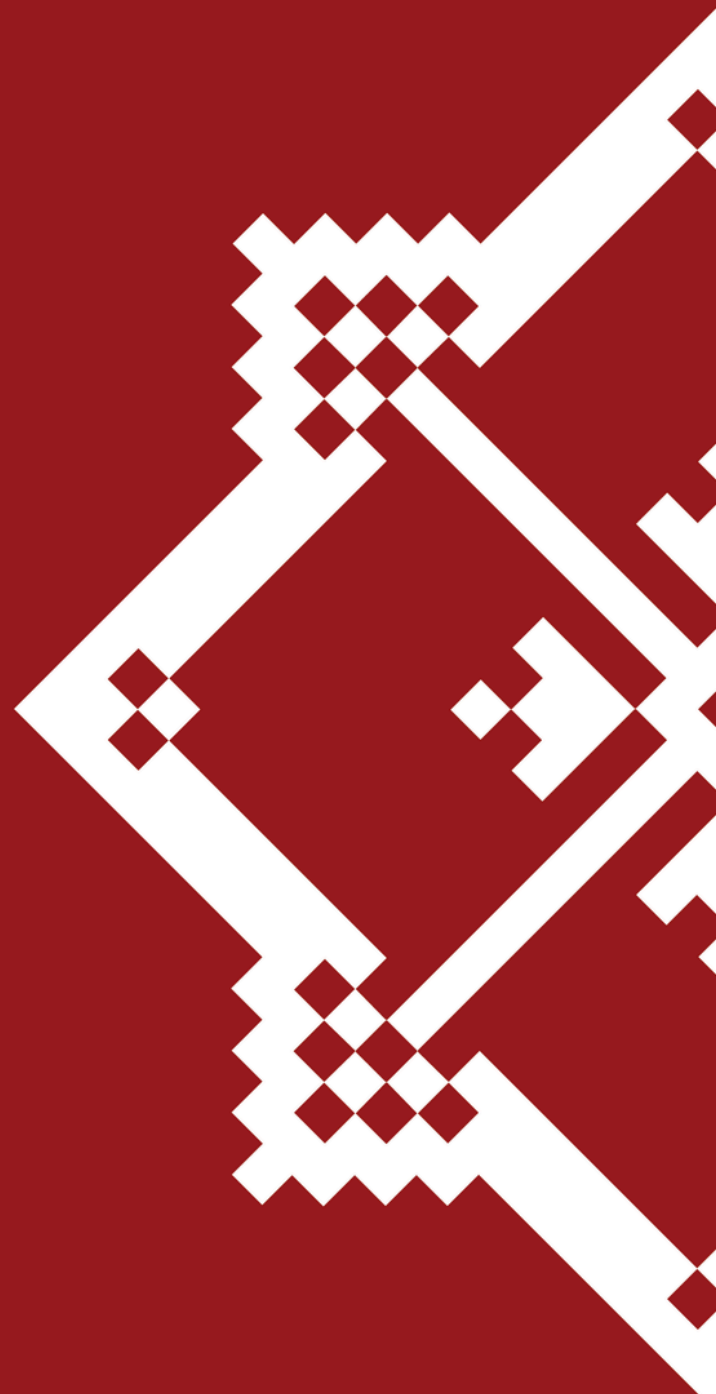




THE INSTITUTE FOR THE UNDERSTANDING  
OF ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM



# **Guide for K-12 Educational Institutions**

**to Counter Anti-Palestinian Racism**  
from the Institute for the Understanding  
of Anti-Palestinian Racism



THE INSTITUTE FOR THE  
UNDERSTANDING OF  
ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM

**NOTE:** This guide is intended for educational purposes to promote awareness and discussion about anti-Palestinian racism. The information presented reflects the nonprofit's educational perspective, not any political position, and may not represent the views of every school or partner organization. It is offered as a voluntary resource for educators and students to encourage respectful discussion and critical thinking. This guide does not constitute legal advice or counseling services.



THE INSTITUTE FOR THE  
UNDERSTANDING OF  
ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM

## **Anti-Palestinian Racism**

is a form of cultural racism<sup>[1]</sup> that  
“silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes,  
defames or dehumanizes Palestinians  
or their narratives.”

---

[1] Refers to the normalization and centering of white cultural norms in institutions, often reinforced by stereotypes that marginalize people of color. For more, see References.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	5
Selected Forms of Anti-Palestinian Racism	5
Recommendations for Countering Anti-Palestinian Racism in K-12 Schools	7
Conclusion	22
Summary of Recommendations	23
References	24
Appendices	25



## BACKGROUND

---

Anti-Palestinian racism is an under-recognized, pervasive, highly prevalent form of cultural racism. We at the Institute for the Understanding of Anti-Palestinian Racism (IUAPR) are working to raise awareness of this form of racism. All forms of racism have impacts on health and well being. The student and educator data emerging from our research shed light on the pervasive character and detrimental effects anti-Palestinian racism has on students, teachers, and education administrators in our schools. We hope that this guide, and the recommendations below, can contribute to building an environment in which all students can meet their full potential free from discrimination, harassment or bias.

The IUAPR released our survey findings focused on students and educators in November 2024. As many of us at the Institute are physicians and psychologists, it concerned us to determine the extent of the harm to mental and physical health caused by witnessing and experiencing anti-Palestinian racism. The results were astounding and more pervasive than expected.

Students do not exist in a vacuum, they exist in community and have awareness of world events. The murder of 6 year old Wadea Al-Fayoumi, the shooting of college students Hisham Awartani, Kinnan Abdelhamid, and Tahseen Ali Ahmed, and the drowning attempt of a 3 and 6 year old in Texas are some of the prominent examples they may be aware of. These acts of violence all took place in the US.

**Anti-Palestinian racism affects both Palestinians (27% of survey respondents) and non-Palestinians (73% of survey respondents).**

**74%** of responding students, faculty, teachers and education administrators reported experiencing anti-Palestinian racism. **2/3 of these** experienced it from teachers or administrators. **>75%** of students reported mental and physical health effects such as fear, anxiety, depression, hypervigilance, difficulty concentrating, insomnia, headaches, body pain, fatigue, and nausea. The numbers were even higher for educators. **What is clear is that our students and our teachers are feeling isolated and alone, and are experiencing harm.**

**Anti-Palestinian Racism is distinct from Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism, and it impacts people regardless of their race, religion or ethnic background. The majority of survey respondents were Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, no religion, or another religion.**

## SELECTED FORMS OF ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM

---

### 1. Erasure:

Erasure commonly takes the form of denying the existence of Palestine and Palestinians as a people, denying the Nakba<sup>[1]</sup>, or failing to acknowledge Palestinians as Indigenous to occupied and historic Palestine. Erasure may also involve excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, or exclude Palestinians and their allies. This often upholds a Palestine exception<sup>[2]</sup> to freedom of speech.

---

[1] Nakba (Arabic for "catastrophe") refers to the mass expulsion/ethnic cleansing of over 700,000 Palestinians during Israel's establishment in 1948. It marks the loss of Palestinian homes, land, and life, and is widely recognized as a foundational historical trauma in Palestinian collective memory. For more, see References.

[2] The "Palestine Exception" describes how advocacy for Palestinian rights is often treated as an exception to free speech norms. For more, read [The Palestine Exception to Free Speech](#).



## **2. Justification of violence against Palestinians:**

This involves rationalizing the use of violence against Palestinians. Justification of violence is closely tied to the dehumanization of Palestinians or characterizing Palestinians as lacking basic human emotions such as not caring for their children. It also may involve erasing the human rights, equal dignity, and worth of Palestinians, or even threatening violence.

## **3. Defamation:**

Defamation involves smearing those who support Palestinian human rights or Palestinians through the use of stereotypes that depict Palestinians as inherently antithetical to mainstream Western society. Defamation involves claims that Palestinian rights movements are motivated by hate or antisemitism. This "othering" of Palestinians involves slander or an assumption that Palestinians (and their allies) are inherently antisemitic, terrorist threats/sympathizers, opposed to democratic values, uncivilized, misogynistic, homophobic, or otherwise inherently biased.

**The Palestinian identity is always at the core of anti-Palestinian racism,  
even when it affects non-Palestinians.**

---



# 01

## **Recommendations for Countering Anti-Palestinian Racism in K-12 Schools:**

---

Institution-wide faculty, staff, and student education on anti-Palestinian racism should be required, and should be provided by an organization qualified to speak on Palestinian human rights. Ideally, where there is a union, including the union in developing such education would be advised.

[Principle: Facilitate opportunities for student support, identifying student-led organizations, identifying safe spaces, providing professional development for educators]



## PROBLEM

---

Anti-Palestinian racism is a pervasive, widespread, and under-recognized form of cultural racism. Ignorance of this type of racism leads to a lack of allyship, fear of speaking up, and fear of sharing one's own Palestinian identity or support for Palestinian human rights, and contributes to poor mental and physical health of students and faculty. When administrators make attempts to address discrimination, they may put out overly broad statements, such as on Islamophobia, while neglecting to obtain input from the community in question. **(Collapsing the Palestinian identity into the non-equivalent overarching term of Islamophobia effectively erases the diverse community of Palestinians, many of whom are Christian, Druze, Jewish, another religion or no religion.)** Palestinian people and Palestinian advocacy organizations must be included in any educational development addressing anti-Palestinian racism, and schools should also carefully screen workshops and organizations to ensure they do not perpetuate anti-Palestinian racism.

## EXAMPLE

---

A school administration is asked to create an antisemitism statement and a statement on protest regulations. They include Islamophobia guidance without input from the Muslim community. Such a statement causes harm as it pits two religious communities against each other by holding them in opposition, erases Palestinians through conflation of a diverse community with a single religious group, and has no affected community involvement or outreach in the creation of the statement. This is anti-Palestinian racism in the form of erasing human dignity and excluding Palestinians and advocates of Palestinian human rights. By leaving Palestinians out of the process, the administration removed their agency to shape policies that directly affect their rights and safety.

## SOLUTION

---

Institutions are encouraged to provide anti-Palestinian racism education and workshop development for administrators, students and educators on a regular and recurring basis within the lines of their annual anti-racism curriculum. The education should be provided by an organization or individuals qualified to speak on Palestinian human rights and in consultation with the affected community. IUAPR recommends anti-Palestinian racism educators that are well versed in the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association's [Anti-Palestinian Racism Naming, Framing and Manifestations Report](#). Workshops should include information on how harassment or discrimination based on national origin, including a student's actual or perceived Palestinian identity or association with Palestinian advocacy, is prohibited. Additionally, facilitating opportunities for student support such as identifying student-led organizations, safe spaces, and mentors can lead to community building and mutual respect that increases the health of individuals. Identifying areas for further professional development for educators around anti-racist work can help move the needle in a positive direction toward safer, more inclusive, supportive, and fair school environment for students of all backgrounds.

## EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS

---

In the American Psychological Association Convention 2025, the [Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict and Violence: Peace Psychology Division](#) hosted a workshop titled Cross-Racial Solidarity Resisting Anti-Palestinian Racism: Accomplice Actions and Development. The session featured testimonies from diasporic Palestinians, findings from a qualitative study on accomplice development, and direct challenges to the "Palestine exception." Presenters connected the conversation to existing anti-racist frameworks and emphasized that promoting justice is central to psychological well-being and healing.





# 02

## **Recommendations for Countering Anti-Palestinian Racism in K-12 Schools:**

---

Include Anti-Palestinian Racism in anti-bullying and harassment policies, and include protections against bullying of students and staff from other educators, faculty in positions of power, and outside community members.

[Principle: Support social, emotional, physical and mental health of all students]



## PROBLEM

---

Students do not exist in a vacuum—they exist in community and have awareness of world events. The murder of 6 year old Wadea Al-Fayoume, the shooting of college students Hisham Awartani, Kinnan Abdelhamid, and Tahseen Ali Ahmed, and the drowning attempt of a 3 and 6 year old in Texas are some of the prominent examples they may be aware of. The deaths in the Occupied Palestinian Territories due to violence by munitions, starvation, dehydration and denial of medicines and childhood immunizations are ever present. Furthermore, when our children observe any violence against children here or elsewhere, and witness silence or justification from trusted adults and political leaders, a lesson is already in the making. When those lessons are carried into school, they can show up as bullying. A child's racial or ethnic identity can make them more vulnerable to it, and the impact can be especially damaging to their health and well-being.

Two-thirds of our survey respondents at the university and college level reported witnessing anti-Palestinian racism from faculty and administrators, and others in positions of power. Outside anti-Palestinian groups have been known to dox students for human rights activism. Even politicians threaten and make unfounded accusations against students for their involvement in human rights activism. **Anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies are often inadequate to protect students from attacks coming from adults in positions of power, or that originate outside the institution.**

## EXAMPLE

---

A Palestinian mother finds a text message on her son's phone threatening him with a firearm emoji, stating "I will f\*\*\* you up like the Palestinians." She states, the bully is not a bad kid, he is listening to the messages we are receiving. This is the water we are swimming in.

## SOLUTION

---

Specific inclusion of anti-Palestinian racism is critical to anti-bullying and harassment policies. These policies exist to protect all of our students from discrimination. The social, emotional, physical and mental health of ALL students must be protected. We recommend against zero-tolerance policies<sup>[1]</sup>, as ample evidence shows such policies to be particularly harmful to students of color and are not effective. **We DO recommend the school safeguard against attacks coming from anti-Palestinian groups originating from outside the school community, including potential doxxing of students, physical attacks from outside extremist groups, or unfounded accusations originating from politicians seeking to advance political agendas through harassment of Palestinians and advocates for Palestinian rights.** Increased policing of nonviolent student protests is **not** advisable and is antithetical to student safety. Our institutions have the obligation to ensure a safe learning environment for all students. There is an incredible opportunity here to help students learn how to effectively advocate for Palestinian human rights.

## EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS

---

The Council on American Islamic Relations released a [national guide](#) for university administrators that names anti-Palestinian racism directly and calls on schools to protect students' rights to speech and protest. The guide affirms that difficult conversations and cultural expression should not be censored, and that institutions have a responsibility to address anti-Palestinian racism alongside other forms of discrimination.

---

[1]Research shows zero-tolerance policies disproportionately impact students of color and are ineffective at improving student climate. See References for more information.



# 03

## **Recommendations for Countering Anti-Palestinian Racism in K-12 Schools:**

---

Name Anti-Palestinian Racism in communications

[Principle: Foster a sense of belonging]



## PROBLEM

---

Communications from state agencies have humanized Jewish Israeli victims of violence while ignoring Palestinian or Palestinian citizens of Israel victims of violence. Communications have called out antisemitism and Islamophobia as if these groups are somehow opposed or pitted against each other. Collapsing the Palestinian identity into the related but non-equivalent overarching term of Islamophobia effectively erases the diverse community of Palestinians, many of whom are Christian, Druze, Jewish, another religion, or no religion. **Such communications contribute to dehumanization and erasure of Palestinians by suggesting that their mere existence is somehow antithetical to another group.** This framing suggests that protection is a zero-sum game, pitting groups against each other and contributing to a hostile climate.

## EXAMPLE 1

---

School administrator reaching out to Jewish staff to support them, while simultaneously instructing staff that the word "Palestinian" should not be sent over email for fear of public records requests. This sent a clear message to staff that speaking about Palestinian community members, students or staff who may need support in a traumatic time is somehow unacceptable or unprofessional and should be hidden. Palestinian staff and students often feel the need to hide their Palestinian identity due to discrimination, and this messaging further reinforces an atmosphere of fear. There should be no double standard to human life and recognition of suffering.

## EXAMPLE 2

---

A Palestinian mother of a 3rd grade student in a large public school district approached her child's teacher about reading a children's book about Palestine as a form of cultural preservation. She was told by the teacher that she would need to check with the principal since there "are a few Jewish kids in the class" (equating education about Palestine with antisemitism). The principal dismissed her for months, despite repeated attempts at scheduling a meeting. When she was finally afforded a meeting with the principal and vice principal, they said they "we're not going to take sides" and that she would need to create a curriculum and have it approved by the district to visit her son's classroom. This mother asked if parents who come to classrooms to talk about Diwali or Hanukkah or other cultural practices were required to create a curriculum, to which the principal claimed she did not know that parents were doing that, despite that being the case in her son's classroom. When she asked if she could speak to or provide resources to teachers about Palestine, she was ignored. When she asked if teachers needed to create a curriculum and receive approval to discuss the Ukraine/Russia conflict, which was widely discussed at her son's school at the start of the conflict, she was again dismissed. During their meeting, the principal mentioned that while this does not reflect her personal stance, she fears repercussions for speaking about Palestine and referenced a colleague at a nearby major public university who lost their job for showing solidarity with Palestinians. This speaks to the censorship and racist double standards Palestinians and allies face in public education.

## SOLUTION

---

A positive and inclusive school climate is a principle that is basic to creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive school environment. Schools can foster a positive environment by welcoming each culture represented in school communities. **Naming anti-Palestinian racism in communications fosters a sense of belonging,** that Palestinian students and those who care about human rights for all community members are seen, heard, and belong. Welcoming education and resources provided by parents in the



community who are part of marginalized identities, and particularly the Palestinian identity, is of immense value to students. We strongly recommend administrators educate themselves about the Palestine Exception to Free Speech and guard against it in all actions, activities, conferences, and communications. Implying that the offers of education by a parent about the Palestinian narrative are somehow against any other group or inherently antisemitic constitutes the form of anti-Palestinian racism that is defamation through the assumption that Palestinians are inherently hateful, violent, or antisemitic.

## EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS

---

Ann Arbor Public Schools passed a resolution calling for a ceasefire and encouraged educators to hold discussions with students about the Israel-Palestine crisis. A Palestinian board member shared: "This resolution says that kids who have names like mine are seen, heard and valued."



# 04

## **Recommendations for Countering Anti-Palestinian Racism in K-12 Schools:**

---

Schools must safeguard free speech and foster students' ability to learn about difficult topics while protecting them from discrimination and harassment.

[Principle: Support nondiscrimination, fairness, dignity, and First Amendment protections including protections against viewpoint discrimination]



## PROBLEM

---

There is pressure from anti-Palestinian groups exerted on schools to remove symbols or phrases they deem as hate speech, however the effect is often simply to remove Palestinian cultural symbols, historic maps, or other representations based on unquestioned and pervasive anti-Palestinian racism. Such anti-Palestinian efforts draw unfounded connections between symbols important to Palestinian culture, and support for terrorism or hate speech. There is also anti-Palestinian messaging targeting schools pressuring them to remove references to human rights abuses by Israel, for example referencing "Apartheid," or "genocide." It must be stated that criticism of a foreign government does not constitute hate speech. The ACLU has called for universities to "reject calls to investigate, disband, or penalize student groups on the basis of their exercise of free speech rights." Palestinian advocacy is also frequently dismissed as "political speech" and excluded on that basis despite being rooted in identity, human rights, and protected expression.

## EXAMPLE 1

---

A staff member is called in to the administrator's office because another staff member complained about her watermelon pin being a symbol of hate. The watermelon, indigenous to Palestine, also took on national significance to express solidarity when the very colors of the national flag were banned by Israeli occupation authorities in past decades. The false assumption that a watermelon represents an attack or hate for any other group is based in anti-Palestinian racism, in particular the form of anti-Palestinian racism which constitutes defamation through a stereotype that Palestinians are inherently violent or hateful.

## EXAMPLE 2

---

The mother of a child had her school volunteer status revoked for wearing a shirt that said "Free Palestine, Free Gaza". The revocation of her volunteer status prohibits her from escorting her child, who has ADHD and documented learning disabilities (which is being met with an IEP and a behavior plan), on class field trips and from art docent activities that she had previously engaged in. Other children told her child that she was not welcome in their homes for a school-related book club activity. The principal arranged for her daughter to participate in activities at the district rather than the local level. The mother and child were discredited, silenced, and subjected to exclusion and erasure. This reflects anti-Palestinian racism, rooted in the assumption that advocating for Palestinian freedom and rights is inherently linked to hate and violence.

## EXAMPLE 3

---

Within the classroom, students may be told certain words or phrases are not permitted as they may be deemed "offensive." Such words or phrases tend to include acknowledgement of potential genocide against Palestinians, or refer to the Nakba or ethnic cleansing of historic Palestine. At events or demonstrations, one may hear "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." This slogan has been attacked by anti-Palestinian groups who claim it to be a call for violence or ethnic cleansing; this association with violence is predicated on a false assumption that Palestinian freedom necessitates violence against others.



#### EXAMPLE 4

---

A high school student participated in a silent walkout in support of Palestine and Gaza. The administration initially approved the action and asked students to submit their protest signs for review. All submitted signs were approved. However, the principal later reversed this approval and informed students that certain terms such as “genocide,” “murder,” and “river” would be prohibited from their posters. Please see the principal’s email below:

*“Photos of the posters made on Friday were shared with Jewish community leaders. I have been directed to you that a) the posters with the words genocide, river and murder cannot be carried, and b) that they will be confiscated at the event if they are there.*

*The message you intended to send with this walkout has been changed, intentionally or not, to be one of divisiveness and fear. It is tearing apart our school community. If the protest were off of school grounds it would be different - but the fact is that if it is interpreted as hate speech it becomes treated as hate speech.*

*My strong suggestion and direction is that the focus be on peace and that the silent walkout is a vigil for those who have died, rather than a rally. This is so important. Please comply with these directions so that it doesn't become even more damaging to our student body. It is now out of control and resulting in harassment toward adults who work in our school.”*

#### SOLUTION

---

A call for Palestinian freedom is a call for basic human rights. The false assumption that a call of “Free Palestine” represents an attack or hate for any other group is based in anti-Palestinian racism, in particular the form of anti-Palestinian racism which constitutes defamation through a stereotype that Palestinians are inherently violent or hateful. The Palestinian people deserve freedom, human rights, and self determination just as any other people.

When individuals are accused of making inherently antisemitic comments simply for mentioning human rights violations that have been described by credible human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, Israel’s most respected human rights organization B’tselem, and Human Rights Watch in addition to the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, International Court of Justice, and a US federal court judge, it contributes to an atmosphere of fear and division. Many are concerned that they also may be falsely accused, targeted, or threatened simply for standing up for Palestinian human rights.

Free speech in the classroom and a positive learning environment that fosters difficult conversations can indeed occur. We encourage staff and students to question and learn why, for instance, the watermelon is used as a symbol of solidarity in response to the Palestinian flag being banned by authorities, and the history of the British mandate map of Palestine, the homeland of the vast majority of Americans of Palestinian origin. These are only two examples among many other culturally rich symbology that one may come across and engage with in the classroom in a positive way. Denial of genocidal acts against the Palestinian people should not be permitted. Denial of the Nakba should not be permitted. Genocide education should include education about the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people in 1948 and since. Guard against using definitions equating criticism of a government with hate speech, such as the IHRA definition of antisemitism, which is being used to limit discourse and critical thinking about current day ethnic cleansing events.





The IHRA definition has been discouraged from use by the American Bar Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, and even by the definition's original author, Kenneth Stern. Instead, we encourage a rights based approach to education.

**From the ACLU and Palestine Legal:**

*"We are concerned that the reference to the IHRA definition in the ABA resolution would undermine the ABA's own ability to engage on key issues related to Palestinian rights, including in support of human rights defenders who are increasingly under attack."*

**EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS** 

---

**American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)**

*"We use our platform as the world's largest pediatric organization to speak out against violence, hate, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and enmity toward Jews, Muslims, Israelis, and Palestinians and to speak up on behalf of all children suffering in armed conflict."*



# 05

## **Recommendations for Countering Anti-Palestinian Racism in K-12 Schools:**

---

Establish dedicated support services and messaging for individuals affected by anti-Palestinian racism.

[Principle: Support capacity for teachers and students]



## PROBLEM

---

A significant number of students and educators surveyed in IUAPR's national study reported feeling isolated and alone in their concern for Palestinian human rights. Among student respondents, 68% reported feeling isolated, and 60% were afraid to speak out about conditions in Gaza or broader human rights issues. This silence is not just emotional. 75% also reported experiencing negative mental or physical health impacts, including fear, anxiety, depression, and insomnia.

This raises concern that students may avoid turning to campus mental health services, sensing that their experiences with anti-Palestinian racism may not be recognized or taken seriously. The data suggests that this is not a marginal issue, but a widespread and harmful climate that can affect well-being and belonging across campuses.

## EXAMPLE

---

A counselor has reported that the student who is utilizing her counseling services most frequently is a Jewish student who is distraught by the violence against Palestinian children, and who feels isolated and alone in her distress.

Even when counseling and support services are available, students and allies affected by anti-Palestinian racism may feel these services do not fully recognize, understand, or validate their experiences. Without visible acknowledgement and outreach that affirms their concerns, students can feel marginalized within their school community, which can deepen their sense of isolation and discourage them from seeking help.

## SOLUTION

---

We encourage school leaders to denounce the targeting of student organizations advocating for Palestinian rights, and ensure Palestinian students, teachers, and their allies are welcome. Schools must reaffirm their commitment to the free exchange of ideas and reject efforts to limit Palestinian students access to academic opportunities or free expression. School administrators and staff can attend Palestinian community events, including events centered on Palestinian culture, heritage and social justice. Mentors, support staff, and counselors should undergo education about anti-Palestinian racism, familiarize themselves with the various forms anti-Palestinian racism can take, and learn about the long term physical and mental health effects of racism in general so that they are able to meet the needs of affected individuals. These workshops should be supported by school resources as capacity building professional development.

## EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS

---

Since October 2023, thousands of educators, students, and families across the U.S. have taken public action to stand with Palestinians and those who advocate for their rights. According to Harvard's [Crowd Counting Consortium](#), more than 3,700 days of protest have taken place across over 500 U.S. campuses, school sites, and districts, many led by students and educators.



# 06

## **Recommendations for Countering Anti-Palestinian Racism in K-12 Schools:**

---

Implement clear reporting mechanisms for bullying and harassment, including education about Title VI and Title VII protections

[Principle: Ensure all are treated with dignity and respect through systemic policies and staff development]



## PROBLEM

---

All forms of racism go under reported, not least because students, families, and educators may not trust the institutional ability to handle such reports appropriately. If harassment occurs, the individuals tasked with investigating and protecting students and staff may not have the education necessary to understand anti-Palestinian racism. When incidents are addressed incorrectly, students are left unprotected and sometimes may even be blamed for the harassment itself, and the resulting hostile environment makes teaching and learning impossible.

## EXAMPLE 1

---

A student of Palestinian origin, who was subjected to anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab harassment due to national origin, was told by the school administrator responsible for protecting students from such harassment that this particular type of harassment did not fall under existing protections. The administrator at first ignored the student's email. When a meeting was asked for by a supportive teacher, the administrator then clarified that because it was not race based discrimination, they did not believe it to fall under a protected class. This incident demonstrates anti-Palestinian racism. By dismissing the harassment as outside existing protections, the administrator denied the student's right to be safeguarded from discrimination tied to national origin or perceived association. The decision left the student unprotected, diminished their identity, and undermined their well-being.

## EXAMPLE 2

---

A public school educator who identifies as Palestinian was called a terrorist, told that she deserved to die, and to "go back where [she] came from." She has received threats of physical harm at her place of employment, and her family has received threats to their safety. Right-wing bloggers in her area lobbied to get her and other Palestinians fired from their jobs. Please see her letter in Appendix 1. The use of dehumanizing stereotypes portraying Palestinians as violent, antisemitic, or dangerous creates a hostile environment, fuels targeted threats, and can lead to professional and social exclusion.

## SOLUTION

---

Complaints of discrimination against Palestinian students or associated individuals must be taken as seriously as they would be for any other type of harassment. Clear reporting guidelines should be communicated to the entirety of the student body, teachers and staff. Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act both protect against discrimination due to national origin, and perceived national origin or close association with a particular group. It is incumbent on university and college leaders to respond to incidents of harassment in a manner that 1) explicitly condemns the incident and explains what steps the school will take to address the situation, 2) describe specific support available for Palestinian community members and allies, and 3) establish clear expectations for treatment of others tied to the institution's mission. Information should be made available regarding escalation to the Office of Civil Rights in the event that harassment is not dealt with appropriately.

## EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS

---

The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights entered into a resolution agreement with George Washington University following complaints filed by [Palestine Legal](#) on behalf of Palestinian students. The agreement required GW to revise protest and nondiscrimination policies, educate staff on Title VI



obligations, and clarify that shared Palestinian, Arab, South Asian, Muslim, Jewish, and Israeli ancestry are all protected.

## CONCLUSION

---

The Institute for the Understanding of Anti-Palestinian Racism welcomes requests for educating, vetting anti-Palestinian racism educators and consultation. We welcome questions that may arise and look forward to supporting your institution's efforts towards eliminating all forms of racism. Please find us at our website [www.iuapr.org](http://www.iuapr.org).

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: ---

- **Institution-wide faculty, staff, and student education on anti-Palestinian racism should be required, and should be provided by an organization qualified to speak on Palestinian human rights. Ideally, where there is a union, including the union in developing such education would be advised.** [Principle: Facilitate opportunities for student support, identifying student-led organizations, identifying safe spaces, providing professional development for educators]
- **Include Anti-Palestinian Racism in anti-bullying and harassment policies, and include protections against bullying of students and staff from other educators, faculty in positions of power, and outside community members.** [Principle: Support social, emotional, physical and mental health of all students]
- **Name Anti-Palestinian Racism in communications** [Principle: Foster a sense of belonging]
- **Schools must safeguard free speech and foster students' ability to learn about difficult topics while protecting them from discrimination and harassment.** [Principle: Support nondiscrimination, fairness, dignity, and First Amendment protections including protections against viewpoint discrimination]
- **Establish dedicated support services and messaging for individuals affected by anti-Palestinian racism.** [Principle: Support capacity for teachers and students]
- **Implement clear reporting mechanisms for bullying and harassment, including education about Title VI and Title VII protections** [Principle: Ensure all are treated with dignity and respect through systemic policies and staff development]



## REFERENCES

---

### ON CULTURAL RACISM:

1. Coghburn, C.D. (2019). Culture, race, and health: Implications for racial inequities and population health. *Milbank Quarterly*, 97(3), 736-761. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0009.12411>
2. Lathan, N. (2023, September 11). Cultural racism worsens health inequities between racial groups. UC Berkeley School of Public Health. <https://publichealth.berkeley.edu/articles/spotlight/research/cultural-racism-worsens-health-inequities-between-racial-groups>
3. Michaels, E. K., Lam-Hine, T., Nguyen, T. T., Gee, C. C., & Allen, A. M. (2023). The water surrounding the iceberg: Cultural racism and health inequities. *Milbank Quarterly*, 101(3), 768-814. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0009.12662>
4. Kids Help Phone. (2020, October 28). Cultural and systemic racism: What are they?. <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/cultural-and-systemic-racism-what-are-they/>
5. Trying Together. (n.d.). Anti-racism tools. <https://tryingtogether.org/community-resources/anti-racism-tools/>

### ON ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES:

1. End Zero Tolerance <https://www.endzerotolerance.org/>
2. Bell, C. (2015). The hidden side of zero tolerance policies: The African American perspective. *Sociology Compass*, 9(1), 14-22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12230>
3. Curran, F. C. (2016, April 4). Reducing racial disparities in school discipline requires more than eliminating "Zero Tolerance" policies. Scholars Strategy Network. <https://scholars.org/contribution/reducing-racial-disparities-school-discipline#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Zero%20Tolerance,that%20shape%20discipline%20in%20schools>
4. Ford, S. (2021). Learning while Black: How "Zero Tolerance" policies disproportionately affect Black students. *University of Florida Journal of Law & Public Policy*, 32(1), 49-70. <https://scholarship.law.ufl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1387&context=jlpp>
5. Welch, K., & Payne, A. A. (2018). Zero Tolerance School Policies. *The Palgrave International Handbook of School Discipline, Surveillance, and Social Control*, 215-234. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71559-9\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71559-9_11)
6. U.S. Department of Education, Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive and Fair School Climates, 2023. <https://eacsouth.org/guides-and-tools/guiding-principles-for-creating-safe-inclusive-supportive-and-fair-school-climates/>

### ON NAKBA DENIAL:

1. Institute for the Middle East Understanding. (2023, April 5). Quick facts: The Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe). <https://imeu.org/article/quick-facts-the-palestinian-nakba>
2. Institute for the Middle East Understanding. (2013, May 8). The Palestinian Nakba & establishment of the Israeli apartheid. <https://imeu.org/resources/resources/timeline-the-palestinian-nakba-catastrophe-establishment-of-israeli-apartheid/146>
3. Imseis, A. (2024, May 17). The Nakba and the UN's permanent responsibility for the question of Palestine [Panel discussion]. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), United Nations Headquarters, New York, United States. <https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Ardi-Imseis-2024-The-Nakba-and-the-UNs-Permanent-Responsibility-for-the-Question-of-Palestine.pdf>
4. The Institute for the Understanding of Anti-Palestinian Racism <https://antipalestinianracism.org/research-resources/>
5. Institute for the Middle East Understanding. (2007, May 9). In their own words: Israeli leaders on the expulsion of Palestinians during Israel's establishment. <https://imeu.org/article/what-leading-israelis-have-said-about-the-nakba>
6. Project 48. Curriculum overview. <https://project48.com/curriculum-overview/>
7. Palestinian Youth Movement. Our history of popular resistance: Palestine reading list. <https://palestinyouthmovement.com/reading-list>





THE INSTITUTE FOR THE UNDERSTANDING  
OF ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM



# Appendices



## APPENDIX 1

---

Sample Letter of Parent to Government Official:

**Letters written directly to a U.S. Senator:**

**Letter 1: Palestinian Educator**

Dear Senator [redacted],

I am anonymously sharing my story with you. I am fearful of continuing to share my name in public spaces as I've been doxxed. I am not the only Palestinian that has been doxxed, and, while there is a law that attempts to address the implications and immense harm doxxing causes, it still protects the perpetrators who inflict that harm.

I work in public education and solely because I have been identified as Palestinian, I have been called a terrorist, I've been told that I deserve to die, I've been told to "go back where I came from", I've received threats of physical harm at my place of employment, and my family has received threats to their safety. There are so-called "journalists" in the [redacted] who continue to try to get me fired, and other Palestinians, from our jobs. They've made inflammatory and defamatory statements and have written articles about myself and fellow Palestinian community members. The amount of racial discrimination I have experienced in the last 4 months (both as a public employee and as a human in the world), shows me that the state [redacted] lives inside a "progressive" bubble where marginalized identities are not as protected as privileged ones. My story is just one of many. Not only are we grieving the immense loss and continued genocide of our people, we are also trying to live our day-to-day lives in conditions that don't actually protect us.

Please continue to advocate for and alongside your Palestinian constituents, go to communities and ask questions. Please do what is right and just, our democracy depends on it.

-

Kindly,

A Palestinian Educator



## APPENDIX 2

---

Quotes regarding the IHRA definition:

**From the American Civil Liberties Union and Palestine Legal:**

"We are concerned that the reference to the IHRA definition in the ABA resolution would undermine the ABA's own ability to engage on key issues related to Palestinian rights, including in support of human rights defenders who are increasingly under attack." — Letter from ACLU, Palestine Legal, Center for Constitutional Rights, et al. to ABA co-sponsors, leading to IHRA removal from Resolution 514

**From the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU):**

"The objective behind the promotion of the IHRA definition is the suppression of non-violent protest, activism, and criticism of Israel and/or Zionism... The IHRA definition has been used consistently (and nearly exclusively) not to fight antisemitism, but rather to defend Israel and harm Palestinians — at the cost of undermining and dangerously chilling fundamental rights of free speech, freedom of assembly and protest, and academic freedom." — ACLU letter to ABA, January 2023

**From Kenneth Stern, original author of the IHRA definition:**

"It was drafted primarily as a tool for data-collectors, not as a definition to be codified into law or speech codes and used as 'a blunt instrument to label anyone an antisemite.' ... Which is more important? To build consensus around the need to address antisemitism with a statement that people can support regardless of their views on the Israel-Palestine or the complicated matter of where Israel fits in Jewish identity? Or a statement that endorses IHRA, picking a side in a contentious political battle and inevitably undercutting what you're trying to achieve?" — Kenneth Stern, December 2022



THE INSTITUTE FOR THE  
UNDERSTANDING OF  
ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM

**IUAPR**  
**P.O. Box 36**  
**Sebastopol, CA 95473**  
[info@iuapr.org](mailto:info@iuapr.org)  
[www.iuapr.org](http://www.iuapr.org)