



November 1, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Mark S. Wrighton, Ph.D., President
The George Washington University
1918 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20052

Dear President Wrighton,

We write on behalf of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), the oldest pro-Israel organization in the U.S., with the support of the undersigned over 200 people, including students and alumni of The George Washington University (GW). All of us are horrified by recent antisemitic incidents at GW and urge you to take more forceful steps to combat all forms of anti-Jewish bigotry on campus, including relating to Israel.

The recent incidents were rendered even more horrifying because they occurred during the Jewish holidays. On Friday, October 7, after Yom Kippur, antisemitic signs were discovered outside the Hillel building, pasted on light posts and affixed to a bench on GW Hillel property – including one sign that read, “[Zionists F**k Off](#).” On October 11, during the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, members of the antisemitic, anti-Israel group that calls itself “Students for Justice in Palestine” (SJP) and another anti-Zionist group that calls itself “Jewish Voice for Peace” (JVP) protested outside Hillel, shouting at students, calling them “[war criminals](#),” and carrying hateful signs like “[GW Hillel, you have blood on your hands](#)” and “GTFO” – meaning “[Get the F**k Out](#).” Protestors demonized Israel with lies, chanting that “[Israel is a terrorist state](#),” when in fact, it is Israel that faces unrelenting terrorism and is on the front lines in fighting it. The protestors also chillingly chanted, “[There is only one solution: intifada revolution](#),” which, as noted Boston Globe columnist and GW alumnus Jeff Jacoby wrote, is a call for the “[killing of Jews through terrorism](#).”

Jewish students were inside the Hillel building during this protest. Some were studying, others were attending an event, and still others were participating in a student leadership meeting. SJP’s and JVP’s conduct undoubtedly inspired fear among Jewish students and [made them feel like pariahs](#) on their own campus.

We appreciate that you and other university administrators issued [statements](#) following these horrific incidents, condemning antisemitism and reporting that the Metropolitan Police Department is investigating the antisemitic vandalism. **But the statements wrongly treated the hateful, bigoted, and threatening conduct that was perpetrated as though it represented**

simply less-than-civil discourse about difficult political issues. In fact, SJP and JVP were expressing rank hatred of Jews and encouraging violence against them.

These groups have made it clear that Jews, unlike other groups of people, do not have the right to self-determination, that Israel does not have the right to exist, that Jews at Hillel and at GW are responsible for alleged wrongs by Israel, and that Jews whose identity is inextricably tied to their ancestral homeland are not welcome at GW. All of this is antisemitism, according to the internationally accepted [working definition of antisemitism](#) that has been adopted by the U.S. government and over 30 other countries around the world.

As you and other GW administrators affirmed in one of your statements, all students **“[deserve to feel safe at our university and to live without fear of harassment, hostility, or marginalization.](#)”** According to a [recent report on campus antisemitism](#), **Jewish students at GW do not feel safe openly expressing their Jewish identity, including their support for Israel. That means that the administration must take more effective steps to afford them the safe and welcoming environment they are morally and legally entitled to.** As you know, GW is required under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to remedy a hostile antisemitic learning environment, or risk losing its federal funding.

We recommend the following remedial steps:

- Issue another statement to the GW community directly condemning these incidents as antisemitic, and also condemning the groups, by name, that perpetrated the antisemitism.
- In the statement, let the community know that the university is investigating these incidents to determine whether the perpetrators have violated GW’s [rules](#) and, if they have, assure the community that the wrongdoers will be punished.
- Adopt the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism](#), because it will help GW determine when speech and conduct are motivated by antisemitic bias. Some universities, including your alma mater, Florida State University, have already [adopted](#) the definition.

We are here to help and are counting on you to show all those who have been affected by the antisemitism at GW – including concerned students and alumni – that GW truly is committed to being a safe and welcoming environment for all students, including those who are Jewish and who love and support their ancestral homeland, Israel.

Very truly yours,



Morton A. Klein
National President



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Veronike Onesmo
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Chris Scholl
Brian Hill
Lewis Glenn
Carol Ogusky
Stephen Doppelt
Paul Fischer
Randall Goldberg (2000)
Moshe Ross
Jeri Williams
Barry Zaltman
Mary Ann Viveros
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