

Statement by the JCC in Support of a Justice Committee Review of Antisemitism

December 13, 2023

The Standing Order tabled by Anthony Housefather, Member of Parliament for Mount Royal, calling for the Justice Committee to undertake "a study on the issue of antisemitism and the additional measures that could be taken to address the valid fears that are being expressed by Canada's Jewish community" is both timely and necessary.

The escalation in antisemitism in Montreal and particularly on university campuses since the terrorist attack on Israel by Hamas is alarming.

Shots have been fired at the Talmud Torah Elementary School and the Yeshiva Gedola Merkaz Hatorah school, and Congregation Beth Tikvah synagogue and the office of Federation CJA were firebombed.

And the Jewish Community Council has not been spared. On November 27th a Molotov cocktail was thrown into the entrance way of our offices in the middle of the night following a meeting with our local Members of Parliament.

Not surprisingly, our children are frightened, and many are anxious to go to school. Similarly, families are worried about their safety and security and reluctant to attend services at synagogues across our City.

The situation on university campuses is no better.

Debate has been raging for days on social media as to whether a Palestinian supporter at Concordia was caught on video calling a Jewish student a "k**e" or a "c**t." A lecturer at the University of Montreal was caught on camera telling a Jewish student at Concordia to "go back to Poland" and calling her names. A proposed class-action lawsuit accuses Concordia and its student union of creating a safe space for antisemitism on campus over decades, leaving students and faculty psychologically scarred.

From our conversations with students, faculty and parents, we can assure you that these examples are the tip of the iceberg.

Jews in every corner of the globe are currently gathering with family and friends to mark Chanukah, the festival of lights. We are lighting the menorah to remember the great miracles from G-d and celebrating the courage of the Maccabees and our ancestors who stood up for the Torah, our values and beliefs.

Today our hope is that Members of Parliament will show leadership by decrying the increase in antisemitism from coast to coast to coast while at the same time identifying and implementing measures that will ensure the safety and security of members of our community. Together we must strive to build a tolerant and inclusive Canada.

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