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Dear Police Services Board,

The last 10 months of non-stop hateful protests in Toronto that have blocked major roads, Jewish neighbourhoods, and damaged personal and public property need to stop. Protest is a right but it needs to be peaceful and hate-free.

As a Jewish citizen in Toronto, I am not feeling safe and I am particularly upset by the number of antisemitic incidents at schools and synagogues. I think they are a result of these protests that are making it "acceptable" to shout hate speech in our city and commit acts that are essentially terrorism towards my community.

Here are my recommendations:

1. Updated police training in both antisemitism and hate crime enforcement so that they can identify it at these protests and arrest appropriately. This includes understanding the historical context, meaning, and impact of antisemitic and genocidal hate speech as well as being able to identify the tactics and symbols used in hate speech and propaganda (including foreign language material). This educational training will show them examples so that they are clear when it occurs. It is essential that the police be given the financial resources to offer this training.
2. Limit protests to locations where there is a clear policy connection to the cause being protested. For example, you can protest high municipal taxes outside city hall, but not outside my house. Likewise, synagogues and Jewish neighbourhoods have little to nothing to do with the Hamas-Israel conflict and should not be allowed as legitimate locations to protest those issues especially when protesters are not even local residents. Ensure that protests do not block roads or people from being able to attend school or work.
3. Many protestors are wearing masks or other items to cover their identities and this empowers them show even more antisemitism, hate speech and hateful acts. We often see that they are carrying hate speech filled signs, climbing on public property such as the Mount Sinai Hospital to harass police and others, and shouting hateful, antisemitic speech. It is important that the police enforce that hiding one's identity while committing a crime such as hate speech is illegal and arrest to reinforce this is not acceptable. The police should have zero tolerance for hate speech.

Sincerely,

Lynne Morris