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UC BERKELEY SUED FOR DISCRIMINATING AGAINST ISRAELI PROFESSOR

Berkeley's discrimination office found the school violated policy; twenty-one months later no action has been taken

Washington, D.C., Aug. 20, 2025 - [The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law](#) and the law firm of Olivier & Schreiber PC sued the University of California (UC) Berkeley today in California Superior Court, alleging the school violated California anti-discrimination laws when it rejected the teaching application of a professor solely because she is Israeli.

Dr. Yael Nativ is an Israeli dance researcher and sociologist, and in 2022, she served as a visiting professor at UC Berkeley. Following a successful semester, professors at Berkeley's Helen Diller Institute for Jewish Law and Israel Studies (HDI) invited Dr. Nativ to apply to return as a visiting professor in the Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies for the 2024-2025 school year. Dr. Nativ did apply – but according to the complaint, her application was rejected expressly because she is an Israeli. As detailed in the lawsuit, the department chair told her, “Things are very hot here [on campus] right now and many of our grad students are angry. I would be putting the dept and you in a terrible position if you taught here.”

Berkeley's Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination opened an investigation into Dr. Nativ's rejection. The investigation found that Dr. Nativ was the victim of national origin discrimination in violation of Berkeley's Nondiscrimination Policy.

It has now been 21 months since Dr. Nativ's invitation was rejected and 11 months since Berkeley acknowledged its discrimination. Yet Berkeley has failed to remedy its discrimination, despite Dr. Nativ's many outreach efforts to the school.

“Well-respected institutions like Berkeley pride themselves on welcoming individuals, academics, and professors from around the globe, with varying backgrounds and expertise on every subject imaginable. Yet since the Hamas attacks on October 7th, Jewish and Israeli professors, researchers, and academics like Dr. Nativ have been unfairly targeted, their work questioned, and their livelihoods threatened because of the rampant anti-Semitism that has overtaken college campuses,” **said Hon. Kenneth L. Marcus, chairman and CEO of the Brandeis Center and the former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education who ran the Office of Civil Rights during two administrations.** “For a university to deny the invitation of a

respected professor simply because of her national origin is not only distasteful, it's illegal. And if the campus administration doesn't hold themselves up to the same accountability standards that they hold their students, what is stopping their students from acting on their own discriminatory beliefs? The vicious and illegal targeting of Israeli faculty and researchers is unfortunately a disturbing new trend we are seeing nationwide that must stop."

In November 2023, the Brandeis Center [filed](#) a separate lawsuit against UC Berkeley alleging the "longstanding, unchecked spread of anti-Semitism" on campus that resulted in discrimination, harassment, and violence against Jewish students and faculty. In April 2025, a district court judge [ruled](#) that the Brandeis Center's lawsuit alleging the university violated the civil rights and equal protection rights of Jewish students could move forward.

Dr. Nativ's complaint is part of a disturbing pattern emerging across top universities: according to several lawsuits filed by the Brandeis Center, Israeli academics and researchers are increasingly becoming the targets of career-undermining attacks. As alleged in a lawsuit against [MIT](#), a tenured professor doxxed an Israeli researcher – publicly exposing his identity online. The researcher claims he was harassed and threatened on campus, at his child's daycare, and at the grocery store. Another lawsuit alleges that, at [Stanford](#), an Israeli postdoc who won the most prestigious research grant in the field of diabetes was locked out of his lab, had his research sabotaged, and was told a serious complaint had been filed against him – a complete fabrication – all to force him to vacate his position.

The Brandeis Center has also [filed](#) federal lawsuits against organizations at UCLA and Columbia that allegedly orchestrated the assaults, battery, and civil rights violations of Jews on university campuses. And in a [precedent-setting agreement](#) with Harvard earlier this year after allegations of anti-Semitism on campus, the university agreed to incorporate the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism with its examples consistent with Harvard's non-discrimination and anti-bullying policies, and to explicitly state that conduct that would violate school rules if targeting Jews or Israelis can also be a violation if directed toward Zionists.

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About The Brandeis Center

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.

About Olivier & Schreiber PC

Olivier & Schreiber is a plaintiff-side law firm based in California that is committed to advancing the rights of employees, workers, consumers, and the public. The firm prosecutes employment, consumer, and civil rights cases on behalf of individuals and classes of persons throughout California and nationally.