Faculty for Palestine-UofT, Healthworkers Alliance for Palestine, and Jewish Faculty Network-UofT Statement Regarding the UofT Senior Administration's Response to the MAP DWG Report

19 November 2026

Faculty for Palestine-UofT, Healthworkers Alliance for Palestine and Jewish Faculty Network-UofT Statement

The University of Toronto defines its institutional purpose as "fostering an academic community in which the learning and scholarship of **every member may flourish**, with vigilant protection for individual human rights, and a resolute commitment to the principles of equal opportunity, equity and justice" (emphasis added).

On November 12th, UofT's Administration made clear that it refuses to uphold this purpose when it comes to Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians at UofT, by summarily rejecting the report and all 57 recommendations made by the Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian Discrimination Working Group (MAP DWG) that the university Administration had itself commissioned.

The MAP DWG was commissioned by UofT in 2024 as a key part of the University's effort "to combat anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-Palestinian discrimination," after prior failed attempts by the university administration to address Islamophobia in 2017 and 2019. Its official mandate included "generating recommendations that, by strengthening equity and institutional accountability, can foster a supportive climate for Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian members of the University" (Report, 7). Despite the Working Group's own concerns about the conflation of these three overlapping but distinct identities, which are each also "internally pluralistic" (Report, 13), the MAP DWG diligently carried out its mandate through two years of painstaking work.

The final report, Over-Policed and Under-Protected, is informed by 85 group consultations and 525 survey responses. It documents rampant and flagrant racism, perpetuated through wanton disregard as well as "incurious ignorance" of Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian experiences at all levels of the University. For example, one student noted:

> *My friend, a Pakistani-Muslim student, was drawn by another student in a stereotypical "ISIS-esque" way – big beard, turban, and "Allahu Akbar" written in the background. The dons did not stop the student from doing this. When the same student that drew my friend went to draw a Jewish-identifying student, they were stopped.* (Report, 132)

Another survey respondent noted:

> *When Palestinian children and hospital personal [sic] were murdered, I had 2 staff applaud it saying: "we told them if you fuck around, you'll find out". During that same conversation, another staff said "these aren't humans, they're all fucking terrorists and animals, killing them is the greatest mercy they can get. I only wish we can do it multiple times.* (Report, 27)

The report devotes an entire section to the Temerty Faculty of Medicine (TFOM) alone, because of its unchecked "culture of bias and the threat of reprisals" (Report, 83). A scheduler refused to make minor adjustments to shifts during Ramadan, saying, "Religion is personal, scheduling is business." UofT learners expressed mistrust of TFOM leadership and clinical faculty who "did not care about, acknowledge, or make space for Muslims, Arabs, or Palestinian perspectives or viewpoints" (84). A staff physician holding a newborn said of a hijabi trainee: "Careful, she may throw rockets at us" (84). Other hijabi learners were turned down for positions because their "visibility" was "polarizing" and were called "terrorist" with no institutional response (84). Another TFOM survey respondent noted, "One faculty even told a student if you report me, I will know it was you" (Report, 27).

The report further documents that, in the face of such racism, Muslim, Arab, and especially Palestinian members of the UofT community are met with policies of 'institutional neutrality', which reproduce the discriminatory status quo, or with institutional gaslighting suggesting that Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian community members themselves are the problem.

The authors reviewed the report line-by-line with members of the administration and conducted a legal review with the University's lawyers over several months. The sudden, unprecedented, rejection of the entire report just days before its anticipated publication is a further damning example of what the report so thoroughly documents: Discrimination against UofT's Muslim communities, and officially sanctioned anti-Arab and, especially, anti-Palestinian racism. The Administration's response has further exposed the largely cosmetic and selective nature of its equity processes that the report documents in such shocking detail. It validates the mistrust that is so widespread among Muslim, Arab, Palestinian, Black and Indigenous members of the university, further illustrating the fact that such working groups only exploit the labour and pain of marginalized communities to feed the institution's false public image. We reject the University's cynical claims to justice and moral legitimacy in this time of great planetary turmoil.

It is not new for the University's highest commitments to equity, justice, and human rights to be derailed because of the Palestine exception, a form of institutional discrimination and selective application of policy to restrict voices, advocacy and scholarship on Palestine. Notably, in 2021 and as documented thoroughly at the Censure UofT website, the University of Toronto was subject to censure by the Canadian Association of University Teachers for failing to address donor interference that violated academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The case in question concerned the appointment of a Director for the Faculty of Law's International Human Rights Program. The position was offered to Dr. Valentina Azarova, only to be withdrawn under donor pressure, specifically because of her scholarship on Palestine. The censure was lifted, in part, due to new commitments by UofT to academic freedom and institutional autonomy. But the Administration has never acknowledged the underlying issues of anti-Palestinian racism and administrative impunity, and, it seems, is now repeating them.

In its letter rejecting the MAP DWG report, the University Administration reiterates the racist and perilous trope that Palestinian flourishing and addressing anti-Muslim discrimination are threats to Jewish safety, and perpetuate the antisemitic conflation of Jewish, Israeli, and Zionist identities, writing:

> While we expect that the working group's report will validate the experiences of many members of our community, aspects will also be offensive and upsetting to other members of our community, including some Jewish and Israeli colleagues and students. (Woodin & Young, 3)

We emphatically reject the university's normalization of conditions that compel Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian members of our community to navigate campus life under conditions of heightened surveillance, marginalization, and hostility. A meaningful commitment to justice requires confronting all forms of racism wherever they occur and regardless of whom they target. Only through such an approach can institutions foster genuine inclusivity, equity, and anti-oppression.

Institutions of higher education are meant to promote learning, belonging, and safety for all. In their response, the administration forecloses the possibility of a UofT in which, as our institutional purpose demands, **"every member may flourish."** While the administration may be unwilling to work toward this purpose, we are not. And we are the University.

Call to Action

We call on our larger community at the University of Toronto, including its students, staff, faculty, librarians, and alumni, to hold the university and all its office holders accountable for the findings of the report.

- Demand the Administration accept the report, publicly address each of its 57 recommendations, and offer a public dashboard with timeline for implementation.
- Organize unit-wide town halls or forums to address the findings and recommendations of the report.
- And for TFOM faculty and alumni in particular: Demand TFOM use its bargaining power with affiliated hospitals to ensure compliance with partnership agreements to protect and redress harms done to MAP learners and their allies.

Access this toolkit for email letter templates and additional resources.