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NEW LAWSUIT: ANTI-SEMITISM AND PROLONGED SILENCE OF PRESIDENT KORNBLUTH CREATE “CLIMATE OF FEAR” AT PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITY

Washington, D.C.: [The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law](#), on behalf of Jewish students, researchers and faculty, today sued the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for standing idly by as faculty and students cultivated an environment rife with anti-Semitism and fear. The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

According to the complaint, following the October 7 Hamas attacks, MIT became a breeding ground for hatred, where students celebrated the murderous rampage of October 7, shouted for violence against Jews worldwide, cheered for terror group Hamas, interrupted classes with hateful anti-Semitic chants, urinated on the Hillel building, blocked Israelis and Jews from entering certain areas of campus, and distributed “terror maps” promoting violence at campus locations deemed Jewish.

Through the spring and fall of 2024, a tenured linguistics professor publicly harassed a young Israeli researcher—posting his name, noting he served in the Israeli Defense Forces (as all Israelis do), sharing images, editing videos on social media, and even tagging Al Jazeera—putting the researcher at serious risk. The professor then published an article in a popular European newspaper, Le Monde, in which he further vilified him. As a result, the researcher was aggressively confronted by strangers in various locations, including his child’s daycare and the grocery store. The researcher emailed President Sally Kornbluth expressing fears for his safety and the safety of his family, and requested that the videos be taken down. President Kornbluth never responded, and no action was taken.

President Kornbluth’s silence emboldened that same professor to intensify his assault on Jews. In November of 2024, this professor relentlessly harassed a Jewish student in full view of President Kornbluth and top-level administrators. The professor issued a rapid-fire series of mass emails to his entire department, copying President Kornbluth and other administrators, accusing the student of having a Jewish “mind infection” and threatening to use him as a “real-life case study” in a class the professor was teaching. President Kornbluth and the other top-level administrators copied on the exchange remained silent while the professor continued to malign and threaten the Jewish student. That same day, flyers were slipped under doors in a dormitory where this student previously lived, targeting him specifically in white lettering on a green band, styled after Hamas headbands, advocating for violence against Jews. As a result of the ongoing harassment and complete lack of protection by MIT, the student was forced to

leave MIT before completing his PhD program, abandoning a dream and a promising career in computer science.

These incidents are emblematic of a larger problem on the MIT campus, where anti-Semitism was permitted to fester in the absence of leadership and accountability. Following October 7, students promoted terror against Jews and Israelis in every corner of campus life with no intervention from administrators.

As a recipient of federal funding, MIT is obligated to provide a safe learning environment for all of its students, including Jewish and Israeli students, pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

“This is a textbook example of neglect and indifference. Not only were several anti-Semitic incidents conducted at the hands of a professor, but MIT’s administration refused to take action on every single occasion,” **said Hon. Kenneth L. Marcus, chairman of the Brandeis Center and the former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education who ran the Office for Civil Rights, which investigates schools for civil rights violations, during two administrations.** “The very people who are tasked with protecting students are not only failing them, but are the ones attacking them. In order to eradicate hate from campuses, we must hold faculty and the university administration responsible for their participation in – and in this case, their proliferation of – anti-Semitism and abuse.”

White & Case is co-counsel on this lawsuit.

In response to a Brandeis Center lawsuit, Harvard [agreed](#) to take significant measures to address anti-Semitism on its campus. As part of the precedent-setting agreement, Harvard will apply the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism with its examples to its non-discrimination and anti-bullying policies, recognize the centrality of Zionism to Jewish identity, and explicitly state that targeting Jews and Zionists constitutes a violation of school rules. Other schools have also settled recent complaints with similar concrete action.

In addition, the Department of Education is [investigating](#) Brandeis Center complaints filed against UMass Amherst, DC’s American University, Yale University, Scripps College, and the Fulton County School District.

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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. LDB engages in research, education, and legal advocacy to combat the resurgence of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses, in the workplace, and elsewhere. It empowers students by training them to understand their legal rights and educates administrators and employers on best practices to combat racism and anti-Semitism. The Brandeis Center is not affiliated with the Massachusetts university, the Kentucky law school, or any of the other institutions that share the name and honor the memory of the late U.S. Supreme Court justice.