

Anti-Racism Program

C J P M E F O U N D A T I O N

– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

ARPCF Condemns YMCA’s Revocation of Peace Medal from Rana Zaman

Montreal, December 01, 2025 — The Anti-Racism Program of the CJPME Foundation (ARPCF) condemns the [decision](#) by the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth to rescind its 2025 Peace Medal from longtime peace and human rights activist Rana Zaman. The ARPCF argues that this decision, taken after targeted pressure from pro-Israel lobby groups including B’nai Brith and the Atlantic Jewish Council, [represents](#) a deeply troubling act of anti-Palestinian racism. Rana Zaman, a Muslim community leader, was selected for the award in recognition of her decades of grassroots humanitarian work. The YMCA’s [decision](#), which appears to be based on her public advocacy for Palestinian rights and criticism of Israel’s actions in Gaza, raises serious concerns about respect for free expression and seems at odds with the Peace Medal’s stated values of peace, inclusion, and justice.

The ARPCF is alarmed by the YMCA’s characterization of Zaman’s vocal criticism of Israel’s state violence as incompatible with “peace” and “community-building.” “This framing implicitly equates support for Palestinian human rights with extremism or disruption, an increasingly common tactic used to silence dissent and dehumanize Palestinians and their allies,” explained Jamila Ewais, lead researcher of the ARPCF. “Fighting for justice, exposing war crimes, and opposing apartheid are not antithetical to peace; they are essential components of it. The YMCA’s decision sets a dangerous precedent: that naming oppression disqualifies one from being considered peaceful. In reality, Zaman’s moral clarity and lifelong commitment to nonviolence are precisely why she was deserving of this honour.”

Further, the YMCA’s internal silence on the controversy, including [reported](#) instructions to staff not to mention the award or Zaman, has left many YMCA community members feeling deeply disheartened. For an organization that serves these very communities, appearing to respond to pressure rather than openly affirming the dignity and contributions of one of its own sends a painful message to those who advocate for Palestinian rights. Instead of fostering the kind of bridge-building the Peace Medal symbolizes, the YMCA’s response risks undermining trust and signaling that advocacy for Palestinian lives is not fully welcome within its walls. We believe there is still an opportunity for the YMCA to engage its community, acknowledge these concerns, and reaffirm its commitment to inclusion, dialogue, and justice.

The ARPCF calls on the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth to publicly apologize to Rana Zaman, reinstate her Peace Medal, and affirm that support for Palestinian rights is not incompatible with peace. We also urge Canadian civil society institutions to resist political pressure campaigns that conflate anti-racism with anti-Semitism and weaponize accusations to suppress legitimate activism. Fighting against genocide, apartheid, and systemic racism is not hateful, it is a moral obligation. If the YMCA truly wishes to stand for inclusion, mutual respect, and community empowerment, it must start by standing with those who are being silenced for daring to speak the truth.

About the ARPCF – *The mandate of the Anti-Racism Program of the CJPME Foundation (ARPCF) is to create public awareness about racism in Canada. This mandate falls in line with the Foundation’s*

broader purpose of monitoring and combating manifestations of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination by increasing public awareness of such biases.

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