



July 19, 2022

Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez
City University of New York
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Chancellor Matos Rodríguez:

Last week, a group calling itself *Not In Our Name: CUNY* (NIONCUNY) released a statement in which they pledge to “create networks and programs within the CUNY Jewish population to question, critique and unlearn Zionism so they may form their own Jewish identity.” **In response to the declaration issued by NIONCUNY, and their clear, antisemitic, and defamatory rhetoric of Jewish Students and their beliefs, the American Jewish Congress condemns this act in the strongest possible terms. Moreover, we urge your office to censure this evident display of hate and protect the sanctity and well-being of Jewish Students and affiliated organizations throughout CUNY’s network.**

While we respect the opinions and personal beliefs of everyone, there is a clear difference between peaceful advocacy and this danger-bearing marginalization of Jewish cohorts within your university system. As Jews, a community that has been targeted and persecuted for centuries, actions and language such as those in NIONCUNY’s statement affects us deeply. Furthermore, it endangers Jewish Students throughout the CUNY system who support Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East, and marginalizes their beliefs in the process.

As you are aware, antisemitism is growing at an alarming rate throughout our country, and this is especially apparent on college campuses. With that said, facets of the City University of New York have regrettably been the culprit of numerous antisemitic actions, translating these concerns into far more of a reality. Recently, a CUNY adjunct professor proclaimed that Muslims will “erase this filth called Israel,” and that Jews are a primary source of corruption around the world. In addition, faculty within the CUNY law school, along with its student government, have openly targeted Israel and supported the antisemitic boycott, divest, and sanction movement. Furthermore, Nerdeen Kiswani, a known antisemite and who’s organization has been previously banned by social media platforms for hate speech, was CUNY law’s commencement speaker this past May.

NIONCUNY’s statement, which holds an alarming 32 signatories, including delegates of CUNY’s Professional Staff Congress, the union that represents 30,000 faculty and staff

throughout the University network, provides even further causes for alarm. Simply put, this pattern of dangerous and hateful behavior toward Jews is far from okay, and the potential for this ideology to grow within CUNY's ranks is only inflamed by NIONCUNY's recent release.

Chancellor, to reiterate, our grievances are not born out of a lack of respect for an individual's freedom to express their point of view, as is their right. Again, however, NIONCUNY's words are a clear and evident example of hateful rhetoric, and will undoubtedly affect the safety, security, and comfort of Jewish Students throughout CUNY institutions. We urge your office to intervene in this matter with haste, condemn this vile and unacceptable deportment toward the Jewish Community, and ensure that CUNY's core values are safeguarded for all.

The American Jewish Congress remains ready to assist in any way possible.

Sincerely,



Jack Rosen
President



Dr. Munr Kazmir
Vice President



Dr. Ben Chouake
Secretary



Michael Melnicke
Treasurer