



MILWAUKEE
JEWISH FEDERATION

May 2, 2024

Statement on campus encampments

The Milwaukee Jewish Federation, Hillel Milwaukee, the Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Center (HERC), and the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) have been monitoring the continued unlawful encampments on campuses, including UW Madison, which removed the encampments for violating campus policy, and at UWM where the encampments remain. The encampments are part of a larger trend throughout the country that has often attracted antisemitic, vitriolic, and hateful language.

Over the past week, we have focused on helping our Jewish students celebrate Passover, process what is happening on their campus, and engage in Jewish life, including vibrant Jewish programming. The Federation security team has been on-site, providing advice and ensuring our students' safety as this escalation comes just weeks after a group of protesters encircled and harassed Jewish students on UWM's campus. This is unacceptable.

The Jewish community expects Milwaukee's largest public university to be a place where Jewish students and community members are welcome and accepted. We call on Chancellor Mone, UWM's administration, and the UW Regents to step up and protect all students, starting by publicly and unequivocally condemning the action of any student groups and students involved in condemning, harassing, or alienating Jewish and Israeli students. As a learning institution, we call on UWM to remind students and faculty there is a way to be pro-Palestinian and critical of Israel that doesn't involve being antisemitic.

As Wisconsin's leading Holocaust educators, we know the dangers of unchecked antisemitism and hatred and where they can lead. Like you, we believe in the cornerstones of American democracy including freedom of speech. But hate speech directed towards any minority, including Jews, has no place on our college campuses, and must not become normalized. We are further disturbed by the weaponizing of the Holocaust and the memory of its many victims as a political and rhetorical strategy. Such invoking of the Holocaust is disrespectful to the victims and survivors of the genocide, and further traumatizes members of the Jewish community.

We continue to advise Jewish community members NOT to counter-protest out of personal safety concerns and a lack of action from UWM to ensure safety for all; we also discourage giving credibility to the illegal and misguided encampments. We assure you we are watching, we are acting, we are speaking out; these situations are untenable and unacceptable.

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