

Eden Yadegar

Columbia University Class of 2025

Written Testimony

before the

United States House of Representatives

Committee on Education & the Workforce

“Roundtable with Jewish Students Impacted by Antisemitism”

February 29, 2024

“Stunning”. “Astonishing”. “Awesome”. “Jubilant”. “Achievement”<sup>1</sup>.

These are the words that a Professor at my University used to describe the deadliest massacre of Jewish people since the Holocaust.

Chairwoman Foxx and distinguished committee members, thank you for inviting us here today to speak about the crisis unfolding in our American universities. My name is Eden Yadegar, and I am a Junior at Columbia University double majoring in Middle East Studies and Jewish Studies. I am twenty years old, and I am the daughter of American immigrants who fled Iran 45 years ago in hopes of escaping the life-threatening Antisemitism that contaminated their country.

45 years later, my family’s worst fear has been proven true - that the Jew-hatred that forced them out of Iran would confront their children in America.

Today at my university, Antisemitism remains inescapable for its Jewish students.

This semester, I planned to complete my Middle East Studies major requirement with a course on Israel. However, I could not, because the only course available was one taught by a Professor whose recently published article argues that, “The question being debated is no longer whether the Israeli government is racist, fascist, or genocidal, but whether a majority of Israeli Jews also fit those descriptions<sup>2</sup>.” This being the same Professor who referred to the massacre of innocent festivalgoers, the kidnapping of babies and the elderly, and the rape of young women just like me as “stunning,” “astonishing,” “awesome,” “jubilant,” and an “achievement.”

But it doesn’t end in the classroom.

- On multiple occasions, Jewish students have been verbally harassed. “F– the Jews”, yelled at visibly Jewish students on campus - within our hallways<sup>3</sup>, in front of our library, and in broad daylight in the middle of campus<sup>4</sup>.
- In our hallways, bulletin boards are smeared with posters promoting age-old Antisemitic tropes depicting Jews and Israelis as animals - in this particular instance, as a skunk.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://electronicintifada.net/content/just-another-battle-or-palestinian-war-liberation/38661>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/how-israels-war-gaza-exposed-zionism-genocidal-cult>

<sup>3</sup> <https://nypost.com/2023/10/30/metro/jewish-columbia-students-slam-universitys-inaction-against-antisemitism/>

<sup>4</sup>

<https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2023/11/02/i-am-a-target-dozens-of-jewish-students-report-feeling-unsafe-on-campus/>

- When putting up informational flyers about Hamas in her Barnard dorm hall, one student overheard a group in the bathroom saying, “Did you guys see the posters people put up about Hamas? We should find them and hurt them...” “Yeah, kill them,” someone responded.
- On the anonymous, Columbia-only social media platform Sidechat, peers suggested labeling local shops that support Israel’s right to exist “with a star of David from the Israeli flag.”
- “F– her,” a classmate commented on another post under my name and photo, mocking me for speaking about the hostile campus climate.
- Another Columbia student “sincerely hope[ed] that “any IDF veterans here (and that includes [name redacted] die a slow death”.
- One peer posted “PLEASE what is the antisemitism on campus??? The only thing I've heard is someone drawing a swastika on a bathroom stall. If that’s it y'all wouldn't survive a public high school in ny it's f–ing grafiti not at all comparable to anti-Palestinian attacks.”
- A swastika was found in the bathroom of the International Affairs Building at the School of International and Public Affairs<sup>5</sup>.
- The president of Columbia funded student club LionLez promoted a club event about Black lesbian films with the note, “it’s FREE PALESTINE over here, Zionists aren’t invited.” She followed up to a concerned club member with an email noting that, “White Jewish people are today and always have been the oppressors of all brown people,” “WHEN I SAY THE HOLOCAUST WASN’T SPECIAL, I MEAN THAT;” and “Israelites are the Nazis.” Though the club was suspended, the student received an honor from Columbia’s Office of Multicultural Affairs upon graduating<sup>6</sup>.
- When a clip of a Columbia student giving an emotional speech on campus about how she had lost loved ones in the October 7 terror attack on Israel went viral on TikTok, she started receiving an influx of threatening messages from unknown numbers. One message

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<https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2023/10/30/swastika-found-drawn-in-international-affairs-building-restroom/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.college.columbia.edu/awards>

said, “Have fun with those crocodile tears b\*tch?” The same student was spit on while speaking Hebrew on the phone while walking to class.

- Across campus, my peers protest for “death to the Zionist state,<sup>7</sup>” chant that “there is only one solution,” an “intifada revolution,” justify terrorism as “resistance by any means necessary,” and scream that “we don’t want no two states, we want all of it<sup>8</sup>” during unauthorized protests that the University does not regulate, despite the numerous ways in which they violate university event policy. Earlier this month, unauthorized protestors shattered the door of Columbia’s Butler Library<sup>9</sup>. Despite the suspensions of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), the groups continue to host frequent events, including protests, while the University remains complicitly silent.
- At the School of Social Work, an unauthorized “teach-in” event intended to explain the “significance of the October 7 counteroffensive” took place in the lobby of the building. Despite the fact that the event took place without school approval and occupied the center of the building in violation with university policy, Columbia provided the event attendees with umbrellas so that they could continue on with the event while keeping their identities hidden from people passing by or recording. Columbia simultaneously asked Jewish and Israeli students and faculty to leave the building, or barred them from entering altogether<sup>10</sup>. This type of blatant discrimination is effectively endorsed by Columbia University against its Jewish students.
- Meanwhile, when I inquired with the university and with campus safety about organizing a silent display through Students Supporting Israel (SSI) without adhering to the three week approval window, I was told that, “Should you move forward, there will likely be individual and student group accountability.” We did not move forward with the event or with any unsanctioned events.
- Trucks reading “Israel is the new Nazi Germany,” and, “Daily Reminder: Israel steals Palestinian organs” have circled around Columbia’s campus. Holocaust inversion is not only dangerous as it warps history and cheapens the experiences of Holocaust victims, but also because it actively paints Jewish and Israeli students in America as villainous Nazis deserving to be isolated, discriminated against, and punished.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://x.com/ShaiDavidai/status/1761848391355580594?s=20>

<sup>8</sup> <https://x.com/ShaiDavidai/status/1757586275484242079?s=20>

<sup>9</sup> <https://x.com/ShaiDavidai/status/1757586280819368313?s=20>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=5zNMK35B.I6E>



- Following the announcement of the new Antisemitism Task Force, a student overheard a conversation in which a Columbia-affiliate said, “These f–ing Zionists. Can’t believe they are saying there is antisemitism on campus” in the dining hall at the Teacher’s College.
- When the Antisemitism Task Force sent an email inviting all students at the School of General Studies, both Jewish and non-Jewish, to a listening session in which students could share their experiences on campus and give feedback to the Task Force, it was mocked and met with disgust. On Sidechat, students commented “Ewww brotha ewww (how about a listening session on how to not infringe on our 1st amendment rights instead??)” alongside a screenshot of the email. Another posted, “Please start registering for the antisemitism task force tickets to take them all and then don’t show up,” and “What are they gonna listen to?” No other minority group would be expected to invite others to share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences about the oppression of said minority group, let alone mock and dismiss it entirely.
- Barnard College invited Hatem Bazian, who has openly stated that “it’s about time we had an intifada in this country<sup>11</sup>,” to speak at Barnard’s “Day of Dialogue”.
- In a letter published on October 9, just two days after the October 7 massacre, by Columbia SJP and JVP, they refer to the attack on Israel as “an unprecedented historic moment” and a “counter-offensive.” The letter condemns “obfuscat[ing] Palestinian resistance as ‘terrorism,’” and claims to “stand in **full solidarity** with Palestinian resistance<sup>12</sup>.”
- Within Columbia/Barnard Hillel, the hub of Jewish life on campus, the coffee maker frequented by students was defaced with a sticker reading “LONG LIVE the PALESTINIAN ARMED STRUGGLE”.
- Unreprimanded, violent rhetoric leads to physical violence. One Jewish student was attacked with a stick outside of the library<sup>13</sup>. Another was surrounded by an angry mob, and threatened to “keep f–ing running” during an anti-Israel protest<sup>14</sup>.

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<https://freebeacon.com/campus/columbia-defends-inclusion-of-anti-semitic-terror-defender-in-universitys-day-of-dialogue/>

<sup>12</sup> [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RcXX5DEO3yfJ9R4ksURnzpIPCyVxo575-Y-SoC\\_vZFk/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RcXX5DEO3yfJ9R4ksURnzpIPCyVxo575-Y-SoC_vZFk/edit)

<sup>13</sup> <https://nypost.com/2023/10/12/israeli-student-attacked-outside-columbia-university-library/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://jewishinsider.com/2024/02/jewish-student-at-columbia-attacked-while-leaving-a-pro-israel-demonstration/>

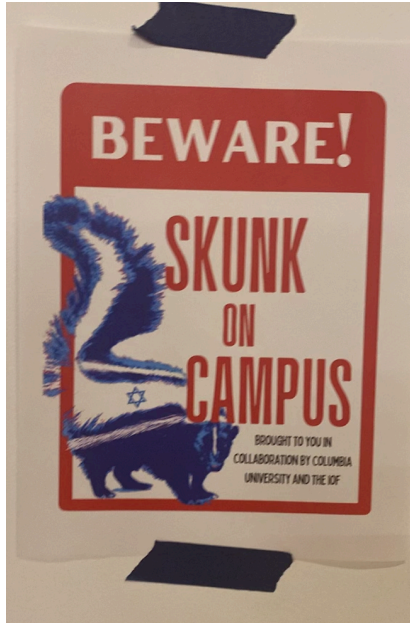
It is impossible to exist as a Jewish student at Columbia without running face first into Antisemitism every single day. Jew-hatred is so deeply embedded into campus culture, that it has become casual and palatable among students and faculty, and neglected by administrators.

“In Thy light shall we see light.” I was drawn to apply to Columbia University four years ago in hopes that their motto would become my reality. That the light of my peers, professors, and administration would illuminate my path. But that reality could not be further from the truth. At Columbia University, the Jewish community is alone. We are ostracized, mocked, harassed, assaulted, and scapegoated, simply because of our identities. Students have removed their *kipot* and Jewish star necklaces for fear of becoming a target on campus. We cautiously map the routes we take to class to avoid being yelled at, spit on, accused of committing genocide, or threatened by calls for genocide. We have received no support from our administration, and minimal from our non-Jewish professors and the majority of our non-Jewish peers.

Well I have a message for anyone seeking to silence us: We are not Jews with trembling knees! We are proud Jews who carry with us the tradition of resilience in the face of persecution, and we will not be silenced.

In the tradition of our ancestors, we will continue to be inclusive and empathetic of all people, regardless of their hatred for us. I am proud and grateful to be a first generation American at Columbia University, but I am horrified by the fact that the same Jew-hatred that drove my family to the United States has become normalized here at my university.

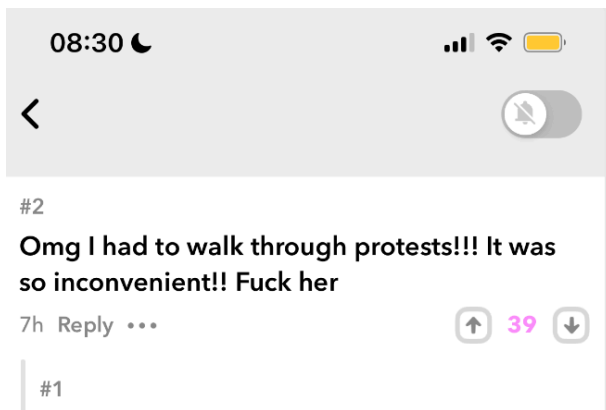
I thought coming to Columbia would enable me to pursue the American dream in the same way my parents did when moving to this country. Instead, it has turned into a nightmare.



Poster on Columbia's campus.



Texts received by a Columbia student following a viral speech she made on campus.



Sidechat commented under a post another student uploaded including my full name and face.



Columbia/Barnard Hillel hub for Jewish student life vandalized.

The email from former LionLez President to a club member who pointed out the injustice in her initial announcement that “Zionists aren’t invited” to a club-hosted film screening:

From: <REDACTED>  
Date: Sat, Oct 21, 2023 at 2:05 PM  
Subject: Re: ONE WEEK: BLACK LESBIAN FILM SCREENING  
To: <REDACTED>  
Cc: <REDACTED>

First they came for the Black people  
And I did not speak out  
Because I am not Black.  
Then they came for the Indigenous people  
And I did not speak out  
Because I am not Indigenous.  
Then they came for the Asian people  
And I did not speak out  
Because I am not Asian.  
Then they came for the Jews  
And there was no one left  
To speak out for us.

Can you read between the lines of this poem? white Jewish people are today and always have been the oppressors of all brown people, just like every other white subgroup. white supremacy is so extreme that even AFTER they (white Jews included) violently went after ALL brown people, they then looked around the room of just themselves and said hmm who is the most different looking here...? And it was the Jewish people! So that means Olivia, and I'm gonna touch your hand when I say this, WHEN I SAY THE HOLOCAUST WASN'T SPECIAL, I MEAN THAT. You got a lot of nerve coming into a Black person's inbox talkin bout "I'm afraid of brown people as a white Jew"

With all the information available to us, the only people who support "Israel" are very stupid and/or very racist. Stop looking at the news' interpretation of primary sources and look at the primary sources themselves. C'mon aren't we scholars? Look at eye.on.palestine on Instagram. Look at social media from people actually on the ground (that includes 0 Zionists, they in the air dropping bombs). No, white Jewish people in Palestine are not dying on a large scale. No, none of the white Jewish people you're referring to are from "Israel," colonizer settlers don't just suddenly "come from" where they forced their way into. No, no one cares how much a white girl cries anti-semitism when we say stop the genocide.

Did you know that only white Jews are allowed to live in "Israel"? So if you had/have a cousin that shared your Jewish grandma and grandpa, but their other parent was Black, that cousin wouldn't be able to go to Israel with you? LionLez is run by people of color. For it to be a safe space for people of color, Zionists (all of whom are white supremacists) are not invited. Ever.

Germany, the government who recently orchestrated the Holocaust and is still anti-semitic to this day, supports Israel. Have you thought about why? Could it be that if Jewish people have a new enemy (the Palestinians), Germans might no longer be held responsible for reparations to Jewish people? Could it be that Israel supports both their white supremacist agenda of ethnic cleansing of brown people AND their anti-semitic agenda of making Jewish people look bad? Britain and the US have admitted to manipulating white Jews' trauma to get a foothold in the Middle East for political and economic gain.

Hamas only exists because of Zionists' cruelty. Zionists have taken Palestinian hostages for 75 years, so Hamas took hostages for a prisoner exchange to get their family members back. They fought back and killed a handful of people after a 75-year ongoing genocide that's killed hundreds of thousands. This is not a war. "Israel" is the sole aggressor. Israelites are the Nazis.

Every religion has religious extremists. Christian religious extremists are called fundamentalists. Muslim religious extremists are called al Qaeda. Jewish religious extremists are called Israelis and Zionists.

You and your white supremacy are also not invited.

**STOP THE GENOCIDE! FREE PALESTINE! FUCK ISRAEL**

## ‘I am a target’: Dozens of Jewish students report feeling unsafe on campus



By [Arielle Shternfeld](#) / Columbia Daily Spectator

Members of the Jewish community have created a buddy system to help their peers feel safer while walking on campus.

BY [REBECCA MASSEL](#) • NOVEMBER 2, 2023 AT 1:28 AM

*Updated on Nov. 2 at 7:00 p.m.*

*Editor’s note: This article deals with topics of harassment and violence.*

After Stav, GS '24, spoke at a Oct. 10 [Students Supporting Israel rally](#), a video of her speech about Israel’s “deep understanding of the sanctity of life” was posted on [TikTok](#) and, to date, has garnered nearly a million views. In the ensuing days, Stav said she received numerous phone calls and aggressive texts from unknown numbers she has since blocked, including messages such as “Had fun with those crocodile tears bitch?” and “YOU'RE THE TERRORIST,” according to screenshots reviewed by Spectator.

“I don’t need to risk myself getting this in the physical world. This is enough for me to understand that Columbia has no ability to protect me or its Israeli students and Jewish students,” Stav said in an interview with Spectator. “I know I’m a target to some people in this University, and I’m not going to go there.”

Since the escalation of violence in Israel and Gaza, Spectator has interviewed over 50 Jewish students, some of whom were Israeli. Of those interviewed, 34 reported feeling unsafe on campus since Hamas’ unexpected attack on Israel on Oct. 7. Thirteen students said that they personally experienced incidents where they felt attacked or harassed, either in-person or online. Ten students reported avoiding or fully staying off campus at some point since Oct. 7. Twelve students said they tried to hide or veil their Jewish identity when walking around campus. Seventeen students said they have been negatively affected or offended by Columbia-affiliated online spaces.

Most of the students spoke on the condition of anonymity due to safety concerns, and most have been identified by their first or first and last initial.

### **‘We don’t feel safe, we don’t feel heard’**

On Oct. 12, the Columbia chapters of Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace co-organized a protest and Students Supporting Israel organized a counterprotest, drawing hundreds of affiliates to South Lawn.

That morning, E, BC ’26, said she was hanging posters of the names and photos of Israelis that Hamas has [reportedly](#) taken as hostages outside the Diana Center when someone ripped down her posters and screamed at her, “You are caging my people.” At the SSI counterprotest, E.W., SEAS ’27, said that while wearing an Israeli flag across her back, protestors yelled at her and told her she was “a murderer.” She said she removed her flag and tried to discreetly leave.

“[They] started yelling at me, and I was afraid that I was going to be attacked,” E.W. said.

A.P., GS ’23, said that when he was leaving the same protest and entering the 116th Street subway station, a woman ripped his Israeli flag from his back and threw it over the railing of the subway stair banister.

Around 1 a.m. on Oct. 11, D.I., GS/JTS ’26, an Israeli student who was wearing a Star of David necklace, said that a person repeatedly yelled “Free Palestine” at him while he was outside of Butler. According to D.I., when he asked the individual why he was yelling, the person responded, “Because you are a Jew,” and pointed at his necklace.

The person began yelling, “Fuck the Jews,” multiple times. D.I. and two of his friends, F.S., CC ’27, and S.S., CC ’27, who were both eyewitnesses to part of the incident, said. D.I. then asked his friends to record the incident, at which point the person did not repeat any comments besides “Free Palestine.” In the video, reviewed by Spectator, the person could also be heard saying, “I thought you were going to show the Star of David. Show off your necklace.”

“I, personally, was not fearful of the guy, at least. I wasn’t worried for my safety,” D.I. said. “But I am worried for the overall safety of Jews on this campus.”

G, GS ’24, said that when he and I, GS ’24, were walking from Lerner Hall to Low Steps on Oct. 8, a person spat at them while they were speaking in Hebrew. The person said, “I know what you just said about me,” according to G. The person then said, “I swear to God, if it wasn’t two of you right now,” according to I. They reported the incident to Public Safety, whom G said called back the next day, telling them that the person was not a Columbia student.

N.S., GS ’24, also said she notified Public Safety expressing general concerns about the safety of Jewish students on campus on Oct. 11, but she was “frustrated” with Public Safety’s response.

“The [Jewish] community is coming together, which has been so amazing, but also just going after the University for all this antisemitism and frankly, neglect of Jewish students,” she said.

Ten students said they raised awareness to their respective deans, most asking them to release a statement condemning the attacks in Israel.

“It’s very tense for Jews,” J.B., BC ’26, said. “We don’t feel safe, we don’t feel heard, we don’t feel like the school is behind us or stands with us. We feel alone and we feel shame.”

M, GS ’24, who formerly served in the Israel Defense Forces, said that on Oct. 24, frustrated and upset with the ongoing tensions on campus, he asked the office of the dean of students to take his classes on Zoom for the rest of the semester. He said when they couldn’t accommodate his request and instructed him to check with professors, he stood at the Sundial with a poster that read, “Columbia doesn’t care about the safety and wellbeing of Jewish students” for four hours with a group of other students.



Abe, GS '24, who was standing in a group of at least five people, including M, said an individual walked by and yelled, "Fuck Israel." Abe said that when someone mentioned the posters were not about Israel but rather about Jewish students, the individual responded, "Fuck the Jews." M corroborated both of these statements.

Abe reported the incident to Public Safety, who he said responded on Oct. 30 that they could not share any details regarding whether they'd identified the individual.

"I'm sitting with people that, beyond just a political disagreement of 'you don't like the Israeli government,' it goes to, 'I don't like you, I hate you because you're Jewish,'" Abe said. "It's a scary place to be in."

Nearly 20 students said they were affected by posts on Columbia-affiliated online spaces. According to screenshots obtained by Spectator, Israeli students were told to "say goodbye to your friends, like we had to," in a School of General Studies group chat. A photo of partially undressed people was also sent into the group with a caption, "This is how Zionist jews came to palestine, half naked, without anything.. This is how they are going to leave too."

"They were threatening our lives, without any doubt. It feels like the war, it's not only in Israel," L, GS '26, said, referring to the General Studies group chat. "There is no question, this is not politics. This is not politics, this is our right to be human beings."

J.S. said a comment on a Barnard College [Instagram post](#), which read, "you guys are a money hungry institution that gets their fundings from Zionists. Shame on you. Sell-outs!!" made her feel unsafe.

A student who is a former Israeli army soldier said that a Sidechat post hoping that all Israeli military veterans at Columbia would "die a slow death" and calling out a current Israel Defense Forces soldier by name made her feel "horrified and scared."

"To know that there are people at Columbia University, one of the best schools in the world, that are so intellectually bankrupt that they can justify the massacre to civilians to themselves and then call for people like me to be killed, and these are my fellow students, that is what scares me," she said.

Columbia, as an academic institution, is "supposed to be the minds and leaders of the future," Eden, GS/JTS '25, said. Instead, she said, "we're resorting to centuries-old antisemitic tropes that ultimately got our people put into gas chambers."

“It’s not something that we can really take lightly,” she added.

These reports from students came in conjunction with the [alleged assault](#) of a Jewish Israeli School of General Studies student on Oct. 11 in front of Butler Library, which the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office has charged as a hate crime, a [swastika](#) drawn in the International Affairs Building on Oct. 27, and inflammatory online comments toward Jews and Israelis posted on Instagram, Sidechat, in WhatsApp group chats, and by email since the escalation of violence in Israel and Gaza.

### **‘I’m scared to walk back because I’m Jewish’**

A dozen students said that they have avoided campus as much as possible since Oct. 7, and some students said they missed classes because they felt that attending could pose a safety concern, especially during the Oct. 12 protests.

S, GS ’26, said she stayed in her dorm room for three days following the Oct. 12 protests, missing Shabbat services and classes “because it just feels very unsafe.” Although S said she generally speaks Hebrew, she now avoids using the language when walking outside and instead speaks in English or Spanish.

“The fact that there are so many students who are (a) protesting and (b) who are silent, who don’t say anything, it shows me how unsafe I should feel on this campus and how much hatred there is for my people,” a BC ’26 student, who went home from Oct. 12 through Oct. 16 due to fear for her safety, said.

A dozen students said that they have tried to hide their Jewish identity when walking on the street, including hiding jewelry related to their Jewish heritage—like a Star of David necklace—under their shirts or removing it completely.

Y.A., BC ’24, said she feels “scared” to walk around campus with anything that identifies her as Jewish. S, BC ’24, said that when walking to the Kraft Center for religious services on Shabbat on Saturday, her husband removed his yarmulke, and she carried a phone on Shabbat—which is against her religious practices—“for the first time ever” because she was nervous of what could happen when walking near campus being “identifiably Jewish.”

“I took off a necklace that had my Hebrew name on it, and I took off my ring that had a Star of David on it,” Y.A. said. “I genuinely fear for my safety, because anyone who could justify the brutal murder of my family is someone who would justify the murder of me.”

A.S., GS/JTS '26, said that, due to widespread safety concerns, he started a buddy system following the Oct. 12 protests. Through the system, those who feel unsafe walking alone on campus during the night or day can temporarily join and text in a group chat of around 15 designated walkers. One of the walkers will meet the student where they are and accompany them to their location.

“There’s always been this idea of ‘It’s dark outside in New York City, I don’t want to walk home at night,’” A.S. said. “But this is a very different way. I’ve never felt that before, from ‘I’m scared to walk back because I’m Jewish.’”

**‘It was one of the most jarring, scary things I have ever seen’**

Multiple students who spoke to Spectator cited the Oct. 12 protest as a catalyst for some of their fears. Although the protests were largely nonviolent, there has been an increased presence from the New York Police Department and Public Safety officers on and around campus since then.

Toward the end of the rally, SJP and JVP protesters moved down Broadway to 115th Street. Public Safety and the NYPD “responded to the Kraft Center,” which “already had Public Safety and NYPD officers present,” according to an email sent by Brian Cohen, executive director of the Kraft Center for Jewish Student Life. The front doors of the Kraft Center, located on 115th Street between Broadway and Riverside Drive, were locked, and students were advised to stay in the building until the protest dispersed at 7:20 p.m.

M.S., BC '26, said it felt “extremely unsafe and scary and threatening” when the doors were locked at the Kraft Center, which she described as “the place for Jews to go.” Eleven students said the protest’s proximity to the center or the locking of the center’s doors made them feel unsafe.

“I was hit with the reality that I sit in class with a lot of people who seemed like they wanted harm to be inflicted upon me, which was just very scary,” B.W., BC '24, said. “It was one of the most jarring, scary things I have ever seen, and I was genuinely scared for my safety in that moment.”

SJP wrote in a statement to Spectator that it was “shocked and saddened by the email released by Hillel that implied that we were marching toward the Kraft Center.” The organization wrote that most SJP members are unaware of the location of the center and that on Oct. 12, the protestors walked around the periphery of campus, escorted by the NYPD.

“To release a public statement insinuating that SJP and JVP’s protest intended to threaten or endanger Jewish students at the Kraft Center simply because we walked in a circle around campus is not only dishonest, but dangerous,” SJP said. “The statement further neglects to mention that the 10/12 protest was co-organized by Jewish Voice for Peace.”

In a separate statement, JVP wrote that it was “alarmed” by the closure of the Kraft Center, “especially considering the sheer distance between the protest and the center.”

“Furthermore, we simply marched on a public city street near our campus,” the group wrote. “We can not posit any explanation for the closure, as it was extremely clear the only reason the protest was on 115th street and Broadway in the first place was to reenter campus through the only gate made available to us, which we then had to wait several minutes in front of to be let in.”

In a statement to Spectator, Cohen wrote that the protestors “violated University policy by leaving their designated protest space in front of Butler Library. They proceeded up the Low Steps, back down to College Walk, exited out the Amsterdam gate, turned down 114th Street towards Broadway, and then proceeded to march northbound on Broadway. SJP and the other students in the protest stopped on the campus side of 115th and Broadway, up the block from the Kraft Center for Jewish Student Life.”

“When I arrived in the Kraft Center’s lobby from my office, 8-10 NYPD officers and the same number of Public Safety officers were in front of the Kraft Center. Someone from security had already ordered the front doors of the Kraft Center to be locked,” Cohen wrote. “We were asked by security officials to advise students to stay in the Kraft Center until the protestors moved. Eventually, SJP and the protestors went back onto campus and we informed students that they were safe to leave the Kraft Center.”

### **‘This isn’t the safest campus’**

Y.A. said that for the past three years, people unaffiliated with the University assumed that the institution has “so much antisemitism on campus,” but she always defended it, citing the different Jewish organizations she proudly tabled for in Lerner or on College Walk. Yet, after the tensions on campus these past few weeks, Y.A. said she would tell prospective Jewish students that “probably this isn’t the safest campus for them.”

A, CC '26, echoed a similar sentiment, saying that when people unaffiliated with the University ask her whether there is an “antisemitic” atmosphere at Columbia, she used to “strongly” rebuff them. After the past weeks, however, A said that she feels that in the future, she will no longer be able to unequivocally say that Columbia’s atmosphere is not antisemitic.

Other students, specifically Israelis, said that they have never felt safe sharing their country of origin.

D.M., GSAPP '25, said that last year, on the first day of class, when she shared that her family was from Israel, a professor responded, “So you must know a lot about settler colonialism. How do you feel about that?” When she shared her heritage with a different professor, D.M. said the professor told her, “It’s such a shame that your people survived just in order to perpetuate genocide.” After those two incidents, she said she has tried “to eliminate Israel from the equation because people just freak out and treat me different.”

Students also said they feel ostracized by their friends or different club associations outside of the Jewish community.

“Never in my life have I felt more alienated or isolated within this University, both by the administration and by my peers,” S.M., CC '26, said. None of her friends without ties to Israel have reached out to her to ensure that her friends and family are safe, she said. S.M. also said she has seen “unjustifiable and atrocious” social media posts by her peers that “ Hamas is validated in their behavior, and that their actions in Israel are merited.”

Other students mentioned that they did feel support from their friends outside of the Jewish community or with no affiliation to Israel. S.L., SEAS '24, expressed gratitude for messages she has received from friends checking in to ask about her well-being after the initial attacks.

“I have felt very supported,” she said. “I really appreciated that.”

### **The Task Force on Antisemitism**

On Nov. 1, three and a half weeks after the antisemitic posts and incidents began, University President Minouche Shafik, Barnard President Laura Rosenbury, and Teachers College President Thomas Bailey announced in an email to the University

community that they are establishing a Task Force on Antisemitism “to enhance our ability to address this ancient, but terribly resilient, form of hatred.”

“We are taking this step as part of a commitment to ensuring that our campuses are safe, welcoming, and inclusive for Jewish students, faculty, and staff, and all of us,” they wrote.

On Oct. 18, Shafik wrote in an [email](#) to the Columbia community that many students, faculty, and staff have been “suffering great distress” and “expressed concern about [their] personal security,” especially those “whose lives have been directly affected.”

“Unfortunately, some are using this moment to spread antisemitism, Islamophobia, bigotry against Palestinians and Israelis, and various other forms of hate,” Shafik wrote. “I have been disheartened that some of this abhorrent rhetoric is coming from members of our community.”

On Oct. 27, Shafik sent an additional email regarding recent antisemitic incidents on campus.

“When hate speech or incidents violate University rules, it will not be tolerated and will be referred for disciplinary action in accordance with our policies,” Shafik wrote. “These disciplinary actions are already underway and we will continue to use every available tool to keep our community safe.”

University spokesperson Ben Chang said in a statement to Spectator that there “is no greater priority than the safety and wellbeing of our community.”

“We have taken a number of measures to reinforce campus safety since October 7. These include working with our partners in the NYPD and other security agencies to assess threats and employ heightened security and safety protocols when necessary,” Chang wrote. “We will continue to offer support to and work with our students, faculty, and staff to ensure everyone feels safe on our campus and in our community.”

Over the past weeks, there have been multiple antisemitic incidents across college campuses around the country, including a Jewish student attacked at [Tulane University](#) on Oct. 26 and online threats and a lockdown at the Kosher dining hall for students’ safety at [Cornell University](#).

**‘The entire campus should be a safe space for Jewish students’**

While students have been struggling with mourning for their friends and family in Israel and a charged atmosphere on campus, many reported finding solace at the Kraft Center, Chabad at Columbia University, and from student-led programming—like the buddy system—to strengthen and bring together the Jewish community.

“In all these different ways, whether through the Hillel, or through the student supportive initiatives, or really just little mentions, it’s really just holding up the Jewish community in a very hard time,” R.H., BC ’26, said.

Still, Jewish students are pushing for more from Columbia and its students, hoping to feel safe throughout campus and not just dedicated Jewish spaces.

“It’s great that the Kraft Center has been there for us and has been so supportive, but it’s not enough for just the Kraft Center—the Jewish student life center—to be our only safe space,” Elisha Baker, CC ’26, Columbia representative in Hillel International’s Israel Leadership Network, said. “The entire campus should be a safe space for Jewish students, including the classroom and the quads.”