



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS

U.S. Affiliate of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists

November 10, 2023

Superintendent Kelly McGuire
New York City Department of Education
District 2 Community Schools
333 7th Avenue
New York, New York 10001

By email to: kmcguire@schools.nyc.gov

Re: Terror Supporting Teacher - Siriana Abboud

Dear Superintendent McGuire:

I write to you regarding a pattern of disturbing antisemitic remarks made by Siriana Abboud, a pre-kindergarten teacher at P.S. 059 Beekman Hill International. Ms. Abboud's unfounded, anti-zionist rhetoric not only undermines the intellectual integrity of New York City's Public Schools, but is also inciting and dangerous to the Jewish community, and antithetical to the New York City Department of Education's Non-Discrimination Policy and Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Surely you are aware of the gruesome atrocities perpetrated by Hamas terrorists on Israel and innocent civilians of all ages and races on October 7, 2023. Entire families were slaughtered, Holocaust survivors and infants abducted, and women brutally raped. The nature of these acts shocks the conscience and is difficult to comprehend.

As the war now rages in the Middle East, and we continue to reel from the atrocities that occurred just 34 days ago, the Jewish community faces increasing levels of vulnerability and discrimination. News of skyrocketing harassment of Jewish students continues to emerge, and serves as a somber reminder of the danger of misinformation, and the need for solidarity and the rejection of any form of hate or bias.

Less publicized in the news, however, is the slander - even blood libel - against the state of Israel, that is being presented in classroom settings by so-called educators. Siriana Abboud is one such educator. Ms. Abboud, a pre-kindergarten teacher charged with educating and shaping the minds of our city's youngest learners, has been offering social media guides and workshops to parents and teachers on how to indoctrinate four-year olds about "land theft, displacement and ethnic cleansing" and the Palestinian "struggle against colonization."



Through social media, Ms. Abboud perpetuates a distorted and dangerous narrative that Israelis are outsiders who have stolen Arab land and that Zionism (the right of Jews to self-determination in their ancestral homeland) is to blame for the atrocities that Palestinians may perpetuate against Israelis.

Abboud encourages parents to take their children to pro-Palestinian protests, while terming Israel a “fascist ethnostate” in her Instagram stories, even in the wake of the October 7th attack by Hamas. She insists that “teaching can never be radical or revolutionary, so long as you deny the ongoing and violent colonization of Palestine by Zionism”, and that early education can be a “tool for liberation.”

Abboud’s Instagram page includes pastel-hued posts about the “genocidal state of Israel” and recommended resources, including the website Decolonize Palestine, which is described as an independent, autonomous project founded by two people in Ramallah, in the West Bank. This website celebrated, saying it “fondly remembered”, the anniversary of the First Intifada, which was a period of widespread Palestinian protests and acts of violence and terrorism against Israelis beginning in 1987.

Another resource Abboud proudly promotes to parents and educators is an antisemitic book called “P is for Palestine,” which has as the entry for the letter “I” that stands “for Intifada, Arabic for rising up for what is right, if you are a kid or grownup!”

Ms. Abboud also runs an online business named Allusio Academy, which provides at-home curriculums for kids, and consultations, webinars, and workshops for parents and teachers. In 2021, Abboud shared numerous posts on her Allusio Academy Facebook page featuring slides from an educational “lesson provocation”, which declared that the establishment of the state of Israel followed the “ethnic cleansing of Palestine.” The slides equated police brutality in the United States with Israel’s alleged treatment of Palestinians. Invoking the “Deadly Exchange” campaign, one of Abboud’s posts read: “You can learn about the long history of military brutality that Israel ‘battle tests’ on Palestinians. Then learn how they invite U.S. police to learn about these violent tactics in free trips to Israel, that are then used on Black Americans here.” One might say these remarks are not only anti-Israel, but anti-American, too.

Abboud has referred to Jews as “terrorists” and “colonizers” of their own historic homeland, arguing that Israel’s security barrier is “an apartheid wall.” She openly supports the boycott, divest and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, and states, “There can be no peace so long as Zionism exists.” “The violence began when the colonizers invaded Palestine,” she wrote in another post. “It will end when Palestine is liberated and every Palestinian has their freedom in their historic homeland.”

Even more troubling is the fact that Ms. Abboud’s twitter page contains various retweets from known anti-Israel agitators.



Abboud has argued on her social media pages that “Palestine is a children’s issue” and not too political to teach to preschoolers. Nonetheless, she discusses in her teachings the “hidden and brutal history of rape that was used to establish the state of Israel”, and how “sexual violence is embedded... in the nature of Israeli settler-colonial violence itself.”

Aside from the fact that these “lessons” contain dangerous lies, deplete of any fact-based evidence whatsoever, a rational person can’t help but ask: is this really appropriate to be teaching to *four-year olds*?

It is alarming knowing someone in a position of power and influence over young children openly promotes such hateful, misinformed, and one-sided information. We trust that you, Superintendent McGuire, share our concern for the wellbeing of both Jewish and non-Jewish students who are subjected to Ms. Abboud’s teachings. Allowing Ms. Abboud to continue on her campaign of demonizing Israel and Zionism is not only dangerous, it is an outright injustice. It is an injustice to the children in your classrooms, and an injustice to their parents who entrust you with providing their children a legitimate education in an inclusive environment free of bias or bigoted influence. History is replete with examples demonstrating the progression of antisemitism, which starts with delegitimization and denigration, devolving into acts of aggression against property, and ending up in violence against Jewish people. The violence has already begun, with Jewish students screamed at, shoved, threatened, beaten, and barricaded on college campuses throughout the country. Even worse, a Jewish school in Canada was fired at only this week. Now is the time to take a stand to ensure your school is not next.

We strongly urge you to consider how Ms. Abboud’s acts align (or fail to align, for that matter) with the values of the New York City Public School system, as well as the obligations of New York City Public Schools under state and federal law.

Thank you for your understanding and commitment to promptly addressing this issue.

Yours,

Robert Garson
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cc:

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About the AAJLJ

The AAJLJ is a national nonprofit association that represents the American Jewish legal community on issues of importance such as freedom of religion, civil rights, human rights, access to justice, and defense of the rule of law. The AAJLJ also advocates on matters affecting the global Jewish community, in particular, the scourge of antisemitism, including antisemitism disguised as antipathy toward Israel.

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