



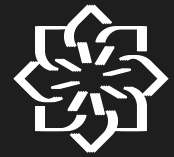
City of Davis, Human Relations Commission, Committee on MAPA

# Update On MAPA Climate & Experiences In Davis

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MAPA

.....  
Muslims, Arabs,  
Palestinians and  
their Allies



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# Background & Methodology

## Info Gathering Approach

We spent the last 3 months gathering information via a qualitative climate survey, 100s of conversations, and review of 100s of videos, photos, and screenshots from social media stories and posts. We spoke with and surveyed residents, DJUSD parents and staff, and UCD faculty, staff and students. Those whose sentiments are included in this qualitative analysis were from a relatively even mix of Muslims, Arabs, Palestinians and Allies.

# Background & Methodology

## Qualitative and Localized Surveying

Given the fear in the MAPA communities to report on or complain about their experiences and the relatively small population of Davis, we chose to take a qualitative approach rather than quantitative one.

## Redaction and Privacy

Where individual names were reported and referenced in accounts, we have chosen to redact any personally identifiable information. This is to protect the privacy of all impacted individuals.

## Supporting Material

To support our qualitative work, we have included studies and findings from larger national and regional quantitative survey efforts. We believe these help to explain the overall experiences of MAPA communities. These are highlighted and linked to at the end of the report.



# Findings & Highlights

# How are you feeling in Davis as a MAPA?

threatened worried tired  
on edge overwhelming vigilant  
gaslit hesitant sad  
not welcome dehumanized  
frustrated silenced not belonging  
supremacy erasure isolated attacked online  
intimidated guarded  
difficult chilling-effect  
harassed distressed

## **1 Climate of Fear and Discrimination**

Davis MAPA community members reported high levels of discrimination, fear, and exhaustion, which is impacting their mental and physical health.

## **2 Fear of Retaliation**

Allies and MAP community members alike reported significant fear of retaliation for both complaining about discrimination or climate issues and for any conversation that indicates care for Palestinians.

## **3 Climate of Silencing and Erasure**

Being silenced, self-silenced, and/or censored was reported by Davis MAPA community members. This, along with feelings of erasure and the ignoring or omission of their identities, is a common theme in climate conversations.

## **4 Weaponization of Antisemitism**

We found a repeated concern that accusations of antisemitism have deterred people from speaking about Palestine and what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank. This theme arose most with Jewish allies.

## **5 Frustration with Acceptance of Intimidation**

Davis MAPA community members expressed high levels of frustration regarding acceptance of and silence about aggressive behavior and intimidation toward MAPA communities.

## **6 UCD & City of Davis Disregard for Issues Facing MAPA Communities**

Deep hurt and loss of trust with both the City and UCD was repeatedly expressed by MAPA community members due to key actions or lack of actions taken by both entities.



# Accounts & Feelings

(direct quotes taken from  
surveys, emails, and  
conversations, organized by  
theme)



# 1 Climate of fear & discrimination

I have experienced physical, verbal, and social media abuse such that I have been offered a police escort; this is how bad it's gotten. But I feel very acutely that the campus is offering me this one thing because I am a faculty member; students are receiving so much more hate and abuse, and they are not receiving protection or support, despite the UC's receipt of considerable funding from the state to offer redress for Islamophobia and Antisemitism, etc.

I always need to be careful, because something could happen to me. It took me almost a year to be comfortable wearing anything about Palestine.

I am mixed in feeling. On the one hand, there are portions of the community that oppose racism and genocide against Palestinians and Arabs. On the other hand, there are vocal portions that actively espouse and incite racism against us, including a group that sets up at the farmers market, right next to a kids' playground, spiting hate and inciting anti-Palestinian and Anti-Arab racism and violence every week.

## ② Fear of/and witnessing retaliation

I have made no formal complaints to the district and I know other MAPA parents who have similar concerns because we fear retaliation against our children. We see retaliation against people that express solidarity with Palestinians all around us, in the news, at universities and many of us have experienced it ourselves in both school and work situations.

People are fired for being open to Palestinian human rights and sovereignty ...Only a semblance of the Palestinian people in Davis are willing to speak to this because of the retribution their loved ones might face in the Middle East. How do we protect this vulnerable community?

I have witnessed and experienced surveillance and harassment by members of Aggies for Israel and Hillel at 90% of Palestine related events [on UCD campus], even if it be as simple as an informational event. Zionist members from the community (who are well known) rally behind these students and support their harassment and are at times the ones leading...This has led to an increase in doxing of students in these organizations which has threatened the safety and professional/academic journeys of many students and community members.

# 3 Climate of silencing & erasure

I sometimes feel not welcomed and not belonging to the Davis community though I have been a resident of Davis for over 36 years. I feel that I cannot share my opinion about the injustice to the Palestinians over the years since 1948 with non-Arabs and non-Muslims as if it is the norm that Muslims and in particular the Palestinians deserve to suffer.

My son has had a teacher indicate in his class that the killing of children by the IDF is justified. While my child did not feel impacted by this, I have concerns that this kind of dehumanization in small increments will over time impact my son's view of himself, his self-worth and his well being. It is this subtle racism and bigotry that MAP communities have to endure day in and day out that indeed takes a great toll on our mental health and wellbeing both individually and collectively.

December 12, 2023, I was part of a coalition of voices asking the City of Davis to adopt an immediate ceasefire in Gaza resolution. When seated and when speaking, I was called a terrorist and asked why I would support murderers. I was photographed by people holding their phones very close to my face. I was challenged to explain myself by people too close for comfort in this crowded city hall chamber...Their aim was clearly to intimidate and create anxiety such that I would not speak publicly.

I was in a checkout line once in a grocery store and the checkout person asked me where I was from. I said I was Palestinian and someone in the line behind me yelled "there is no such place as Palestine"

# 4 Weaponization of Antisemitism

It saddens me that people don't see that this weaponization of antisemitism is detrimental to both Palestinians and Jews. And a growing number of Jewish people are standing up against it ...because it is dangerous and is taking people's eye off the ball of true antisemitism that is growing and is at the heart of the wave of the right wing, white supremacist fascism that is growing here and all over the world.

People have called me or implied that I am antisemitic or a terror supporter simply because of my desire to protect and care for MAPA communities. They have also done this because of my activism, which has never included any expression of hate towards Jewish people or the Jewish faith.

I have also been concerned by the weaponization of the term anti-semitism against those who are opposed to some of Israel's policies. For example there is a Davis Anti Semitism group (same as the original October 7 Coalition group) who sends out a periodic newsletter, which includes things examples like "free Palestine" or even showing the Palestinian flag as being anti-semitic. The creators of these newsletters have given anti-semitism talks at the local synagogue and on campus, equating anti-semitism with being against Israeli policies, which further scares people into being silent on this topic.



# 5 Frustration with acceptance of intimidation

The expectation is for MAPA communities to be extremely polite and engage in dialog with people that have openly stated and informed the public that criticism of Israel is antisemitic. It's exhausting and so clearly unfair. The rest of the community watches silently in the hope that no one notices that they care about Palestinians out of fear of being labeled antisemitic or supporters of terrorism.

I am frustrated with the ongoing harassment by supporters of Israel and the ongoing genocide of Palestinians. I am Palestinian and well aware of how we are dehumanized and portrayed as inherently hateful and violent just by existing. As a graduate student, I'm horrified at how Zionist faculty have acted toward students and how the school's administration does nothing about it.

I don't feel the full freedom...freedom in this country is for some people, but not for all. I am always asking how this will affect me, will I be punished, blacklisted?

# 6 UCD & City of Davis Disregard

A recent example was at an on campus Iftar, where we were told two scheduled speakers, both Palestinians, had been uninvited from speaking. As far as I understood from the other speakers there that night, the reason for their removal was to ensure the safety of the most vulnerable on campus. This seems pretty clear to me that the University was not prepared to ensure, or try to back, the safety of vulnerable people who might simply attend a talk where Palestinians were speaking.

I feel that when I've brought up my frustrations with electeds many write us off or roll eyes because they don't want to touch this issue nor do they care to be a champion on having hard conversations.

I feel being an ally for the Palestinian cause of Justice is alienating in many political spaces in Davis. It has been heartbreaking to watch elected say nothing about Gaza or Palestinians in Davis. Many people in Davis are scared to take on the hard work of understanding how this issue intersects with every cause. Conflating critiques of Israel with anti-semitism has left Davis confused about how to actually define antisemitism and to be afraid to speak their honest opinion about Palestine.

# Overview of Findings

Based on the conversations and review of extensive materials, we conclude that many MAPA members feel that Davis institutions and leaders have not done enough to protect the well being of the MAPA communities. Many feel they have ignored voices of concern and have not openly condemned harassment, intimidation and silencing of MAPA communities. This has caused great harm, distrust, sadness and disappointment to members of the MAPA community.

This perception of lack of action and clear condemnation of anti-MAPA discrimination has created an atmosphere in which perpetrators feel emboldened and protected to exert subtle and overt acts of bigotry while those impacted feel silenced, marginalized further and ignored. This is negatively impacting both the mental and physical health of those in the MAPA community.

The MAPA community finds solace and comfort in their own solidarity, but is tired, frustrated and hurt by the sense of inaction and acceptance of bigotry by the City of Davis, DJUSD, UCD and leaders from these institutions.

Actions that are taken and efforts being made by these institutions are notably appreciated, even if they are perceived as long overdue or done only after an outcry.

# The Even Bigger Picture

- **GOP politicians have joined with supporters of Israel against political protests and criticism of Israel** -- e.g., by labeling it hate speech and support of terrorism; by seeking to make it illegal; by alleging antisemitism; by punishing and threatening those who engage in or allow it; and by **using immigration policy to remove people for their exercise of the right to free speech**.
- The GOP-led House adopted **H. Res. 894 defining antizionism as antisemitism**, and **H. R. 6090**, requiring federal investigations to use standards that even conservative legal scholars say violates free speech rights. Our local Rep., Mike Thompson, voted in favor of both.
- In January, **Pres. Trump issued E.O. 14161 and E.O. 14188** to use ICE enforcement against students and faculty who express political views the government doesn't like, and to enlist universities in reporting students and staff who engage in speech critical of Israel. The ACLU and others have warned that compliance with these executive orders would likely be unconstitutional.
- The **Trump administration has sent letters to 60 universities, including UC Davis**, threatening federal funding for alleged antisemitism. Shortly after, the government began detaining and deporting many pro-Palestinian students and professors who are legally in the United States, and has threatened to pursue many more.
- **Many of the targets have previously been subject to witch-hunt campaigns by pro-Israel vigilante groups** that seek to identify and blacklist their opponents. One such group, Canary Mission, maintains a doxing website that contains photos and dossiers on dozens of UCD professors and students.





# Recommendations

# Building on Positive Steps

- Several impacted MAPA community members have reported still loving Davis and believing Davis is a good place to live with good people. They express a belief that Davis can do better and showing more support of the MAPA communities could be helpful in healing some of the hurt they have felt.
- Harassment on campus and within the community seems to be mostly by a small group of known and identified people. More subtle forms of bigotry (online and offline) and discrimination is more widespread, though.
- City of Davis Arab American Heritage Month proclamation on April 1, 2025 is greatly appreciated by many in the MAPA communities.
- DJUSD efforts like the creation of a Muslim staff constituency group and the offering of professional development credit for Middle Eastern history talks offered on campus are appreciated.

# City of Davis Recommendations

## 1 Acknowledgement of anti-MAPA discrimination in Davis

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While the City of Davis has worked to recognize Arab American Heritage month on April 1, 2025, many feel an acknowledgement of the anti-MAPA discrimination in Davis since 2023 is needed.

## 2 Commitment to solidarity by the City of Davis

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In recognizing anti-MAPA discrimination, many feel a commitment to demonstrate solidarity and care for the MAPA communities going forward is needed. A further commitment to explaining that political speech is protected, including speech on justice for Palestine, is also important.

## 3 City Council Review and Response to Report in Session

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This report should be reviewed and discussed in session as soon as possible.

# Recommended Meetings & Trainings

- 4** A meeting or set of meetings to review the report and discuss appropriate next steps with DJUSD and UCD administrators and the Davis City Manager.

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Report on planned next steps within 6 months and implementation progress provided to HRC within 1 year.

- 5** City commitment to Anti-Palestinian Racism Training for staff and council

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Inclusion of anti-Palestinian racism training in the city's professional development requirements.

- 6** Meeting facilitation within the Jewish community around antisemitism to address deepening rifts

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Facilitate conversations to work towards addressing antisemitism in Davis without silencing speech regarding Palestinian justice.

# Recommended Additional Acknowledgements

**7 Acknowledgement and a statement from the DJUSD Superintendent**

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While the school district has taken steps to remedying a lack of focus on MAPA communities, an acknowledgement of the lack of communication to show solidarity and care for the MAPA communities would be helpful.

**8 Acknowledgement and a statement from UCD Administration**

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Given the deep concerns regarding the treatment and handling of complaints by UCD MAPA communities, which were brought up by faculty, staff and administrators, many believe a statement of solidarity with MAPA communities and a public commitment to protect them on campus is needed.

# Proposed Action Items

- 1 Acknowledgement of anti-MAPA discrimination in Davis
- 2 Commitment to solidarity by the City of Davis
- 3 City Council Review and Response to Report in Session
- 4 A meeting or set of meetings to review the report and discuss appropriate next steps with DJUSD and UCD administrators and the Davis City Manager.
- 5 City commitment to Anti-Palestinian Racism Training for staff and council
- 6 Meeting facilitation within the Jewish community around antisemitism to address deepening rifts
- 7 Acknowledgement and a statement from the DJUSD Superintendent
- 8 Acknowledgement and a statement from UCD Administration



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# Thank you