



The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law is an independent, unaffiliated, nonprofit corporation established to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all.

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Harvard Touts Professor Who Discriminated Against Israeli Students

Brandeis Sends Legal Warning to University Demanding Immediate Action

Washington, D.C. (October 30, 2023): In response to a [complaint](#) from the [Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law](#), made public for the first time today, Harvard University found that a professor at its Kennedy School discriminated against three Jewish Israeli graduate students in violation of Harvard and Kennedy School policies and federal civil rights guidance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. After more than four months, however, not only has Harvard failed to address the anti-Semitism, the school is now publicly touting the professor as a civil rights hero. The Brandeis Center today sent a [strongly-worded legal warning](#) to the University's general counsel, demanding the school take the prompt action it is required under the law.

"This failure, on top of other failures of leadership, have set the stage for the worsening climate that we have seen for Jewish Harvard students since [Oct. 7]," wrote the Brandeis Center, referring to numerous events of late, including the support more than 30 Harvard student groups recently expressed for Hamas, rallies attended by students and faculty celebrating Hamas' barbaric acts, the posting of Hamas paratrooper images to intimidate Jewish students, and the university's own equating of Hamas terrorists and the IDF. "Harvard's failure to speak out against anti-Semitism masked as anti-Zionism has only emboldened the student groups who are now celebrating Hamas' atrocities. The silence needs to end."

Part of the "silence" the Brandeis Center is referring to involves the discrimination and harassment of three Jewish Israeli students, Amnon Shefler, Gilad Neumann, and Matan Yaffe, which took place in Professor Marshall Ganz's "Organizing: People, Power, Change," course over this past spring. The students decided to work together on a joint project that would examine ways to "to harness and unite a majority of diverse and moderate Israelis to strengthen Israel's liberal and Jewish democracy" at a time of division and social strife within their country. The students articulated their purpose as "organizing a growing majority of Israelis...that act in harmony, building on a shared ethos of Israel as a liberal-Jewish-democracy, being a cultural, economic and security lighthouse."

Professor Ganz dismissed their project as illegitimate, demanded they change it, and subjected them to anti-Israel and anti-Semitic bias and discrimination when they refused. Specifically, Ganz told the students they could not use the term "Jewish democracy" as a descriptor for Israel. Ganz demanded they eliminate "Jewish" and "democracy" from their project's stated purpose, stating that an organizing project to promote Jewish democracy was akin to a project promoting white supremacy.

When the students decided to stick with their project as designed, Ganz threatened them with consequences. Professor Ganz admitted he had never told students in any other class that they could not present their work, even when it centered on controversial topics. During the final class, two of Ganz's teaching fellows taught a lesson on how to recruit support for Palestinians. While the topic itself was not objectionable, it led to students making hostile claims, inaccurate characterizations and false accusations against Israel and Israelis. Ganz refused to let the Israeli students provide a response or any counter arguments to the wildly inaccurate data presented.

After the Brandeis Center sent a complaint to the university, this past March, Harvard launched a third-party-investigation, which agreed with the Brandeis Center and [concluded](#) Ganz subjected the students to anti-Israel and anti-Semitic bias and discrimination on the basis of their identities as Jewish Israelis, silenced the speech of the Jewish Israeli students about a topic he viewed as illegitimate, treated the students differently and denigrated them on the basis of their Israeli national origin and Jewish ethnicity and ancestry, and prioritized others' concerns over the Israeli students. The investigator also concluded that Ganz's conduct interfered with and limited the students' ability to participate in and benefit from Harvard Kennedy School's educational program, in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires schools that receive federal funding to respond immediately to discrimination and/or harassment that "negatively affect[s] the ability and willingness of Jewish students to participate fully in the school's education programs and activities." A university "must take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate any hostile environment, and prevent the harassment from recurring."

While Harvard Kennedy School Dean Douglas Elmendorf promptly accepted the investigator's findings as final and [committed](#) to addressing the harassment and discrimination, stating "[w]e need to ensure that the School fulfills these commitments and that the violations of policies that occurred this spring are addressed fully and do not recur," four months later, not only has there been no action to address the anti-Semitism, Harvard is now publicly touting Ganz, who continues to teach there, as a civil rights hero. The latest [edition](#) of the *Harvard Gazette* vaunts Ganz's early civil rights work, making no mention of his recent dishonorable conduct.

"The professor is no civil rights champion when it comes to minorities he personally finds distasteful, namely, Jewish Israelis. He is in fact a civil rights violator, who undisputedly trampled the rights of members of his class without hesitation or apology, denigrating the Students' identity and preventing them from participating fully in his class," wrote the Brandeis Center. "Harvard, it seems, has no genuine intent to address the anti-Semitism on its campus, choosing instead to publicly celebrate a professor who recently subjected Jewish and Israeli students to bias and discrimination."

The Brandeis Center demands Harvard fulfill the commitment it made to address Ganz's discrimination, and eliminate the hostile environment that is snowballing on its campus, as it is required under Title VI. Specifically the Brandeis Center calls on Harvard to commit to university-wide changes, including requiring all faculty and staff to undergo training on anti-Semitism, including understanding that expressing support for the Jewish homeland is a sincere and deeply felt expression of Jewish ethnic and ancestral identity as well as the Jewish religion. The training also must help faculty and staff recognize when anti-Semitism directed at Jewish ethnicity is a concerted strategy to marginalize Jewish students on campus and make them feel unwelcome. The Brandeis Center also demands Harvard publicly acknowledge and renounce Ganz's discrimination and harassment of Israeli Jews and take steps to ensure he and all professors treat Israeli and Jewish students with the same level of respect accorded others.

"Harvard leadership has allowed its campus to run amuck with anti-Semitism for far too long. This outrageous, irresponsible and illegal failure of Harvard's administration to address even undisputed anti-Semitism has paved the way for the problems they are now facing," stated Kenneth L. Marcus, founder and chairman of the Brandeis Center and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education for the Bush and Trump Administrations. "It is high time the university provides the leadership it is required under the law."