

Toronto Jewish Community Urged To ‘Go On The Offensive’ After Canada Day Abuse

thej.ca/2022/07/07/toronto-jewish-community-urged-to-go-on-the-offensive-after-canada-day-abuse/

By TheJ.ca Staff

July 7, 2022

Ontario politicians denounce ‘Pro-Palestinian’ protesters



“Anti-Israel protesters screaming about freeing Palestine and yelling anti-Semitic slurs in Thornhill, Ontario outside a plaza with many kosher establishments,” reported La’ad Canada on July 1. “This is a blatant act of #antisemitic hate which must be condemned.” (Image: La’ad Twitter)

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Officials from the Canadian Antisemitism Education Foundation have reacted to the harassment of Jewish shoppers at a Thornhill mall on Canada Day with a call to action- and pointed out this is not a battle the Jewish people of Canada should be fighting alone.

Anita Bromberg, President of CAEF told TheJ.ca, “It shouldn’t only be the Jews that are reacting to this. Where are the allies to speak up and bring the warring camps together? This is not a Canadian model where one group harasses another just going about their business. Where are the allies?”

Echoing her sentiments, CAEF Executive Director Andria Spindel said, “I assume if the police don’t lay charges this will continue.”

“I also assume if such blatant acts of antisemitism aren’t condemned by Muslim clerics, they will continue. I further assume that the best opposition, to be effective, has to come from other Muslims and allies who condemn this behaviour.”

Spindel also called for a specific strategy to be undertaken by the United Jewish Appeal (UJA), which oversees community security in the GTA. Last fall the organization hired a Senior Vice-President, Countering Antisemitism and Hate.

In her view, “The new UJA plan should involve every Jewish organization and be offensive not defensive.”

Spindel explained that, “Speakers should be going into schools in Muslim dominated areas and presenting facts about Israel and Jews as well as making the human rights case for peace and tolerance, but not just the latter. We must not bury our fight in terms that are about race relations, and ignore the specific bigotry of Jew hatred.”

Bromberg emphasized that concern.

“It’s feeling like Canada is a very unwelcoming place these days. I have spoken to a couple of police services about the angst.”

Supporters of a controversial conference held by the Muslim Association of Canada drove 45 minutes to the Chabad Gate Plaza on July 1, ostensibly to confront Meir Weinstein, host of the Israel Now webcast who was not present. The flag bearing, hate-chanting mob of dissidents turned to harassing shoppers using the Jewish stores. Shortly after, local residents alerted by cel came to even the odds, although no fights broke out.

One protester was briefly detained by York Region police before being driven away from the property and then released with no charges laid.

Bromberg said the action was staged on false pretences, to continue a campaign associated with leaders of a pro-Iran group “CD4HR” to intimidate Jews in the Toronto metropolitan area. In this case, people were preparing for Shabbat when confronted.

A video shared by the NGO Stop Antisemitism showed pro-Palestinian protestors shouting “Shabbat shalom bitches.”

“Shabbat Shalom b*tches” - a Palestinian radical screaming at Jewish shoppers outside a Kosher supermarket in Canada this past Friday

Pure and unadulterated Jew hatred - sickening. pic.twitter.com/R2LuBCe4xh

— StopAntisemitism (@StopAntisemites) [July 3, 2022](#)

Video from the Chabad Gate Plaza in Thornhill, Ontario shows Jews doing their shopping to prepare for the Sabbath being harassed by members of “CD4HR”, on July 1, 2022. (Video: StopAntisemitism)

“The MAC has a public face, (the conference) was in a public venue, at a government – run facility (the Enercare Centre at Exhibition Place). Weinstein said he was going to bring attention to it, which is (essentially protected) as free speech. He had well documented concerns about some of the speakers, about the organization and its public funding, so he was going to show up in this public venue to highlight those concerns. He wasn’t threatening to attack any individual, any business, he wasn’t threatening to make anti-religious comments. He was simply going to use his freedom of speech. “

Bromberg continued, “Contrast this to their actions, what was the concern, Jews were going about their business to prepare for Shabbat? One was freedom of expression, the other was an act of harassment directed at private individuals at private facilities.”

She noted a previous confrontation at the plaza was instigated by many of the same bad actors in May 2021, and the kosher store Taste of Israel and a key Orthodox synagogue nearby has been targeted in the past.

“Instead of (Palestinian) flags representing self-determination, they were waving it as symbols of taunting.” Calling for leadership from elected officials, Bromberg concluded, “We can’t allow this kind of rhetoric to divide our community.”

In the wake of the confrontation, both the federal and provincial representative for Thornhill denounced the protest as the action of antisemites.



LAURA SMITH, MPP
THORNHILL

Official Statement from MPP for Thornhill, Laura Smith

July 2, 2022

Yesterday, protesters were outside the plaza at Bathurst and Chabad Gate intimidating patrons and residents of the area and yelling antisemitic slurs.

These acts of antisemitism must be condemned in the strongest terms. Thank you to York Regional Police for taking this seriously and acting quickly. Local law enforcement remains in the area.

The plaza where this protest took place is home to many Jewish-owned businesses and is in a neighbourhood in Thornhill that many Jewish people call home.

I will continue to stand with our Jewish community and work to prevent and combat all forms of discrimination and antisemitism in this province.

- Laura Smith

Only a month after being elected to represent Thornhill at Queen's Park, Laura Smith had to come out swinging against the antisemites who came to her constituency on Canada Day. (Photo: Laura Smith Twitter)

Newly-elected, Laura Smith holds the provincial riding of Thornhill for the Progressive Conservative government of Doug Ford. Smith issued a statement on Saturday citing how "protesters were outside the plaza at Bathurst and Chabad Gate intimidating patrons and residents of the area and yelling antisemitic slurs."

Insisting that "These acts of antisemitism must be condemned in the strongest possible terms," Smith noted the plaza "is in a neighborhood that many Jewish people call home."

Melissa Lantsman (MP for Thornhill), has emerged as the leading voice for Canadian Jews in Ottawa, shared video of protestors waving Palestinian flags and chanting slogans in front of the shops.

“Protesters screaming ‘free Palestine,’ yelling antisemitic slurs and intimidating Jews in Thornhill outside a plaza of mainly kosher establishments,” Lantsman tweeted. “This is not anti-Zionism —it’s a blatant act of antisemitic hate which must be condemned by everyone.”

“You don’t come to a Jewish neighborhood and yell antisemitic tropes if it isn’t about hating Jews,” the conservative MP said of the fracas.

Quebec Liberal MP Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal), tweeted “Jewish Canadians have been in this country since 1760. We are incredibly proud Canadians and Canada Day is our national holiday. To do something like this on Canada Day is especially offensive. I share @MelissaLantsman’s outrage.”

Like Lantsman, Housefather is Jewish. According to [a National Post report by Terry Glavin](#) on June 30, “the [Liberal] Trudeau government has provided with more than \$3 million in federal “anti-hate,” youth engagement and security funding over the past three years” to MAC.

The report quoted Gail Adelson-Marcovitz, national chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, as saying MAC’s lineup of speakers is disturbing, owing to several speakers’ habits of proselytizing “misogynistic, anti-LGBTQ+, antisemitic, and often violent beliefs that stand in stark contrast to cherished Canadian values.”