UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Our Commitment to Address Anti-Muslim, Anti-Arab, and Anti-Palestinian Discrimination at the University of Toronto

November 12, 2026

Introduction

Anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-Palestinian discrimination exists at the University of Toronto, and we are committed to addressing it. As part of that commitment, the University established the Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian Discrimination Working Group (MAP DWG) in the fall of 2024, drawing on previous work in 2017 and 2019. The Working Group was chaired by Professor Anver M. Emon, then-Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies, and submitted its final report to us on October 13, 2026. The University is always open to learning where our practices may fall short in meeting our principles of inclusion.

Experiences Shared by Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians at U of T

The Working Group engaged in thorough consultation, with 85 individual and small group meetings as well as a University-wide survey that generated 525 responses. Their findings reveal a diverse Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian community in terms of nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, and other identities, as well as many other members of the community who identify as allies.

Before outlining our immediate actions and commitments, we would like to share a summary of the experiences shared in the Working Group's consultations and presented in their report:

Experiences of Discrimination and Harassment

- Experiences of ridicule and dismissal in classroom and work contexts for wearing a hijab or other markers of Muslim identity and belief (including being called "terrorist" or other derogatory terms and being subjected to inappropriate jokes about harmful stereotypes)
- A feeling of being unprotected or that the safety of Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian community members is not a priority of the University
- Vandalism of flyers and personal property, including materials and symbols expressing solidarity with Palestine and Palestinians

Reprisal and Silencing

- Negative impacts of online harassment by parties external to the University that profile and document individuals' research and activism, which may damage their reputation and pose safety threats
- A "chilling effect" on campus for students expressing pro-Palestinian positions in classrooms and other community members in various activities and interactions
- Perceptions expressed by Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian community members of being surveilled and/or targeted due to their work and/or speech on issues pertaining to their communities

Complaints Resolution Processes

- Experiences of complaints and accommodations processes that are not responsive to the issues brought forward
- Belief that prejudicial decisions were made or assumed about motivations and conduct of Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian community members without sufficient evidence and due process
- A need for a review of the University's complaints processes when third-party partner organizations are involved, such as hospitals or autonomous student organizations

Community Space & Feelings of Belonging

- Inadequate space and accommodations for Muslim life on campus, including for daily prayer
- A desire for more interfaith and intercultural dialogue, as well as celebrations for holidays such as Eid

Atmosphere of Mistrust

- A feeling that administrative efforts are insincere and performative
- Perception that concepts of institutional restraint are not applied consistently and are improperly motivated
- Significant distrust in the administration following the 2024 encampment
- Lack of motivation to pursue official processes related to divestment

Institutional Capacity-Building & Academic Investments

- A need for academic investments in Palestinian Studies on all three campuses
- A desire for more education and training on anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-Palestinian discrimination
- Calls for a review of protocols, frameworks, and guidelines with respect to institutional processes, including donations, international partnerships, and travel policies for students and researchers

Next Steps

We shared feedback with the Chair throughout the Working Group's process while also affirming the independence of the MAP DWG and the academic freedom held by its faculty members, including the Chair. It is understandable that the administration and the Working Group would not be in total agreement with each other about the range of issues and related analysis presented in their comprehensive report, nor about the ideal responses to those issues – particularly given the fraught circumstances, passionate feelings, and ongoing global conflict informing many of the situations described.

The Working Group's report departs significantly from past equity reports in several ways:

- Some of the recommendations conflict with collective agreements and protections for faculty members' academic freedom.
- Others (about hospital partners, school boards, and government) fall outside the University's jurisdiction.
- Parts of the report raise specific and unattributed allegations, some of which reflect a single individual's perspective, which we know to be incomplete.
- Elements of the report are not congruent with U of T's position of institutional restraint, which provides the foundation for a University community where people can express multiple and divergent viewpoints.
- The report contains lengthy commentary about events abroad rather than focusing on proposals to improve University life and student experience.

It is for these reasons that we cannot accept the MAP DWG's report and recommendations as written; however, we commit to immediate actions to address Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian discrimination at the University of Toronto. While we expect that the Working Group's report will validate the experiences of many members of our community, aspects will also be offensive and upsetting to other members of our community, including some Jewish and Israeli colleagues and students. Nonetheless, guided by our commitment to transparency, we are making the Working Group's report available to members of the U of T community.

Institutional Commitments

Over the past year, the administration has launched and promoted a series of initiatives in response to needs identified from consultations with Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian community members, as well as the wider community; these initiatives include:

Muslim Prayer Space and Chaplaincy Services

The absence of adequate, accessible space for daily prayer has been a persistent concern among Muslim members of our community, and we are committed to addressing it swiftly.

The UTSC campus has spaces that can be used by Muslim communities for prayer and spiritual practice. Muslim prayer rooms have existed at the UTM campus for a number of years, and we have recently established a dedicated Muslim prayer space on the St. George campus in the Bahen Centre for Information Technology. It is currently open, and further renovations are scheduled to be completed this academic year. But there is more work that can be done to address these ongoing needs. The University will work to ensure there are appropriate Muslim prayer spaces as well as multi-faith spaces on all three campuses. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Students has also refreshed the framework for chaplaincy services to ensure tri-campus coverage and more student and community engagement.

A New Human Rights Office and Policy

The University's new discrimination policy (pending governance approval) and the newly created Office of Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion (OHREI) include simplified pathways for making and responding to complaints by those who have experienced discrimination. We encourage those who shared their experiences with the Working Group and in the survey to consider making a complaint so that the University can respond.

Web Resource

The University has developed a new web resource in consultation with University experts to bring together and share existing legal and policy frameworks at U of T that address anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-Palestinian discrimination. The resource, released in September 2026, includes illustrative examples for educational purposes.

Initiatives of the U of T Libraries

Work is underway towards a Library Research Guide (LibGuide) on Palestinian research topics, which is expected to be finalized by the end of the year. Special events are also taking place in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library to highlight Islamic collections. And, the U of T Libraries recently updated the title of the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Librarian to better reflect the focus on Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian identities and research topics.

In addition to these recent initiatives, we wish to announce a series of actions to further improve the experiences of Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian community members at U of T. These commitments will be posted on a public dashboard on the University's equity commitments website so that members of our community can track our progress and hold us accountable.

Training

Based on the web resource released in September, the OHREI will introduce an e-module on anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-Palestinian discrimination. We will also hold an information session for Governing Council members about anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-Palestinian discrimination.

Supports for Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian Students

The Division of University Advancement will work to secure additional investments to support students in need, including Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian students affected by global conflicts. Unfortunately, circumstances outside of the University's control – such as visa requirements for international students – have limited the ability of some admitted students to enter the country for their studies; we continue to support international prospective and admitted students where possible. We will consult with students about ways to encourage innovation and recognize academic excellence in new supports and initiatives.

Academic Investments in Scholarly Activities related to Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian Topics

The University has supported and is committed to continued support for a range of scholarly activities, including research related to Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities, as well as academic initiatives focused on Palestinian history and culture

Muslim Community Advisory Council

Senior leadership will seek external advice from Muslim community organizations to provide a forum to discuss campus climate and equity matters of concern to students, staff, faculty members, and librarians at U of T. Over the years, we have valued the advice of organizations like the National Council of Canadian Muslims and will benefit from building on such relationships.

We commit to considering other actions based on further consultation. For example:

- A climate survey to understand the experiences of students from diverse backgrounds in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, and/or creed
- Continued installation of bidets and ablution facilities on all three campuses
- Additional training and education about safety abroad for students and faculty members
- Awareness-raising about existing resources on social media best practices, cybersecurity, online harassment prevention, and privacy protection

Conclusion

We are grateful for the time and energy dedicated by Professor Emon and the Working Group as well as other members of the University of Toronto Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities. We remain committed to continuing this work across all three campuses.

Professor Melanie A. Woodin
President

Professor Trevor Young
Vice-President & Provost