

Canada's Campus Antisemitism and Student Experience (CASE) Report Fails to Represent Jewish Student Diversity

Policy Brief | August 2026



Methodological, Terminological, and Procedural Concerns Regarding the Campus Antisemitism and Student Experiences (CASE) Report

To:	Department of Canadian Heritage
From:	Independent Jewish Voices Canada
Date:	August 2026
Re:	Campus Antisemitism and Student Experiences report (August 5, 2026)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV Canada) welcomes serious efforts to understand and confront antisemitism in Canadian postsecondary institutions. The Campus Antisemitism and Student Experiences (CASE) report, published by the Department of Canadian Heritage, was commissioned to the Association for Canadian Studies and the Metropolis Institute by the former Special Envoy on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism. The report includes disturbing accounts of anti-Jewish threats, Holocaust denial, harassment, and discrimination, and these experiences must be taken seriously and addressed.

At the same time, the report's consultation process, recruitment strategy, survey design, and interpretive framework do not adequately represent the diversity of Jewish students in Canada. It draws sweeping national conclusions from an unweighted, non-probability sample recruited mainly through a narrow set of Jewish institutions, and it repeatedly combines Jewish identity, Israeli nationality, and Zionist political belief. As a result, some conduct the report presents as evidence of antisemitism consists instead of anti-Zionist political expression, criticism of Israeli government policy, or classroom engagement with a live public controversy. Progressive, non-Zionist, and anti-Zionist Jewish organizations, including IJV Canada, were not consulted, invited onto the advisory committee, or given the opportunity to circulate the survey among our hundreds of student members connected to campuses across Canada.

IJV Canada asks Canadian Heritage to treat CASE as a record of the experiences and perceptions of its respondents, not as a representative survey of antisemitism among all Jewish students, and to undertake a broader, more methodologically rigorous, and more inclusive consultation before developing policy based on its findings.

1. PURPOSE

This brief sets out IJV Canada's concerns regarding the CASE report, published on August 5, 2026 by the Association for Canadian Studies and the Metropolis Institute and commissioned by the Department of Canadian Heritage.¹

¹ Association for Canadian Studies & Metropolis Institute, "Campus Antisemitism and Student Experiences (CASE)," Canadian Heritage, August 5, 2026:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/canada-holocaust/antisemitism/campus-antisemitism-student-experiences>

We do not dispute that antisemitic incidents occur on Canadian campuses and cause real harm, and we share the Department's concern for Jewish students' safety and wellbeing. Our concerns are with methodology, terminology, consultation, and advisory governance that are significant enough that the report should not, in its current form, be treated as a reliable national evidence base for policy, funding, or institutional decisions affecting Canadian universities and colleges.

2. METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

I. Non-probability, unweighted sample presented as national evidence

The Jewish student survey was not randomly sampled and was not weighted to reflect the demographic or institutional composition of Jewish students in Canada. The report's own methodology appendix acknowledges that post-stratification weighting was not applied because it would not have been supportable given how participation was mobilized, and states that results should be read descriptively rather than as population estimates.²

Despite this, the report's executive summary describes it as the “most comprehensive national evidence to date” and concludes that antisemitism is persistent, proliferating, and systemically embedded in Canadian campus life. Those claims exceed what an uneven, unweighted, non-probability sample can establish.

II. Recruitment channel bias, and IJV Canada's exclusion from distribution

Respondents were recruited primarily through Jewish student organizations, including Hillel and Chabad, and affiliated community networks.³ These organizations, while an important part of Jewish campus life, are not neutral or comprehensive gateways to the Jewish student population; they tend to draw disproportionately from students already institutionally affiliated and more likely to hold mainstream Zionist views. Progressive, secular, non-Zionist and anti-Zionist Jewish students are structurally less likely to be reached through these channels.

IJV Canada has hundreds of members and supporters, including students and recent graduates connected to campuses across the country. We were not asked to help distribute the survey and had no opportunity to do so. This materially reduced the likelihood that the study would hear from Jewish students whose political views and campus experiences differ from those of students reached through mainstream Jewish institutional networks.

III. Geographic and institutional concentration

The distribution of respondents was highly uneven: 418 were from Ontario and 243 from Quebec, compared with 14 from Alberta, two from New Brunswick, and one from Saskatchewan. McGill University alone accounted for 135 respondents – roughly 15 percent of the entire retained sample.⁴

IV. Undisclosed scope of a data-quality incident

The methodology appendix discloses an anomalous surge of identical responses after the survey link was shared publicly, prompting the researchers to close the original link, move to controlled dissemination, and

² ACS & Metropolis Institute, “CASE,” Canadian Heritage, 2026.

³ ACS & Metropolis Institute, “CASE,” Canadian Heritage, 2026.

⁴ ACS & Metropolis Institute, “CASE,” Canadian Heritage, 2026.

remove flagged cases from the final dataset. We recognize the need for appropriate data-quality controls. However, the report does not disclose how many responses were removed, what criteria were used to identify them, whether the exclusions were reviewed manually, or whether the removed responses differed demographically or politically from those retained. Without this information, readers cannot independently assess how the screening process, as well as the subsequent restriction of survey circulation, may have affected the composition of the final sample.

V. Conflation of personally experienced and witnessed incidents

The report's most widely publicized statistic (that 95.7 percent of respondents experienced or witnessed at least one antisemitic incident in the past year) combines direct personal experience with secondhand observation into a single figure. The same combined structure applies to reported rates of threats and physical violence.⁵

Witnessed incidents matter and deserve documentation, but combining them with personal victimization produces a topline percentage that readers may reasonably, if incorrectly, interpret as meaning nearly every respondent was personally targeted. Multiple-response items on incident type, location, and perpetrator likewise allow totals to exceed 100 percent, which the report's own footnotes acknowledge complicates interpretation of figures such as the share of incidents attributed to faculty.

VI. No independent baseline, and pre-emptive framing of an unpublished companion survey

The report does not employ a comparable probability-based Canadian benchmark to validate its prevalence estimates, and it repeatedly previews conclusions from a companion general-population survey that has not yet been published or independently reviewed. Using an unpublished survey to reinforce the credibility of a published one, before either has faced outside scrutiny, risks shaping policy and public expectations prematurely.

3. TERMINOLOGICAL CONCERNS

The report adopts the heavily-criticized IHRA working definition of antisemitism and its illustrative examples without acknowledging the substantial body of scholarship and the alternative frameworks, including the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, signed by roughly 200 scholars of antisemitism, Jewish studies, and Holocaust history, and IJV Canada's own definition, which distinguish antisemitism directed at Jews as Jews from political criticism of Israeli state policy or of Zionism as an ideology.^{6,7,8}

I. A one-sided definition of anti-Zionism

The report falsely defines anti-Zionism as a movement rooted in “libel and distortion” which seeks the erasure and annihilation of Israel and the denial of Jewish self-determination, citing a small set of sources (including Tablet Magazine, a right-wing American publication) that themselves advance a specific political position on this question. This excludes the reality that many Jews, including IJV Canada's

⁵ ACS & Metropolis Institute, “CASE,” Canadian Heritage, 2026.

⁶ Independent Jewish Voices Canada, “No IHRA – Our Definition of Antisemitism”: <https://www.noihra.ca/our-definition>

⁷ Independent Jewish Voices Canada, “IJV Statement on Antisemitism,” November 1, 2016: <https://www.ijvcanada.org/ijv-statement-on-antisemitism/>

⁸ Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (2021), signed by approximately 200 scholars of antisemitism, Jewish studies and Holocaust history: <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/>

members, hold anti-Zionist or non-Zionist commitments rooted in their own understanding of Jewish ethics, history, and safety, without seeking to deny Jewish people's right to exist or to safety.

Survey data from outside Canada bears this out: a 2025 study of British Jews found that roughly a quarter of respondents aged 20 to 29 identified as anti-Zionist, and a further fifth as non-Zionist (Fig 1).⁹ That same survey found that Jews of all ages who identify as anti-Zionist have risen from 8 percent in 2022 to 12 percent in 2025.¹⁰ A December 2024 survey of Canadian Jewish opinion found that only 51 percent of Canadian Jews identify as Zionist.¹¹ Treating anti-Zionism and non-Zionism as a fringe or inherently hostile position does not reflect this diversity of Jewish opinion.

Fig 1. Proportions of British Jews who identify as Zionist, non-Zionist or anti-Zionist, by age (2025, %)

Jonathan Boyd (2025), "Two years after the October 7 attacks: British Jewish views on antisemitism, Israel and Jewish life"

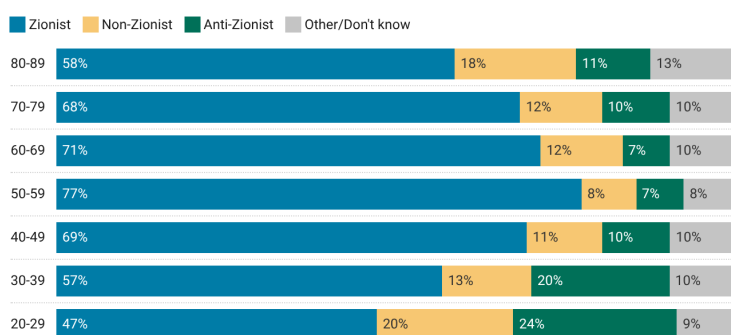


Chart: Independent Jewish Voices Canada • Source: Institute for Jewish Policy Research • Created with Datawrapper

II. Measuring hostility toward “Zionists” as a proxy for antisemitism

The survey instrument and resulting figures repeatedly measure “hateful or discriminatory treatment of Zionists” and report it as a component of campus antisemitism. Because Zionism is a political position rather than a Jewish identity, and because not all Jews are Zionists and not all Zionists are Jewish, this framing risks recording political disagreement or criticism of Israeli state policy as an antisemitic incident, inflating headline figures and blurring the line between protected political expression and identity-based hate.

III. A single survey question conflating four distinct categories

Question 24 of the survey instrument asked respondents whether they encountered course content or classroom discussion that portrayed “Jews, Judaism, Israel, or Zionism” in a biased or antisemitic way. A people, a religion, a state, and a political ideology were combined into a single item, so a respondent troubled by criticism of Israeli policy and a respondent who encountered an antisemitic slur would register identically in the resulting 36 percent figure. This design choice makes the statistic impossible to interpret as a specific measure of antisemitism.

⁹ Jonathan Boyd, Two Years After the October 7 Attacks: British Jewish Views on Antisemitism, Israel and Jewish Life, Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2025:

<https://www.jpr.org.uk/reports/two-years-after-october-7-attacks-british-jewish-views-antisemitism-israel-and-jewish-life>

¹⁰ Boyd, Two Years After the October 7 Attacks, JPR, 2025.

¹¹ Robert Brym, Arguments for the Sake of Heaven: A Jewish Community Divided, 2024:

https://www.jspacecanada.ca/arguments_sake_of_heaven

IV. Holocaust analogy treated as Holocaust denial

Several accounts characterized in the report under “Holocaust denial and distortion” involve comparisons between Israeli government conduct and historical atrocities. Such comparisons are a recognized, if often contested, form of political argument and historical analogy. They are analytically distinct from denying that the Holocaust occurred, minimizing its scale, or questioning well-documented facts about it, and should not be classified alongside genuine denial.

4. CONSULTATION PROCESS CONCERNS

IJV Canada was not consulted at any stage of this project, despite our standing as a national Jewish civil society organization with direct engagement on antisemitism, campus climate, and Jewish communal life, including prior submissions to Parliament on these exact questions.

- The report describes an Expert Advisory Committee that shaped question wording, recruitment strategy, and “interpretive framing,” including observers from the Department of Canadian Heritage, but does not disclose the committee's full membership or the range of viewpoints represented on questions where Canadian Jewish opinion is genuinely divided – particularly Israel, Zionism, and the IHRA definition.¹²
- Recruitment prioritized organizations such as Hillel and Chabad (as mentioned in Questions 16 and 17),¹³ which are not politically neutral with respect to Israel and Zionism, without parallel outreach through organizations representing other segments of Jewish political and religious life. This compounds the sampling concerns discussed above in Section 2 and the terminological concerns discussed in Section 3, since the population most likely to be reached through these channels is also the population most likely to share the report's underlying assumptions.
- We are not aware of any opportunity for public or civil-society comment on the survey instrument, the definitions used, or the draft report prior to publication.

5. ADVISORY BOARD COMPOSITION

IJV Canada has reviewed the published list of the report's 17 Advisory Board members.¹⁴ By our count, 13 are men (76%) and four are women (24%), and none is identifiably affiliated with a progressive, anti-Zionist, or non-Zionist Jewish organization. Several members are publicly associated with scholarship and advocacy that treats anti-Zionism as inherently antisemitic, a contested position that is central to the very questions this report purports to measure objectively.

The Board also includes Seth Goran, the Chief Executive Officer of Hillel Ontario, an organization that served as one of the report's recruitment channels. Having a recruitment partner represented in an advisory and interpretive capacity, without a counterbalancing presence from organizations outside that network, raises questions about the independence of the report's design and interpretation.

The report does not specify what authority the Advisory Board held over question wording, sampling strategy, or interpretation of findings, nor whether members reviewed and approved the final report or specific sections of it.

¹² ACS & Metropolis Institute, “CASE,” Canadian Heritage, 2026.

¹³ ACS & Metropolis Institute, “CASE,” Canadian Heritage, 2026.

¹⁴ ACS & Metropolis Institute, “CASE,” Canadian Heritage, 2026.

6. TESTIMONY THE REPORT CLASSIFIES AS ANTISEMITISM THAT REFLECT POLITICAL OR ANTI-ZIONIST EXPRESSION

Appendix C of the report includes many accounts of unmistakable antisemitism, including anti-Jewish threats, Holocaust denial, slurs, vandalism, and physical violence targeting Jewish students because they are Jewish. IJV Canada does not dispute or minimize these accounts, and, in line with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, we condemn threats, harassment, and violence directed at anyone, including calls for violence against “Zionists” that the report separately documents.

However, the report also groups a number of accounts describing academic or political engagement with Israel and Zionism under the same headings of antisemitism and classroom bias, without establishing why they should be classified as anti-Jewish rather than as political disagreement, contested pedagogy, or protected academic freedom. The table below sets out illustrative examples.

What the testimony describes	IJV Canada's assessment
“In a course that had nothing to do with Israel, my professor spent three weeks talking about Gaza and the creation of the State of Israel. He never mentioned the Holocaust as a precursor to its founding, repeatedly calling the state a ‘Zionist political project.’”	Framing Israel's founding through the history of the Zionist movement is standard terminology in Middle East studies across the political spectrum, including by Zionist scholars. A pedagogical judgment about which historical context to include is not evidence of hostility toward Jews.
“In a course titled CANADIAN [sic] Law and Violence, the professor spent the entire semester discussing Israel's occupation of Palestine, while encouraging students to miss class to attend protests, showing Al Jazeera videos, and wearing pro-Palestine shirts and earrings every week.”	Curricular choices, the outfit of a professor, and encouraging participation in lawful protest on a live public controversy are academic freedom and freedom of expression questions. They do not, on their own, target Jewish students because they are Jewish.
“My class was forced to answer exam questions according to my professor's biases. We were forced to draw positive connections between BLM and Hamas.”	This may be a legitimate pedagogical complaint. However, the comparison of two political movements is not an attack on Jewish identity and should be assessed on academic quality grounds, not tallied as antisemitism.
“A professor cancelled class on October 7 so that students could attend anti-Israel protests.”	Accommodating student participation in lawful protest on a contested public issue is a scheduling and pedagogical decision seen across many situations. It is not, by itself, directed at Jewish students.
A professor used the acronym “IOF” rather than “IDF” when referring to the Israeli military in class.	This terminology is used by a range of human-rights advocates, journalists, and some governments to describe the same institution. A politically inflected word choice is not, on its own, evidence of antisemitism.
“The Holocaust was omitted from a lesson on the history of the Second World War.”	Omitting the Holocaust from a lesson may raise concerns about the completeness of the curriculum, but omission alone does not constitute Holocaust denialism or establish antisemitic intent.

“A Professor assigned us to listen to a podcast that discussed how Zionism was similar to Nazism.”	Comparisons between Zionism and other political or historical movements, however provocative, appear in published scholarship and journalism. Assigning such material may be a pedagogical complaint, but it differs from targeting students for who they are.
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The report also documents students being pressed to declare whether they are a “good Jew” or a “bad Jew” based on their views of Israel, and being asked to state a position on Israel as an unstated condition of full acceptance in campus spaces. IJV Canada takes these accounts seriously: pressuring anyone to prove political loyalty as a condition of belonging is a real harm. But it is also the clearest illustration in the report's own data of the danger of treating Jewish identity and Zionism as synonymous – the same conflation embedded in the report's methodology and terminology, discussed in Sections 2 and 3 above. Disentangling Jewish identity from a political position on Zionism protects Jewish students in both directions.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

IJV Canada respectfully submits the following recommendations to the Department of Canadian Heritage:

Recommendation 1: Commission an independent methodological review.

Before the CASE report is relied upon for policy or funding decisions, the Department should commission an independent review of the survey design, sampling strategy, and weighting decisions by researchers without a prior role in the project.

Recommendation 2: Disaggregate Jewish identity, Judaism, Israel, Israelis, and Zionism in future instruments.

The IHRA definition should not be used. Future government-commissioned surveys on antisemitism should measure hostility toward Jews as Jews separately from hostility toward Zionism as a political position or Israel as a state, in both question wording and public reporting, rather than combining them into single items or single statistics.

Recommendation 3: Separate personal victimization from witnessed incidents.

Future reporting should distinguish clearly between what respondents personally experienced, what they directly witnessed, and what they encountered online or heard about second-hand, rather than combining these into single headline percentages.

Recommendation 4: Include progressive, anti-Zionist, and non-Zionist Jewish organizations in the design, advisory structure, and recruitment of national surveys.

The Department should ensure that any future national survey of Jewish Canadians' experiences, including a future phase of the CASE project, involves consultation with, and recruitment support from, organizations such as IJV Canada that represent progressive, anti-Zionist, and non-Zionist segments of the Jewish community. This is essential to both the methodological validity of the sample and the legitimacy of a report that purports to speak on behalf of Jewish students as a whole.

Recommendation 5: Diversify future advisory bodies and disclose their mandate.

Advisory boards for government-commissioned research on antisemitism should reflect the genuine political, gender, and institutional diversity of Jewish life in Canada, and reports should disclose what authority such bodies held over the final product, including whether members reviewed and approved specific findings.

Recommendation 6: Disclose recruitment partners and consultation criteria.

Canadian Heritage should publish which organizations distributed the survey, how advisers were selected, and what steps were taken to reach Jewish students outside mainstream institutional networks.

Recommendation 7: Protect both student safety and lawful political expression.

CASE should not be used to justify surveillance, censorship, or discipline directed at Palestinian advocacy, anti-Zionist organizing, boycotts, or critical scholarship. Institutional responses should focus on conduct such as threats, harassment, and identity-based discrimination, not on political viewpoint.

Recommendation 8: Address antisemitism as part of a broader anti-racism framework.

Canadian Heritage should confront antisemitism alongside Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of oppression. These have distinct histories and manifestations, but they often reinforce one another and should not be placed in competition.

8. CONCLUSION

Antisemitism is real and rising, and it must be confronted through credible research and effective institutional action. That work is weakened, not strengthened, when political disagreement about Israel and Zionism is classified as anti-Jewish hatred, or when a narrow segment of Jewish institutional life is presented as speaking for the whole community.

IJV Canada asks Canadian Heritage to acknowledge the limitations of the CASE report, broaden its consultation process, and ensure that future research captures the full diversity of Jewish student experience and opinion. Jewish safety, Palestinian rights, and academic freedom should not be treated as competing objectives. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further with the Department.

Respectfully submitted,

Independent Jewish Voices Canada



Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV) is a grassroots organization grounded in Jewish tradition that opposes all forms of racism and advocates for justice and peace for all in Palestine-Israel. Our strength comes from our members. IJV has active chapters in cities and on university campuses across the country.