

Written Statement of
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Rutgers University Class of 2026
Congress of the United States House of Representatives
Committee on Education and the Workforce
“Roundtable with Jewish Students Impacted by Antisemitism”

2/29/2024

Hi, my name is Joe J. Gindi. I am 21 years old, from Brooklyn, New York, a Syrian Jew, and a sophomore at Rutgers University. I major in Economics with a triple-minor in Jewish Studies, History, and Arabic.

I would like to thank the Chair and the Committee for hosting this important roundtable today. To understand the current crisis we are facing, it is crucial that we hear what students are experiencing at our universities. So, thank you.

I am here because Jew-hatred has become rampant at Rutgers University. And it has become clear that some members of the school's administration and faculty are complicit in allowing—and even in encouraging—this hate to grow.

I am here in the hope that my remarks will be a catalyst for action, so that Jewish students, like myself, feel safe and welcome at Rutgers, not harassed, threatened and invisible.

I am here to say, “It is time to wake up America,” and understand what is happening on our college campuses.

On November 17th, the Students for Justice in Palestine stormed the Rutgers University College Avenue Student Center and took it over.

I was just standing outside of the student center. I was shouted at, I was called a “murderer.” People screamed at me, “we don’t want Zionists here,” They called me a “European colonizer” because I am Jewish. The irony of this being my family came to America from Aleppo (Halab), Syria.

Jewish students caught inside of the Student Center were forced to flee.

I was horrified, but what shocked me most was the reaction of the police officers and administrators at the scene. At the direction of officials from the school administration, police on the scene did nothing, allowing SJP to march in and take over the student center.

This was the first of many incidents that highlight a clear pattern of allowing and even encouraging abuses to go by undeterred when they are against Jewish students.

The student center was not the only building that SJP, in their words, occupied (see below). On November 27th SJP decided to march in and take over the business school, chanting, disrupting classes and turning the of the building into an area where Jews were afraid to enter. This was, again, a clear violation of the code of conduct. Jewish students were afraid to leave their classrooms, numerous faculty reported being terrified.

This was not only allowed, but literally encouraged by members of Rutgers's administration. One administrator literally held the door open as SJP agitators violated school conduct and entered the building.

Justice requires the equal application of the law. So too, the code of conduct can only protect students if the University enforces the rules equally. Unfortunately, at Rutgers University - like at many other campuses - there appears to be selective enforcement of these rules. They just don't seem to apply when it comes to protecting Jewish students.

These chants, these rallies, and these building-takeovers are designed to make Jews afraid. I can tell you all about how the student leaders of these rallies and marches scream and shout calling for a violent "intifada" and the ethnic cleansing of Jews. One even called for martyrdom, saying and I quote, "Dying as a Martyr, dying as a Hero is one of the greatest sacrifices you can do as a Palestinian and as a Muslim."

Though, it is not just students.

Some of the University's own staff also lead these rallies. At one rally, a Rutgers University program coordinator screamed at Jewish students (apologies for the profanity), "Fuck you! Fuck you, Colonizer! Fuck you, Zionist!"

Administrators watched on the sidelines as this staff member berated the Jewish students and what actions have been taken against this employee so far? Nothing.

This is not fostering a warm and open campus climate at Rutgers. The actions of these staff members effectively deny Jewish students equal access to campus resources, and many students do not feel safe reaching out for help!

These are not new problems at Rutgers University. This hate, this vitriol, has been festering for far too

long. The co-chair of our University Committee on Diversity, Race, and Gender has been a public supporter and defender of Hamas since 2009. In an [article](#) she published in 2009 titled the “behind the Myths About Hamas,” the co-chair wrote, “When we separate propaganda from reality, however, what we find is a group that has taken on the mantle of national resistance against Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.” This entire article is shocking, and it is even more shocking that this is the person that Rutgers University has [tasked](#) with “recommend[ing] initiatives pertaining to diversity, including diversity training, recruitment, retention, mentoring, and professional development.”

We are making recommendations to the administration in order to make Rutgers a more welcoming place for Jews, but these problems are systematic and deeply rooted in our university infrastructure.

This inaction to help Jewish students has not gone away. Just this month a dialogue table was formed in order to facilitate healthy conversations between Jewish students and others at Rutgers who might disagree with their views on Israel. Agitators from an SJP rally came across the street and surrounded the table, preventing the intended respectful conversations. Some of the SJP members made disgusting comments related to the Holocaust and Jewish students felt afraid. The Jewish students then asked university administrators nearby if the conversation could be “shut down;” the administrators refused to even take action.

There is so much more that I can list. I invite you to see the list of over 50 incidents below that Jewish leaders on campus compiled in the wake of October 7th. Even this list is missing so many incidents at Rutgers’s other campuses and those that just went unreported.

In Newark, for example, the Center for Security Race and Rights held an event three days after October 7th, titled, “Psychoanalysis Under Occupation: Practicing Resistance in Palestine.” The Center has also brought in a number of antisemitic speakers to Rutgers New Brunswick (with one event featuring both Nick Estes and Marc Lamont Hill) and is already being [investigated](#) by the Senate.

These are just a number of horrible quotes said or posted by speakers who were hosted at Rutgers Newark last year (apologies for the profanity):

“If you want to be a fag go join Judaism they have a bunch of fags over there you’d feel at home” -
Mohamad Habehh

"Mom, look! I is chosen! I can now kill, rape, smuggle organs & steal the land of Palestinians Yay #ashke-Nazi (with a picture of a Jew)" - Hatem Bazian

"These Pakis are more gassed up than a Jew in Nazi Germany smh" - Mohamad Habehh

"I'm not racist I love everyone. Except the yahood (Jews)" - Mohamad Habehh

"I hope that pop-pop is the last noise that some Zionists hear in their lifetime!" - Nerdeen Kiswani

"The worst curse an Arab can call you is a Jew" - Mohamad Habehh

"From now on I'm taking rocks with me to the gym and every time I see a yahoodi (Jew) staring at me I'll flash them" - Mohamad Habehh

There is even a faculty member at both Rutgers Newark and New Brunswick who has been featured on panels with senior Hamas officials!

So much happening at Rutgers Newark alone that my testimony cannot do it justice.

I am not here because I want this, I am here because I have to be. Rutgers University is an absolute mess, and has failed to meet the moment. I didn't come to college to study in a living laboratory of antisemitism, which is what Rutgers has become.

These problems are bigger than any of us students and we need your help to ensure that our universities take actions to make Jews feel welcome.

Compiled list of incidents at Rutgers University - New Brunswick - 10/7/23 to 2/27/24

1. After October 7, on various occasions, Jewish students put up posters of hostages that were subsequently torn down. Some were torn down by other students. Some were torn down by university staff who were instructed, as part of their job, to remove all posters (regardless of content) from bus stops.
2. On October 12, A YikYak (anonymous social media post) called for the murder of a “Zionist” at AEPi while SJP was holding a protest at Brower Commons.. The perpetrator was identified, criminally charged. He is not part of SJP. It is going through the conduct office and terroristic charges were filed as well.
3. On October 16 a newsletter was sent out from the SAS Honors Program, where the newsletter editor wrote “I can’t drink water without thinking about the people of Gaza who have had their water cut off from them; I can’t sit at home without thinking about the countless families whose homes have been destroyed; I can’t study without thinking about the electricity that has been denied to them” without any mention of the suffering of Israelis.
4. On Monday night, October 23, as two AEPi brothers were returning to the house, a black car was idling outside. As they started to enter the house, one of the occupants yelled “fucking Jews” and threw eggs at the brothers, hitting one of them in the head. Luckily it did not hit his eyes or cause any damage. They immediately called the police who came and took the report. Two Jewish female students reported being egged that night as well. The police also said that there were a total of 4-6 eggings on College Avenue that night, targeting a wide variety of identities. The university considers the AEPi incident to be a bias incident.
5. Chabad Rabbi X shared that on the same night as the incident at AEPi, his wife’s car was egged as she was driving down the street from Chabad on her way home.
6. In mid-to-late October, a Jewish student named X reported on an incident in her Political Science class where a professor allowed a student to make an announcement about a “Free Palestine” event. She spoke with the professor afterwards, explaining that the announcement made her uncomfortable and she didn’t feel it belonged in the classroom. The professor told her she draws the line at homophobia or sexism, but free speech dictates that anyone can make an announcement on behalf of a Rutgers club in her classroom. When she saw this made X upset, she told her to toughen up because the world contains things that will upset her sometimes. Lucy responded by explaining that yes the world is a tough place, but she has control to try to avoid situations and people that will make her uncomfortable, she cannot avoid going to class. To that,

the professor told her she should've stepped out into the hallway until the announcement was over. Then she asked X if she needed a hug.

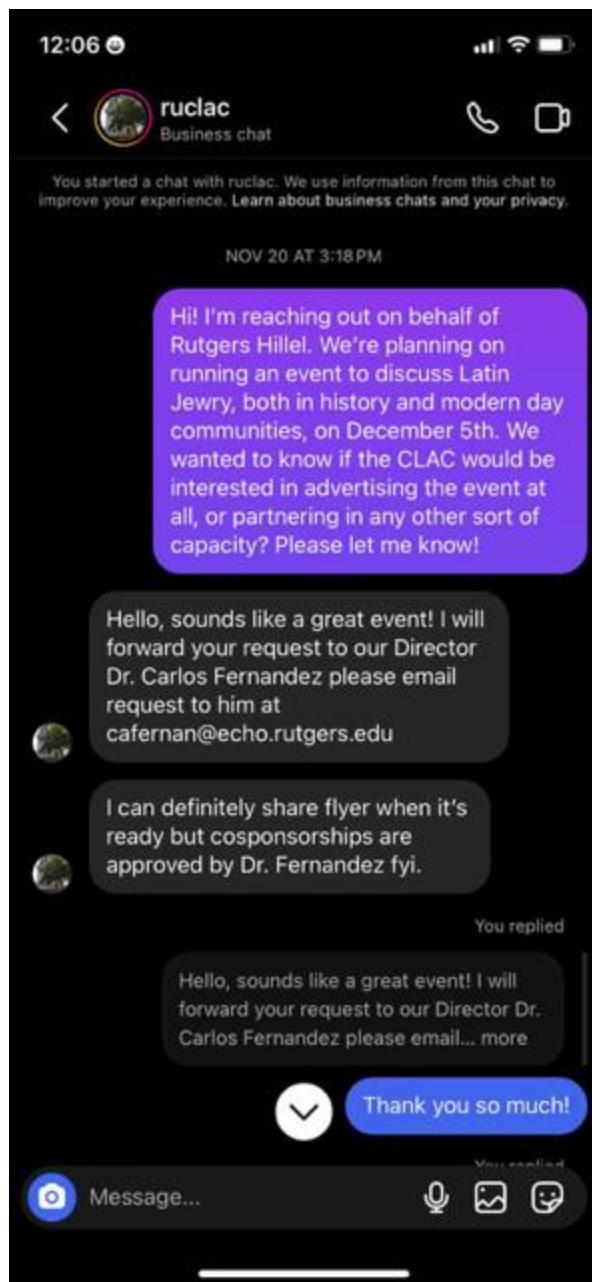
Lucy reported this incident to the Dean of Students.

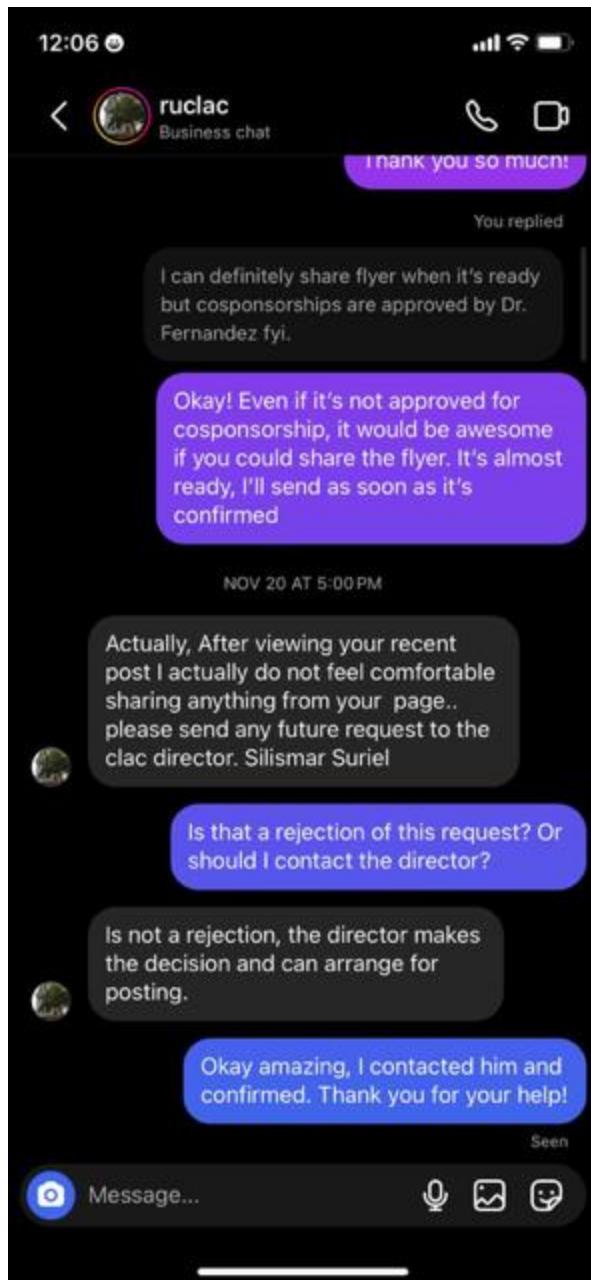
7. On Thursday, October 26, students were taping flyers about the hostages to the bus stop near the student center. Another student shouted at them that the hostage story was a lie and used derogatory language while shouting at them. He said that he would return with scissors and cut them all down. It was reported as a bias incident, and caught on video, and RUPD said the students could press charges. Several days later when the students proceeded to press charges they were told they could not.
8. On Friday morning, October 27, two sets of plastic bullets were found on the grass outside of Hillel. The next morning, Saturday, October 28, an item that looked like a small propane tank, but ended up being a piece of plumbing equipment was found on the grass outside of Hillel. In both cases, it was on the grass immediately next to the building. RUPD was called for both, and took reports. RUPD considered these incidents to be "litter" and not bias related.
9. On Friday, November 4 a Dean of Humanities for the School of Arts and Sciences, reported to other faculty that on Thursday, November 3, an easily identifiable Jewish lecturer in the Spanish department was taunted by students on the other side of a glass wall while he was teaching in the Academic building. He had been taunted by other students earlier in the day. The university is considering this to be a bias incident.
10. We discussed a current Rutgers student who has been tearing down posters of Israeli hostages. Hillel Rabbi X shared that the Vice Chancellor has been informed about this individual.
11. "Art" posters in Mason Gross (propaganda posters downloaded from a website and posted without permission in Mason Gross Halls).
12. The Daily Targum (Rutgers Student Newspaper) refused to publish an article by a Jewish Rutgers student and alum.
 - a. <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/rutgers-silence-sjp-and-media-accountability>
13. A Jewish student was rushed to the ER week of 11/13 with what appeared to be a stroke but was in fact a major anxiety attack.

14. Posters at the Busch campus bus stops are being put up repeatedly, supposedly taken down, then put up again (daily).
15. A letter from the chair of the Art Department, which adopts what Hamas says as truth.
16. Small counterprotest in front of the student center as SJP protested on Friday (11/17) at Brower. SJP chanting “we don’t want Zionists here” was directed at the Jewish students who were there.
 - a. SJP sit in at the Atrium on Friday, November 17. As they walked into the student center, passing Jewish students who had a counter-protest in front of the student center, some called Jewish students “murderers”.
 - b. “Murderer, murderer” shouted at a student wearing a yarmulke as he walked through the student center.



17. Incident with Silismar Suriel (Program Director referred to above)





18. Wednesday, Nov 29: a group of students received permission to have a press conference on the Livingston Campus. About 50 of them ended up walking to the Business School while classes were in session (around 12pm-2pm) and stayed there, chanting, for about 20-30 minutes. They left the space and protested outside. After about 30-45 minutes some came back in. This time they were quietly occupying the space. Classes were still going on. They set up a projector to show a documentary in an open lounge. Some individuals remained until the building closed at 10:30pm.

19. Thursday, Nov 30: Disruption of event sponsored by Rutgers Hillel, the Academic Engagement Network, the Miller Center on Policing and Community Resilience, The Critical Intelligence Studies Program and JFAS: the Jewish Faculty Administration and Staff group. The event was called “How October 7 Changed Everything: Lessons from Terrorism for Counterterrorism” and was a lecture by Dr. Bruce Hoffman of Georgetown University. About 8-9 minutes into the program, a group of students stood up and disrupted the event. Rutgers Police (who had been hired and paid for by Hillel) were in the room. They escorted the students out of the space and the program continued.
20. Cultural Collaborative Event “Support Space for Palestine: Teach In, Community Wellness, Resources” on Friday, Dec 1. This was a partisan program sponsored by all the university cultural centers.
21. Instagram Rutgers_dpe (Diversity Peer Educators) post “term guide for what is happening in palestine” appeared on Dec 4 or 5. The post had 10 slides with inaccurate and inappropriate information. Rabbi Reed wrote a long email to Darnell Thompson (supervisor of the DPE’s) with a point-by-point explanation of what was problematic about the post on Thursday, Dec 7. The post was taken down on Friday, Dec 8.
22. Thursday Dec 7: Event called “Race, Liberation, and Palestine: A Conversation with Noura Erakat, Nick Estes, and Marc Lamont Hill” took place on the Cook/Douglass Campus.
23. Center for Security, Race and Rights at Rutgers Newark uses university lists to send out their propaganda. Multiple times a week.
24. General Psychology class questions posted:
 - a. Questions that should be Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree
 - b. Basic antisemitic tropes, such as: “Compared to other groups, Jewish groups have too much power in the media.” “Israel and its supporters are a bad influence on our democracy” “Jewish people chase money more than other people do.” *“Israel treats the Palestinians like the Nazis treated the Jews.”*
 - c. Faculty member Lee Jussim explained that this was part of a research project on attitudes around antisemitism. It is from a qualtrics survey, not a class Canvas site.
25. On Monday afternoon, December 11 a, "study-in" took place at Alexander library. It was organized by SJP. Their stated aim was to “shut it (the library) down” and render the space unusable for the rest of the students. This created an unsafe environment for the student body. Despite complaints from at least one Jewish student, this was permitted.
26. At an Endowment Justice Collective rally on Thursday, Dec 14, a student positioned himself across the street from the rally in order to silently counter-protest. He was called derogatory

remarks, including being called a Nazi, subjected to verbal abuse, and threatened with violence. Despite his attempts to bring this to the attention of the RUPD present at the scene, no action was taken. RUPD informed him that if he attended future protests and maintained a peaceful and non-confrontational stance while standing alone across the street, he would still be moved if he displayed an Israeli flag. There was no Demonstration Response Team present that day. He has documented all of this and emailed it to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. He has since given a recorded statement to RUPD about this incident and their internal affairs department is reviewing it. Anne met with the student in January and followed up with RUPD. She affirmed his right to stand silently with a flag across the street from a rally in counter-protest.

27. On Sunday night, December 17th, as a student was entering Chabad House, a group of 3 students that were walking did a nazi salute as they passed the front of Chabad House. After reviewing the CCTV footage, Chabad was able to confirm those details and made a Police report, RUPD detectives came and copied the footage for the investigation. RUPD has their own cameras in front of the ROTC and will continue to investigate.

28. On Tuesday, January 16, the first day of spring semester, a swastika was drawn into the snow. This was believed to be in Deiner park, behind the River Dorms.

29. SJP held a press conference on Wednesday, 11/17 . The press conference is linked [here](#), but here are some highlights:

- They announced that they have been reinstated as an organization, although they are on probation until December 2024. They did not clarify what this probation means.
- They listed their demands, which are as follows
 - “Rutgers must identify and terminate the position of the administrator who leaked the suspension letter, which included private personal information of a student to media outlets. They must also issue a formal apology letter”
 - “We reiterate our previous 5 demands”: (as stated in an Instagram post from December 2023)
 - 1. RU must divest from Israeli bonds in corporations upholding Israeli “settler colonialism, apartheid, and genocide”
 - 2. End its agreement with TAU
 - 3. Protect Palestinian students and advocates
 - 4. Must release a statement from the president recognizing the “genocide”, its impact on Palestinian students, and call for a ceasefire



- 5. Hire additional professors specializing on Palestine and settler colonialism and institute a Department of Middle East Studies
 - “RU must incorporate anti-Palestinian racism training, including Nakba denial, into all DEI training for faculty and staff”
 - “RU must provide resources for Palestinian and Arab students on campus in the form of an Arab student resource center”
- They also called on the whole school to support divestment, and stated that “Palestine is our demand, no peace on stolen land”. This could be interpreted as an incitement to violence, depending on the “stolen land” that they referred to
- They also included a message to University President Holloway, stating that “You have endorsed our permanent subjugation” and “In your continued endowment and normalization, you have endorsed the genocide”
- They closed the press conference by saying “May we remove the walls and barriers in Palestine. May we see liberation within our lifetime. Long live the Intifada, globalize the Intifada, Long Live Palestine.”

30. On January 18 the Endowment Justice Collective held a [rally](#) calling for individuals to become martyrs as a way to support the Palestinian cause. During the [rally](#), SJP leader X chants, "Dying as a Martyr, dying as a Hero is one of the greatest sacrifices you can do as a Palestinian and as a Muslim," in a direct call for violence and sacrificing one's life for the "resistance." She makes clear that this "resistance" is in reference to the fighters in Gaza (Hamas). Ms. X also chants, "Resistance is justified when the land is colonized." A direct defense of the terrorism on 10/7. There is also a sign reading, "Gaza will Haunt you," with a red triangle. The red triangle symbolizes the Al-Qassam brigade, one of the divisions of Hamas, a designated terrorist organization. Ms. X also chants in Arabic, "falasteen 'arabiyah," literally meaning Palestine is Arab. Finally, she chants, "We are the resistance." Taking into context the sign, the calls for martyrdom, and the call for an "Arab Palestine," this seems to be a solidarity statement with Hamas, the "resistance" of Gaza.



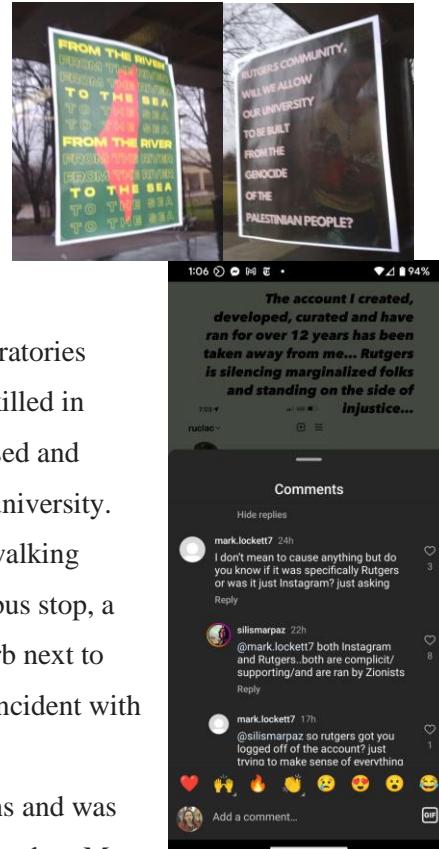
31. On January 18, the Center for Latino Arts and Culture posted on their Instagram about a Daily Targum article with an image of “We are all SJP.” Hillel Rabbi X wrote an email to Chris Carey and Ji Lee, who supervise cultural centers on Friday, January 19 to explain why this is problematic. On Monday, January 22, Chris Carey wrote back to say that the post had been taken down.
32. A Rutgers-Camden law student, who is both Jewish and African-American, had a swastika written with a marker on the door decoration (a sign made by an RA for each resident with their name on it) on her residence hall door on November 24, 2023, and again on January 20, 2024. The most recent incident of vandalism also had n****r written below the swastika.
33. On January 18, the Center for Security Race and Rights posted on Instagram about the Canary Mission, saying it is “funded secretly by Jewish Americans and foundations” and that “organizations like AIPAC contribute to the immunity of Israel to investigations.”
34. January 24, 2024 - protest - students tools they are now all Palestinians, the speaker extols the virtues of them dying for the cause. “You are the resistance on behalf of the Palestinians. Dying as a martyr...is one of the greatest sacrifices YOU can do...”
35. Anti-Israel posters were found taped to the windows of James Dickson Carr Library over the weekend of January 27-28. Response from the library on Monday morning: “The flyers were removed by library staff this morning. Flyers and posters are not permitted to be posted on the



windows of the library. I will bring this to the attention of the Rutgers security guard assigned to the building during weekends and nights."

36. After being removed from running the CLAC social media accounts, Silismar Suriel (program director) commented on her own personal social media accounts, accusing Rutgers of standing on the side of injustice AND spread the antisemitic trope that the university is "ran by Zionists."
37. A postdoc fellow reported flyers on the doors of the Nelson Biology Laboratories (Allison road, Piscataway). The flyers listed "University Faculty & Staff killed in Gaza by Israel" and the non-Jewish postdoc felt that these flyers were biased and inappropriate propaganda pieces. She reported it as a bias incident to the university.
38. On January 27, Jewish students wearing Jewish religious garments were walking down College Avenue. Between the College Ave Student Center and the bus stop, a group of people (presumed to be students) pulled up in their car on the curb next to the students and started yelling "Free Palestine!" This was filed as a bias incident with the university.
39. On February 2, a Jewish student was standing outside of Brower Commons and was verbally attacked, harassed, and repeatedly cursed at by a Rutgers Staff member, Ms. Silismar Suriel, while a plethora of other faculty stood and watched. This was filed as a bias incident by the student and is being referred to the Employment Equity Office.
40. On February 2, during the rally by the Endowment Justice Collective, a student was peacefully protesting across the street. The student wrote: Throughout the protest, I endured repeated instances of profanity and insults from both Rutgers students, as well as particularly hateful comments made by a Rutgers faculty member, Ms. Silismar Suriel. She repeated phrases such as "Fuck you!," "Fuck you, Colonizer!," "Fuck you, Zionist!," and "Read a fucking book!" directed at me in a hostile and threatening manner. This personal attack continued for nearly an hour and persisted even after I put away all protesting material and stayed in the area to simply observe. Despite these and many other violations of Rutgers policies, both Rutgers police and administration conveyed their inability to enforce these rules, claiming, "We can't enforce those rules."

"While I was told by Rutgers faculty that I could only protest 'silently' and without engaging with the other side, they were allowed to hurl insults and threats without repercussion. This double standard not only undermines the principles of free speech and peaceful protest but also perpetuates a toxic environment where certain voices are privileged over others. It is imperative

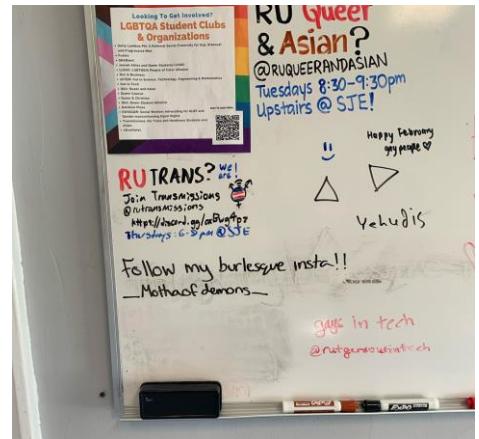


that Rutgers University addresses these issues of unequal treatment and discrimination to ensure a fair and inclusive campus community for all students.

Furthermore, I must highlight the lack of intervention from Rutgers authorities when I was verbally assaulted and threatened with violence by a Rutgers student within proximity to Rutgers Police Department members and university staff last month. Despite my efforts to report these incidents through biased incident reports and follow-ups with RUPD and university administration, the investigations have concluded with no repercussions and ;no further actions at this time.”

51. On January 26, a JAQs (Jewish Allies and Queers) student leader wrote information on the whiteboard at the SJE office about the weekly JAQs meeting time (this is the whiteboard where all queer clubs are advertised. By Feb 7 it had been erased. The student who erased it admitted having been to an SJP/EJC rally and returned to the SJE office wanting to do “something” so they erased the JAQs info. The student met with JAQs leadership via zoom on Feb 16 and apologized for their action of erasing this information.

52. On February 14, a group of Jewish students held a “dialogue” table about Israel across the street from an SJP demonstration. At the end of the SJP demonstration, members of SJP surrounded the dialogue table so that there wasn’t a way to actually have a dialogue. Some of the SJP students made inappropriate comments related to the Holocaust. Jewish students felt uncomfortable and asked university administrators nearby if the conversation could be “shut down” because the Jewish students felt uncomfortable and the administrators declined to take action.



53. On Thursday, February 23, a Jewish student was guarding the installation of chairs at Brower that were set up to bring awareness to the plight of the hostages still in Gaza. The student was there for several hours alone, and towards the end (around 4pm) she was verbally accosted by two male Rutgers students. They were calling her a murderer, complicit in genocide, etc. and only walked away after she started recording them. Apparently RUPD was supposed to be there for the 5 hours prior, but only showed up as she was gathering her things after the incident to come to Hillel. She said she would submit a bias report.

AND FROM THE DAILY TARGUM (the Rutgers student newspaper)

Since 10/7, the Targum has published 23 commentary articles. 17 were about the Israel-Hamas War and its consequences on campus. 11 of those articles centered Palestinian perspectives, and 6 centered Jewish and Israeli ones. Of the 11, four were particularly egregious.

<https://dailytargum.com/article/2023/10/letter-to-the-editor-on-al-ahli-baptist-hospital-tragedy>

“On Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital tragedy”, which repeated the disproven Hamas propaganda that Israel blew up a hospital with 500 civilians inside.

<https://dailytargum.com/article/2023/10/letter-to-the-editor-it-is-time-to-acknowledge-decades-long-palestinian>

“It is time to acknowledge decades long Palestinian struggle”, which supports BDS and heavily insinuates that violent terrorism is an acceptable way to resist Israel’s existence.

<https://dailytargum.com/article/2023/12/letter-to-the-editor-rutgers-faculty-for-justice-in-palestine-releases>

“Rutgers Faculty for Justice in Palestine releases statement” FJP’s statement of principles is antisemitic for a whole slew of reasons, which I can elaborate on if you’d like.

<https://dailytargum.com/article/2024/01/commentary-suspension-of-sjp-rutgers-lack-of-commitment-to-academic-freedom>

“Suspension of SJP, Rutgers’ lack of commitment to academic freedom, necessity for divestment”, which is full of ahistoric anti-Israel and antisemitic disinformation.

<https://dailytargum.com/article/2023/12/abd-elhameed-what-you-need-to-know-about-israel-lobby> they also published this as part of a regular column. this is basically the protocols of the elders of zion modern edition