

Anti-Zionism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

May – December 2017



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Over the past several months, a series of virulent anti-Israel events have occurred at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, including blatant calls for violence, the destruction of the Jewish state, and "intifada." The university administration has been unwilling to address these issues and has even defended many of these inciting calls on the grounds of "free speech."

The goal of this report is to shed light on the troubling situation that has engulfed the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

1. **Students hold university-authorized pro-terror rally:** On May 23rd, a university-approved protest featured students brandishing signs with convicted terrorists and calling for violence and "intifada" against Israel. Im Tirtzu activists were prohibited from staging a counter-protest.



[See the original footage here](#)

See the media coverage here: [Channel 2 \(Video\)](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Algemeiner](#)

[University's response](#): "The student event in support of the hunger-striking prisoners was held in accordance with the regulations and there was nothing said that constitutes a violation of the law."

2. **Arab student assaults Jewish student – no disciplinary action taken by university:** During the above protest, an Arab student physically assaulted a Jewish student, forcing him to seek urgent medical care at the hospital. No disciplinary action was taken by the university against the perpetrator.



[See the media coverage here \(Channel 2\)](#)

3. **Arab students hold unauthorized protest praising "Shahids" and vow to "continue the struggle" and "expel the occupier" – no disciplinary action taken by university:** On November 8th, students held unauthorized protest with inciting calls for violence. The university nonetheless enabled them to protest but prohibited Im Tirtzu students from holding a counter-protest.



[See the original footage here](#)

See the media coverage here: [Channel 2 \(video\)](#), [Times of Israel](#)

4. **Arab students disrespect and taunt memorial for IDF soldier Ron Kokia z'l and assault security guard – university orders memorial to be put away and takes no disciplinary action against perpetrators:** On December 4th, a memorial was set up by Im Tirtzu activists in honor of IDF soldier Ron Kokia z'l. Arab students responded by waving the PLO flag, calling to kick out the "Zionists" and assaulting a security guard who arrived to maintain order.



[See the original footage here](#)

See the media coverage here: [Ynet](#), [Israel National News](#)

[University response](#): "The university enables the free speech and expression of diverse opinions and views, as long as no illegal activity is involved."

5. **Students hold university-authorized protest calling for destruction of Israel:** On December 5th, a university-approved protest featured students calling for the destruction of Israel and to kick out the "Zionists."



[See the original footage here](#)

See the media coverage here: [Algemeiner](#), [Jewish Press](#)

6. **Professor compares Israel to Nazi Germany in class, stating it is a "fact" – university criticizes student for coming out with the story.**



[See the video here \(Channel 2\)](#)

See more media coverage here: [Jerusalem Post](#), [Israel National News](#)

[University response](#): "It is unfortunate that certain students chose to record their professor when not agreeing with his stance, instead of conducting an open discussion based on facts and opinions."

7. **University prevents pro-Israel activists from waving Israeli flags, dubbing it a "provocation," but allows Arab students to wave unauthorized PLO flag at pro-Israel rally:** While on a number of [occasions](#) the university prohibited Im Tirtzu activists from waving Israeli flags in response to the pro-terror chants of their fellow students, the university allowed Arab students to wave unauthorized PLO flags at an authorized pro-Israel rally.



[See the original footage here](#)

8. **University-sponsored conference features pro-BDS organization:** On November 26th, the university hosted a conference discussing Israeli arms sales to African countries. One of the featured speakers was a representative of Coalition of Women for Peace, an Israeli NGO that openly promotes boycotts on Israel.

See the media coverage here: [Jerusalem Post](#), [Jewish Press](#)

9. **Arab students regularly disregard instructions and threaten security personnel with impunity – no disciplinary taken by the university:** In addition to physical violence against security personnel as illustrated above, Arab students regularly disregard the instructions of security personnel and even threaten them.



[See the original footage here \(Hebrew, 2:30\)](#)

10. **Swastikas spray-painted on campus:** Over the past year, there have been at least *three documented cases* in which swastikas were spray-painted on the Hebrew University campus. Despite repeated appeals to the university, no person is known to have been investigated for involvement in any of the incidents.





While the university clearly abhors such vandalism, it is not a stretch to posit that this is a natural step resulting from the virulent and unhindered anti-Zionist atmosphere on campus.

See the media coverage here: [Ynet](#) (February), [Jerusalem Online](#) (July), [Jerusalem Post](#) (August)

Summary

Various anti-Zionist groups and individuals have been progressively radicalizing Hebrew University for some time now. The student groups associated with the Joint List political party, along with other nationalistic Arab groups, have a clear agenda that includes support for terrorism and calls for violent “intifada” and the annihilation of the Jewish state.

The acquiescence, and often explicit approval granted by the university to these activities, is disappointing and very troubling. If activities like those at Hebrew University were encountered at an institution of higher learning elsewhere in the world, they would be condemned without hesitation as anti-Semitic. Yet in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, Hebrew University ignores the problem and refuses to take active measures to prevent such things from recurring. This passivity of the administration toward students who blatantly violate university rules and regulations not only empowers these students, but encourages their fanaticism.

The definition of freedom of expression and political activity on campus varies from one institution to another. Like its fellow universities, so too Hebrew University has the power to set the criteria for what political activities are permissible and forbidden on its premises. The regulations of the University of Haifa, for example, include provisions permitting the president of the university to prohibit certain activities after consulting with the rector, vice president, CEO, and dean of students.

Thus when university presidents say that their hands are tied and they have no choice but to allow these events to occur, their claims hold little ground.



In other instances, the university rationalizes these anti-Israel events by claiming that such events are not illegal under Israeli law and the university thus has no reason to prohibit them. But as detailed below, these university-approved activities violate several aspects of Israeli law.

For instance, an approved demonstration held at Hebrew University on May 25th included calls that are easily understood as expressing solidarity with a terrorist organization and incitement to terrorism under the Israeli Counterterrorism Act of 2016. The Act specifically refers to “one who publishes matter praising, sympathizing with, or encouraging an act of terrorism, supporting it, or identifying with it, provided that the content of the matter published and the circumstances under which it was published are such that there is a substantive possibility that it will lead to the commitment of an act of terrorism” (Section 24). Calls for “Intifada!” while holding up photographs of convicted terrorists leaves no room for doubt that these are illegal activities.

Yet even once the details of the event were made public, the university regrettably adhered to its original decision, declining to take issue with entirely predictable problems. Worse, when the administration did voice disapproval, its objection was to the display of the Israeli flag, an ostensible provocation that security personnel were ordered to prevent.

As demonstrated in this report, Hebrew University has a real and utter difficulty distinguishing between activities that legitimately criticize Israeli policy and activities of anti-Israel groups that openly work for the erasure of the Jewish state.



Conclusions

1. The president, rector, and dean of the Hebrew University, as the leaders of the university, must take a far more active role in combating anti-Zionism on campus and put an end to the misconduct detailed above.
2. The university must give notice that it will not permit demonstrations that include incitement of violence against the State of Israel or praise of terrorism or terrorists. Any student who chooses to organize or participate in such an activity must immediately be summoned to a disciplinary hearing, suspended, and stripped of any scholarship.
3. The university must amend its regulations to ensure the safety of its students and to prevent incitement of violence and encouragement of terrorism from occurring on its campuses.