding to attest that they agree to the government's anti-racism strategy.

In addition to the federal level, Canadian proponents of IHRA have worked for years to have the IHRA definition adopted at the provincial level, in many Canadian municipalities, as well as in school boards. When the adoption is open to debate, the adoption is often highly contested, and sometimes blocked.¹⁵³ Unfortunately, the adoption is often done behind closed doors, as was done in Quebec,¹⁵⁴ and Ontario, where IHRA was adopted by an order in council.¹⁵⁵ Often the legal implications of the adoption are not clear, and the applicability of the definition's illustrative examples is not clearly stated.

For all these reasons, government bodies which have adopted the IHRA definition should replace it with a different, less controversial, definition which does not reproduce APR, such as the Jerusalem Declaration.¹⁵⁶

Introduce programs to educate the public about APR

APR is very much ingrained in Canadian society, so a concerted effort to educate the public about APR is an essential long-term strategy. There are many levels at which public education and awareness programs could be extremely helpful. A few examples are provided here:

- **Governments at all levels could conduct public awareness campaigns** on racism which incorporate APR. As part of their broader anti-racist awareness initiatives,

governments could incorporate warnings/caveats about APR into their broader anti-racist public awareness strategies.

- **Governments at all levels could develop multi-cultural educational materials** which incorporate APR. Such materials could incorporate information about Palestine and Palestine solidarity within broader materials discussing history and different cultural practices as a means to foster cross-cultural understanding.
- **Governments at all levels could institute cultural competency training** to combat APR as part of broader trends of systemic racism. Such training could be targeted to professions perceived to be susceptible to systemic racism like APR (educators, judges, etc.) Such training would give individuals the opportunity to connect meaningfully with these ethnic groups perceived to be subject to systemic racism.
- **Governments at all levels could provide grants to academic experts** in Canadian universities to support the creation of research on systemic racism including APR. Such research could be used to inform public policy.
- **Governments should work with law enforcement bodies** to provide racial and cultural competency training which incorporate APR. Such programs should provide training for the handling of APR hate crime cases for officers and other members of law enforcement.
- **Governments should increase funding for investigations** by law enforcement of APR and similar forms of racism. Such funds could enable investigations into APR and other forms of racism and hate speech on the Internet. It could also be used to enforce existing laws to prevent racism like APR.

Ensure that schools do not provide a conduit for APR

As mentioned above, for better or worse, schools are often at the forefront of expressions of both APR and Palestine solidarity. As such, Canada's school boards have an important role to play in fostering a positive and respectful learning and working environments that enable students to reach their full potential. Schools are places that should support and guide students in their development and participation in a diverse, anti-racist and inclusive society. Schools must create a positive climate where all members of the school community feel safe, accepted, and valued upholding social justice and the human rights of each person.

Despite such generally accepted values, Palestinian students and their allies are often faced with blatant APR. In an article highlighting the issue in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), anti-black racism activist Desmond Cole wrote:

A Black student is suspended from school for saying the words “Free Palestine” during morning announcements. A book that includes journal entries of Palestinian children is banned from school libraries. An educator sharing anti-oppression resources on Palestine for colleagues on an opt-in basis is put under investigation and his mailout is cancelled. A student who comes to class wearing a keffiyeh—a traditional Palestinian

scarf—is told to remove it or get out. Students who object to history lessons that erase Palestinian existence are told they are antisemitic.¹⁵⁷

CJPME has been hearing about such incidents for years, but because the victims are minors, and the venues are largely shielded from outside view, it is difficult to address the issue. This makes it even more incumbent on school boards to adopt APR into their EDI frameworks, and consider an alternative to IHRA when looking to define antisemitism in their EDI frameworks.

Another potential area of concern was brought to CJPME’s attention in December last year when an “expert” was brought in to the English Montreal School Board (EMSB) to deliver a “Holocaust Education” session at Westmount High School. A parent raised concern about the session with the EMSB and the CBC, the latter of which produced a segment on the session. The CBC news segment shows a clip from the school’s YouTube page where Rambam is shown saying, “[People are saying] Israel is a terrible country, [that] they’re abusing the Palestinians – which is a bunch of crap. I lived in Israel. Trust me they’re doing everything *but* abusing the Palestinians” [italics added].¹⁵⁸

CJPME was not able to find any mention of the “expert’s” academic credentials qualifying him to lead a “Holocaust education” session. CJPME raised the issue with EMSB, asserting that there was clearly a need to review the process by which the EMSB selects and vets its “expert” speakers. This example demonstrates that school boards must ensure that the experts for such sessions have academic credentials around the experiences of Jews in Europe through the mid-20th century. School boards must also ensure that their Holocaust education speakers do not conflate 20th-century European antisemitism with the Palestinians’ struggle against Israeli colonial domination and apartheid. Ultimately, such speakers should be able to agree that people can be critical of Israel while still recognizing and acknowledging the horrors of the Holocaust.

Like all anti-racist organizations, CJPME supports the idea of anti-racist education in schools. Nevertheless, CJPME was surprised to see that Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia announced renewed emphasis on Holocaust education in the aftermath of Oct. 7, 2023, citing the need to combat antisemitism following pro-Palestine demonstrations in the respective provinces.¹⁵⁹ This indicates, of course, that both governments view support for Palestine as inherently antisemitic – a standard APR trope. There is thus clearly a need to disentangle antisemitism education from anti-Palestinian hate. *Anti-racist education in general* and *Holocaust education in particular* must be credibly separated from support for the State of Israel.

Guidelines for Canadian media

The examples from this analysis demonstrate that many media organizations are themselves perpetrators of APR. The media cited in this analysis have tended to be “right-wing” and/or fringe far-right media, and many of the examples of APR are appalling. Beyond these “worst

offenders,” however, there is a broad and latent APR in mainstream Canadian media. CJPME’s media analysts find themselves consistently pressuring the media in a number of ways which reflect the media’s implicit APR bias. Awareness of the below problems should compel leaders in mainstream Canadian media to do better.

Failure to balance voices = Silencing, excluding, erasing of Palestinian perspectives. “Single viewpoint reporting” and “prejudicial placement of viewpoint” are two issues that CJPME staff constantly observe with reporting on Palestine-Israel. By delivering stories which favour Israeli or pro-Israel spokespeople, or which put the pro-Palestinian perspective at the bottom of the story, media engage in the silencing, excluding and erasing which is core to APR.

Failure to provide context = Erasing, and denying Nakba and indigeneity of Palestinians. “De-contextualization of story/motivations” and “omission of key information” are another pair of issues that CJPME staff observe with reporting on Palestine-Israel. Mainstream media will often fail to mention key information that media consumers need to develop a fair interpretation of the news. For example, mainstream media often fail to state that Israel is a belligerent military occupant of Palestinian territory, or that Israel has been accused of apartheid by all major human rights organizations. Mainstream media will also often fail to describe important antecedents to news events, like the Nakba, Israeli human rights violations, a case at the International Court of Justice, etc. Hiding such context again contributes to the APR tendencies of erasing of Palestinians and their narratives, and in many cases, denying the Nakba and Palestinian indigeneity to the land.

Self-censorship = Excluding and erasing of Palestinian narratives. Many times, CJPME staff realize that mainstream media are essentially self-censoring. For example, when the Amnesty International report on Israeli apartheid was published in February, 2022, the mainstream Canadian media hardly covered it. By simply not talking about Palestinians, and ignoring key developments supporting their narrative, mainstream media again contribute to APR, by effectively excluding or erasing their voices and narratives.

Sourcing gullibly from Israeli sources = Justifying violence against Palestinians. “Failure to properly qualify the assertions of protagonists” is another common media failing that CJPME staff observe. The Israeli Army and Israeli Government are sophisticated PR machines which project the most positive spin on everything the army and government do. Nevertheless, many mainstream media quote Israeli sources with little or no skepticism. Israeli sources, for example, consistently refer to Palestinian victims of Israeli violence as terrorists, even when the victims are children, women, passers-by, or human rights organizations.¹⁶⁰ By parroting these narratives, Canadian media contribute to the APR tendency to justify violence against Palestinians.

Reporting gullibly about antisemitism = Defaming Palestinians with antisemitic slander. CJPME staff also often observe that accusations of antisemitism are often reported by Canadian media uncritically. Pro-Israel organizations consciously try to prevent criticism of Israel, by

condemning and marginalizing such critics, most commonly with the smear of antisemitism. When media develop stories and create headlines around these accusations, without exploring the basis for such charges, and without talking to the individuals accused of antisemitism, they contribute to the APR tendency to accuse Palestinians of being inherently antisemitic.

Standing up to bullying from HRC

In determining which propagators of APR were the “worst,” sheer volume does count. The record of HRC is atrocious, and media organizations which respond to its pressure do so at the cost of their own credibility. HRC considers itself a type of “media watchdog” organization, but neutral observers will understand it as an organization which seeks to banish any portrayal of Israel that is the tiniest bit negative. HRC also has political views which are fringe even for pro-Israel organizations, and HRC is prepared to weaponize the antisemitic smear whenever possible. Mainstream media which give credence to, or quietly cave under pressure from HRC do a disservice to their readers and the media industry generally.

Recommendations for Palestine solidarity activists

The Palestinian solidarity movement already faces monumental challenges as it tries to address one of the greatest injustices of our time, and APR presents a significant obstacle to this work. If the Palestine Solidarity movement can confront and discredit APR, it will enable progress on many other fronts. Below are some recommendations for individuals involved in Palestine solidarity:

1. **Prioritize the campaign against APR.** For the Palestinian solidarity movement, there are campaigns that may garner more immediate attention (like BDS, or divestment campaigns), but a successful APR campaign will pay huge dividends in the long-term. For example, Palestinians and their allies should work to have APR incorporated into their institutional EDI frameworks. When campus groups are successful in having APR recognized by their university, it will be harder for their opponents to undermine or dismiss their activism (e.g. divestment resolutions) using common APR tropes. When employees are successful in having APR recognized by their employer, this could help to protect them from being wrongfully dismissed based on social media posts in support of Palestine.
2. **Participate in informational events and activities around APR.** Palestine solidarity activists should make sure they and their network have the knowledge and training they need to identify and self-report APR.
3. **Don’t be silent, don’t submit; get the necessary help when victimized by APR.** Anyone who is a victim of APR must rally the support of their community to oppose it publicly and vigorously. Such individuals should also engage support from organizations like CJPME, and get legal help when necessary.
4. **Report incidents of APR.** While Palestinian solidarity organizations have a role to play in consolidating and centralizing the reporting of APR, this process relies on individuals self-reporting when they are victims of APR. Without empirical data, organizations like CJPME find it more difficult to bring visibility to this insidious form of racism.

Below are some recommendations for organizations involved in Palestine solidarity work:

1. **Prioritize the campaign against APR.** Like for individual activists, Palestine solidarity organizations should give APR file the strategic importance it deserves.
2. **Develop an APR task force.** There are many organizations and individuals which have an interest in fighting APR, but far fewer of them actually have the capacity to act substantively against APR. While organizations should communicate and share ideas on combatting APR, one or two key organizations with the capacity and expertise to lead the issue should be endorsed.
3. **Centralize and normalize the reporting of APR incidents.** As mentioned earlier in the report, there are at least three organizations that currently have APR self-reporting pages. These efforts should be consolidated and normalized, and the resulting centralized gathering point for this data should be widely publicized.
4. **Host informational events and activities around APR.** Palestinians and their allies should be made aware of the various ways that APR manifests itself in Canadian society. Once equipped, such individuals will feel more confident and comfortable self-reporting APR, and combatting APR.

Notes

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