

## **Antizionism in Canada**

**Prepared for the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights (RIDR) — November 2025**

**To:** Members of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights (RIDR)

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**Subject:** Antizionism in Canada, the evolution of antisemitism

*The Network of Engaged Canadian Academics (NECA, [neca-rdace.org](http://neca-rdace.org)) is a faculty network of over 400 Jewish and non-Jewish members on 52 Canadian campuses. NECA promotes academic freedom, research excellence, and intellectual pluralism to counter antisemitism.*

### **1. Situating antizionism within its historical context**

Canada's consensus definition of antisemitism, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition (IHRA) [1], which is implemented in Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy includes six illustrative examples that reference Israel. This inclusion reflects a recognition of the evolving nature of antisemitism and its most recent manifestation, antizionism.

#### History of anti-Jewish Discrimination

Discrimination against and hatred of Jews has a long history and reflects the ideals and problems present at different historical moments. Regardless of its expression, the **common feature across all the different manifestations of antisemitism is a set of lies, libels, conspiracies, and accusations that blame Jews, Judaism, or the Jewish collective for preventing society from attaining what the majority value most.**

Antisemitism changes over time. Historically, we can trace this historical evolution from anti-Judaism, through antisemitism to antizionism. Despite this evolution, earlier manifestations of antisemitism are never fully replaced, they continue to be reimagined and reconfigured, and still exist to this day.

*Anti-Judaism:* Anti-Judaism emerged from early Christianity as part of supersessionist (the Christian doctrine that the church has replaced the Jewish people as God's chosen people, thereby superseding Judaism) efforts to define and differentiate the new religion as the true and righteous path. Judaism and the Jewish people were condemned as rule-bound and spiritually

empty, willfully rejecting the truth of Christianity. Jews were blamed for the death of Jesus, a libel which presented them as both uniquely evil and powerful.

*Antisemitism:* With the advent of the idea of race that could explain both individual character and broad cultural differences, and culminating in the racial purity laws of Nazi Germany, antisemitism became the predominant form of Jew hatred. In this phase, Jews were cast as subhuman, race polluters, whose genetic impurity had to be eradicated from society. Jews were equally framed as uniquely malevolent, devious and controlling, actively working against the interests of the good. This fantasy of outsized Jewish world power is exemplified in the Soviet forgery, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which continues to be circulated by antisemites as evidence of Jewish perfidy.

*Antizionism:* The latest incarnation of Jew hatred is antizionism. Antizionism relies on libel and distortion to claim that the Jewish collective, Israel, rather than the individual Jew, is uniquely evil. It further asserts that Jews, who have thousands of years of history in this place, are fabricating a legitimate claim to their ancestral homeland. By erasing this history, antizionists dismiss Jews as nefarious settlers who have usurped the rights of the true indigenous people, Palestinians. Antizionism claims that Israel, exceptionally, is the one state that must be eradicated. Importantly, antizionism is often presented by its proponents, as simply a political position that is merely criticism of the actions of the State of Israel (NOTE: legitimate criticism of Israel is not antisemitic and IHRA explicitly acknowledges this fact). Yet, antizionists do not only criticize the action of the state, they delegitimize, demonize it, hold it to standards not applied to any other state or government, and call for its destruction.

**Antizionists define Zionism in false terms that bear no resemblance to how the consensus Jewish community understands the term or the political reality of Israel [2].** For example, they claim that Zionists are Jewish supremacists who seek the cultural genocide of Palestinians. In fact, Zionism, properly understood, is the belief that the Jewish people have a right to self-determination in some of their ancestral indigenous homeland (94% Canadian Jews hold this belief whereas only 1% endorse being antizionist, [2]). It is not a “supremacist” movement and respect for the rights of people of all backgrounds including Druze, Muslims, Christians, and

others is enshrined in the Israeli Declaration of Independence. Nonetheless, antizionists deploy such libels, which serve as a strawman argument to justify, as a moral imperative, calls for the eradication of the only Jewish state where more than half of the world's Jews reside.

Antizionists frequently distort the Holocaust or use its language and imagery to demean and demonize Israel and the Jewish people. Recent surveys show that nearly twenty percent of Canadians under 25 believe the Holocaust is exaggerated or never happened. The distortion of Zionism and the Holocaust reinforce each other and together strengthen libels against Jewish people and institutions.

#### History of Antizionism:

**Antizionism is not a new ideology** and even pre-dates the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Antizionism has been employed repeatedly in numerous countries including the Soviet Union, Iraq, and Poland. For example, the Soviet Union invented an area of study they called “Zionology” to claim that Israel was a threat to the world order and thousands of Soviet pamphlets, newspaper articles, and books were published that claimed Israel was an illegitimate state and that “Zionism is racism”. As scholar Izabella Tabarovsky has documented, the Soviets portrayed Zionism as a global system of domination—racialized, conspiratorial, and inseparable from Jewish civic life. During this same era, the Soviets demonized the idea of Zionism and persecuted and jailed Soviet Jews. Eminent Canadians, including Irwin Cotler, led campaigns to rescue Soviet Jews. Yet today, the old Soviet lies are repeated, sometimes word for word, in much of antizionist writing.

Importantly, we see in Canada how the libels antizionists employ about the Jewish collective lead to stigmatization of Jewish people, followed by incitement of violence against them, and denial of their suffering. This pattern is repeated in every country where antizionism thrives and ultimately results in Jewish people being purged. We are witnessing an alarming increase in antizionist rhetoric and actions targeting Jews in all sectors of Canadian society.

Antizionism has become so normalized and legitimized on Canadian university and college campuses that it is regularly expressed through violent imagery and rhetoric by faculty and students alike. It even appears uncritically in course material and syllabi. The normalization of antizionism is escalating into violence. On November 5, 2025, students from Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU)'s student club Students Supporting Israel were physically attacked at a private event (the university refused to host the event of campus despite several requests by SSI). Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) TMU, an antizionist hate group, used its social media channel to incite the violent actions taken that targeted the SSI event, which was intended to offer open dialogue and debate with IDF soldiers who had fought the terrorist group Hamas in Gaza. Other manifestations of antizionism on Canadian campuses include Boycott, Divest, and Sanction campaigns, unofficial and official academic boycotts of Israel, and statements taking political positions by departments and faculties. These have ongoing cumulative severe mental and professional consequences for Jewish students and faculty (see Appendix A).

The history of antizionism warns us that without strong action now, Canadian Jews, who make up approximately 1% of Canada's population, may not have a future in Canada.

## **2. Antizionist hate used to explain the war in Gaza**

### False Claims at the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights

Antizionists, including several organizations that have testified before the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights (e.g., Independent Jewish Voices), have relied on well worn tactics to exceptionally target Israel and justify its dismantling. Claims that characterize the actions of the Israeli Defense Forces and the Government of Israel in Gaza as "genocidal" is a key antizionist strategy" The genocide libel has been leveled at Israel throughout its history as described by the scholar Goda, 2025 [3]. Thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that some were even clamouring that Israel was committing genocide on October 8, 2023 before Israel had taken any action against Hamas in Gaza and as Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon began firing missiles into Northern Israel. The false charge that Israel is committing genocide is an antizionist libel that is

intended to malign, isolate, and delegitimize the Jewish collective rather than describe accurately the actual events of the Gaza war [4],[5], [6].

Some antizionists have quoted NGOs such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International as having determined that Israel committed genocide. Yet, both organizations are unreliable [7], [8]. Amnesty International admitted to inventing a new definition of the crime of genocide under international law to support this conclusion, and HRW has failed to engage with the internationally accepted standards for imposing a finding of genocidal intent. HRW's anti-Israel bias has been reflected in longstanding criticisms and controversies involving staff with extremist affiliations and allegations of ideological slant [7]. Others point to an academic organization of genocide scholars that passed a motion declaring Israel was committing genocide. But it was soon revealed that anyone could join this organization, the motion was passed by a few dozen activists and it even included a member who used the name Adolph Hitler. (see <https://www.scholarsfortruthaboutgenocide.com>). Their accusations of genocide substitute inflammatory rhetoric for legitimate legal analysis of the requisite intent to prove genocide. In fact, **no international court of law has determined that Israel is committing genocide**. Even the Chief Justice of the ICC, after her retirement, *clarified that the Court had not even made a finding that a plausible case of genocide exists* [8].

Antizionists also quote the more recent UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel as having determined that Israel committed genocide. However, the Commission is not a court of law, and their opinion does not reflect the official position of the UN on this matter. More troubling, the Commission relied on falsified information (e.g., by misquoting Israeli officials) to arrive at their controversial conclusion and comprises four malignant antizionists (<https://unwatch.org/end-the-coi/>) who have a documented agenda to demonize Israel.

Importantly, such antizionist libels have the effect of targeting the Jewish community in Canada as evidenced by the staggering increase in hate crimes against Jews since October 7, 2023 (statistics that are reliable and valid notwithstanding claims by antizionists) such that Jews are 25 times more likely than the general public to experience a hate crime [10] (Statistics Canada,

2024). Jews in Canada are being targeted in their neighbourhoods, their places of worship, and at their places of business based on a core component of their identity. Shots have been fired at girls' schools, synagogues set on fire, and student meetings stormed by angry mobs. Human rights of Jews in Canada are being violated because of the proliferation and promulgation of such antizionist rhetoric.

### **3. Antizionism and Tokenizing the Jewish community**

Antizionist organizations, such as Independent Jewish Voices and the Jewish Faculty Network position, themselves as representing a silenced significant voice within that community that should be given equal weight in attending to Jewish accounts of antisemitism and antizionism. Yet a rigorous study using a representative sample of Canadians demonstrates that their antizionist viewpoint is only shared by a mere 1% of Canadian Jews [2]). Antizionist Jewish organizations are, at best, fringe groups who are tokenized to discredit, silence and override the consensus views of most of the Jewish community that affirms the right of Jews, like all others, to self-determination in some of their ancestral indigenous homeland. These tokenized groups are given disproportionate attention by institutions including Canadian media. Such tokenization has harmed Jewish communities across Canada by falsely presenting extremist attitudes and positions on Israel as reflecting the consensus viewpoint among Jews. As a consequence, when Jewish people speak up and defend their identity, they are often treated as social pariahs based on the libels, disinformation, and misinformation promoted by antizionists. **NECA strongly supports robust dialogue about Israel, Israeli politics, the conduct of the IDF and the Government of Israel. But demonizing the Jewish collective through ideological accusation and conspiratorial framing is not dialogue—it is egregious perversion, and it is discriminatory.**

### **4. Antizionism cloaked as anti-racism**

The genocide libel works together with others modern antizionist libels, which also falsely charge its inhabitants as a settler-colonists practicing apartheid, to demonize the Jewish state. Note how this damning language is typically accompanied by claims that Jews are “White,”

invoking North American understandings of race as the sole explanatory paradigm. Such North American categories do not apply in the Middle East. If such a framework were applied, more than half of Israelis would be considered people of colour using such a racial framework. How can people of colour who trace their heritage back 5000 years to the land of Israel be “White settler colonialists”?

Antizionism is increasingly being institutionalized including under the guise of addressing racism in Canada, specifically to address discrimination against Palestinians. Anti-Palestinian Racism (APR) is a concept developed by two antizionist organizations, the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association and Canadians for Peace and Justice in the Middle East. They take the political claim that Jews have a right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland – a belief shared by 94% of Canadian Jews – and assert that it can only be a racist belief. This re-situates the Soviet’s 1975 UN resolution that “Zionism is racism,” which was revoked in 1991. These groups and others are promoting a bigoted definition and framework to target Jews on the basis of a key aspect of the identity. This is offensive and harmful.

Importantly, calls for adoption of the flawed and discriminatory concept of APR do nothing to address discrimination against Palestinians in Canada or anywhere else in the world.

Discrimination against Palestinians, as with any group, is unacceptable. Fortunately, Canada has robust legal frameworks to address such issues, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and various provincial human rights codes. These laws prohibit discrimination based on factors such as place of origin, race, ethnicity, and religion. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has affirmed that these existing protections are sufficient to cover and address instances of prejudice directed toward Palestinians. APR is not needed to address this form of discrimination against Palestinians.

APR explicitly targets Jewish peoplehood, collectivity, and national identity as illegitimate or oppressive. This is the hallmark of antizionism: not merely criticism of particular Israeli policies (which is not antisemitic), but a systemic effort to delegitimize Jewish collective identity and political expression itself. Emerging research indicates that antisemitism and antizionism are parallel attitudes that are reliably related. Their connection is mediated by conspiratorial thinking

[9]. **Using a racist definition of anti-Palestinian racism to target Jews violates the basic tenets of human rights principles.**

Kogan, Louis-Klein, and Sandler write (<https://thehub.ca/2025/10/24/a-definition-of-racism-that-targets-jews-is-racist/>) that even, “ [t]he federal government is now being urged to enshrine APR, including by [Canada’s Special Representative on Islamophobia](#), into its anti-racism strategy. This would be a dangerous mistake. **By endorsing a definition that equates Jewish identity with racism, Canada would undermine its existing anti-discrimination regime, politicize legal norms, and embolden those who seek to suppress rather than engage in open debate. This definition is not aligned with Canada’s inclusive, democratic values.**”

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Antizionism is the latest incarnation of antisemitism and the dominant form that we see in Canada today, particularly on our post-secondary campuses. Antizionist tropes and rhetoric have been promulgated in some of the testimony given before the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights.

We call on Senate to: 1) recognize the threat that antizionism poses to Canadian Jewish community and to democratic values, 2) give no support to antizionist organizations to marginalize Jewish civic life, 3) ensure that institutions including Canadian media, and especially our national broadcaster, the CBC, abide by fair journalistic standards and ensure balance in their reporting and accurate reporting of the views of the majority of the Jewish community including about Israel and the Gaza war, 4) ensure that human rights laws are being enforced equitably to protect Jewish people in Canada who are experiencing an explosion of antisemitism, 5) recommend that the operating definition of anti-Palestinian racism, which calls Jewish identity inherently racist, be definitively rejected by the Government of Canada, 6) assist Universities in Canada in their efforts to address anti-Jewish hate, including all forms of antisemitism and especially antizionism, which has become embedded systemically in Canadian post-secondary education.



- [1] Canada's adopted definition of antisemitism, IHRA comprises four parts – (a) the Core Definition, (b) the Preamble, (c) the Illustrative Examples, and (d) the Postscript.
- [2] Brym, R (2025) What does Zionism mean to Canadian Jews? A longitudinal study of semantic drift. *Canadian Jewish Studies/Études juives Canadiennes*, 41
- [3] Goda paper: <https://isca.indiana.edu/publication-research/research-paper-series/norman-jw-goda-research-paper.html>
- [4] Shalev, A.R. (2025), Hamas' October 7th genocide: Legal analysis and the weaponization of reverse accusations-a study in modern genocide recognition and denial. *Israel Law Review*. Published online 2025:1-40. Doi:10.1017/S0021223725100009
- [5] Orbach, D. Boxman, J. Henkin, Y. Braverman J (2025). Debunking the Genocide Allegations:A Reexamination of the Israel-Hamas Warfrom October 7, 2023 to June 1, 2025. *Mideast Security and Policy Studies* No. 213
- [6] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2025/06/03/israel-gaza-genocide-allegations/>
- [7] HRW's alleged bias is detailed here: NGO Monitor highlights controversies over staffing and funding: [https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/human\\_rights\\_watch\\_hrw\\_/](https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/human_rights_watch_hrw_/)
- [8]<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001yplc/hardtalk-joan-donoghue-former-president-of-the-international-court-of-justice>, at minute 04:54. See also <https://rozenberg.substack.com/p/top-judge-corrects-media>.
- [9] Harber, K, Bulska D, Malloy, TE, Vila, VM. (accepted) Antisemitism, Conspiracy Beliefs, and Anti-Israel Attitudes. *American Psychologist*.
- [10] <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/250722/t006a-eng.htm>

## Appendix A: Antizionism on Campus

<b>Manifestations of Antizionism on Campus</b>	<b>Consequences for Jewish Faculty and Students on Canadian Campuses Today</b>
Denial of Jewish indigeneity employing anticolonial frameworks	Erases Jewish history, fails to recognize Jewish diversity and legitimate right to live on a part of their ancient land
BDS Campaigns, Academic Boycotts	Professional discrimination, uninvited to conferences. professional events/organizations
Department or faculty antizionist statements	Silences dissent, creates hostile environment, compromises institutional neutrality
Pressure to renounce Zionism	Exclusion, policing of identity
Harassment and ostracism Intimidation and toxic work environment	Mental health harms, fear, isolation, curtailing opportunity and research innovation for both prevents students and faculty from fully

Academic antizionism on Canadian campuses today replicates antisemitic patterns of identity denial, exclusion and delegitimization, producing outcomes that ultimately lead to the expulsion of Jewish faculty and students from the academy and the disruption of civil society.