

LETTER TO CHANCELLOR LOFTIN RE: SWASTIKA ON CAMPUS

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin
Office of the Chancellor
105 Jesse Hall
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO 65211

November 5, 2015

Dear Chancellor Loftin,

We are 36 organizations representing hundreds of thousands of people who are very concerned about the safety and well-being of Jewish students at the University of Missouri. Many of our organizations wrote to you last spring expressing our concern over two separate incidents of antisemitic graffiti discovered at MU, as well as over an Honors Tutorial entitled "Perspectives on Zionism" which was scheduled to be taught in the Fall of 2015 by MU Biology professor George Smith, a well-known anti-Zionist.

We are writing to you today because we are troubled by [reports](#) of a swastika drawn out of feces, which was found on the wall of a bathroom in Gateway Hall on October 24.

While we applaud Residence Halls Association President William Donley, an MU student, for releasing a statement strongly condemning the vandalism and labeling it antisemitic and "an act of hate," we are dismayed that neither you nor any other MU administrator has yet to publicly address this act of blatant antisemitism, which clearly targets Jewish students and causes them to feel threatened and unsafe.

We know that just last month, the morning after MU students were harassed by someone using racist and hateful speech, you issued a [vigorous condemnation](#) of the incident, even sharing with the campus community a recorded message expressing your outrage over what had happened and your commitment to "end hatred and racism at Mizzou". You also described substantive steps, including educational initiatives, that your administration would be taking to address the problem of racism on your campus. We commend you for your prompt, vigorous and comprehensive response to this act of racism. At the same time, we urge you to treat blatant acts of anti-Jewish bigotry, such as a swastika smeared in feces on a dormitory wall, no less promptly, vigorously and comprehensively.

In addition, just as the MU Equity Office has acknowledged that certain kinds of expression constitute [microaggressions](#) that can cause members of targeted racial, ethnic and gender groups to feel discriminated against and harassed, it is no less important to acknowledge that certain kinds of anti-Israel expression that demonize and delegitimize the Jewish state and call for its elimination not only create a hostile environment for many Jewish students, but may foster acts of blatant antisemitism such as swastikas.

Of particular concern in this regard is the departmental sponsorship and implicit ideological endorsement of virulently anti-Israel events. For example, in November 2014 a talk by [Saree Makdisi](#) calling for the elimination of the Jewish state was sponsored by 6 MU departments along with the University Lectures Committee and the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative; in April 2015 a panel discussion entitled "[Palestine in Context](#)," during which MU Professor George Smith called for an end to Zionism, was sponsored by one MU department; and "[Racism in Israel](#)", an upcoming talk by noted anti-Zionist David Sheen, who [compares](#) Israeli Jews to Nazis, is being sponsored by two MU departments. Pope Francis, President Obama, British Prime Minister Cameron and French Prime Minister Valls have all stated that denying Israel's right to exist, as some departmentally-sponsored MU speakers have, is antisemitism.

We encourage you to demonstrate unequivocally your commitment to protecting Jewish students no less than other students on your campus, by doing the following:

- Swiftly, forcefully and publicly acknowledge that swastika graffiti is an act of antisemitism and will not be tolerated on campus.
- Publicly commit to educating University staff, including campus police, in identifying antisemitism and antisemitic hate crimes.
- Formally adopt the [U.S. State Department's definition of antisemitism](#) to fully and accurately identify all future acts of hate toward Jews and draw the distinction between acceptable criticism of Israel's policies and calls for the destruction of Israel which are unquestionably antisemitic and breed additional antisemitism.
- Allocate resources and publicly commit to educating students about antisemitism and anti-Jewish discrimination.

Thank you for considering our recommendations. We look forward to working with you to protect Jewish students at the University of Missouri.

Sincerely,

Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)
Alums for Campus Fairness
AMCHA Initiative
American Institute for Jewish Research
Americans for Peace and Tolerance
BEAR: Bias Education, Advocacy & Resources
Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law
Club Z
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA)
CUFI on Campus
David Horowitz Freedom Center
Davis Faculty for Israel
Eagles Wings
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)
Fuel For Truth
Hasbara Fellowships
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel
Iranian American Jewish Federation
Israel Peace Initiative (IPI)
Jewish Law Students Association at UCLA
Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA)
National Conference on Jewish Affairs
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations
Project Genesis
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East
Sigma Alpha Epsilon Pi
Simon Wiesenthal Center
StandWithUs
Students and Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism
Students Supporting Israel at UCLA
Students Supporting Israel at University of Missouri
The Israel Christian Nexus

The Israel Group
The Israel Institute
Training and Education About the Middle East (T.E.A.M.)
Zionist Organization of America

Cc: Board of Curators
Garnett S. Stokes, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Mizzou Hillel Director