



November 8, 2023

Board of Directors

Robert Grant
Daphna Grossman
Carole Gruson
Jocelyn Kadish
Leon Kadish
Annette Poizner
Howard Price
Steve Samuel
Frank Sommers
Lisa Tarshis
Larry Weiss

Honorary Board

Irwin Cotler
Leslie Dan
Bernard Goldman
Barbara Kay
Robert Lantos
Mary Seeman
Imam Mohamad
Tawhidi

University of Toronto President Gertler,

We are writing to express our profound disappointment, bordering on disbelief, in our university leadership's response to the Hamas terror attack on Israel. Your comments as President of the University of Toronto demonstrate an appalling lack of judgment and sensitivity: you have neither sufficiently acknowledged the horror and symbolism of the Hamas terrorist attack for Jewish societies around the world, nor the ongoing trauma and fear felt by your own faculty, students, and university community.

We feel patronized, isolated, and rendered vulnerable by statements which appear more concerned with corporate messaging and political fallout than human suffering and moral clarity. Such feckless equivocation compounds our suffering.

Let's be clear: innocent civilians in Israel were attacked – targeted – by a terrorist organization. Women were raped. Children were murdered. Vulnerable, defenceless persons were abducted from their families so they could be converted into human shields and remain held hostage. A mother and her son were burned alive. It was a torrent of violence unleashed by the anti-Jewish racism of Hamas ideology. It must be identified as such.

Of utmost concern to us is the safety of our students and colleagues. The university's Jewish community is hurting and afraid, the latter feeling borne out of not just anguish over the events in Israel, but the very present reality that since the attack hate crimes are up 132% according to Toronto police, with most reported crimes being linked to antisemitism.

The members of DARA and other members of the healthcare professions desire for peace to be pursued; for the sanctity of human life to be protected; for international law to be respected. These beliefs form the basis of our call for Hamas to allow humanitarian aid to be delivered to Gazans, for Hamas to immediately release all hostages held in Gaza and Hamas' perpetrators of terror to be brought to justice.

These are troubling times. Overwhelming grief and historic trauma are colluding with opportunistic anger and modern misinformation to create a civic terrain that is dangerously familiar. It is not only Jews who will suffer if the undermining of truth, decency, and compassion are allowed to prevail.

The Jewish community of the University of Toronto needs its President to stand in solidarity with us. A statement from you, President Gertler, unequivocally and clearly denouncing the inhuman actions of Hamas and those who support this terrorist organization on our university campuses would provide some solace to the grieving, harassed community of Jewish students and academics.

Board of Directors, DARA
(Doctors Against Racism and Antisemitism)