MCRO
Muslim Communities Research Observatory

POLICY BRIEF

Equal Protection on Campus: Muslim, Arab and Palestinian Members at the University of Toronto

Prepared by MCRO from Over-Policed, Under-Protected, the Final Report and Recommendations of the University of Toronto's Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian Discrimination Working Group (November 2026; 175 pages). This brief reports the working group's findings and recommendations and adds no MCRO recommendations. Sources appear in grey, for example MAP 8 *means the report, page 8.*

Key finding.

The working group found "a general pattern of over-policing and under-protecting speech, research, and advocacy by or on Muslims, Arabs, and especially Palestinians."

MAP 7

The evidence at a glance

85
consultations with students, staff, faculty, librarians and administrators MAP 8, 15

525
survey responses from students, staff, faculty and librarians MAP 8, 122, 124

56%
of survey responses came from people identifying as Muslim, Arab or Palestinian MAP 8, 122

44%
came from people who did not identify as Muslim, Arab or Palestinian MAP 122

57
recommendations to the University, under 11 headings MAP 8

The report says the 44% "included witnesses to anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-Palestinian discrimination and harassment; those mistakenly targeted for being Muslim, Arab, and/or Palestinian; and others perceived as expressing solidarity with Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians, whether through scholarship or advocacy" MAP 122.

The survey was open to anyone at the University and is not statistically representative; it reflects those who chose to respond MAP 123.

Where the report focuses its recommendations

1. **Over-policing, under-protection** Review safety and risk assessments, police protest and postering without regard to content, and counter doxing MAP 9
2. **Protecting speech and academic freedom** Revise the memo on institutional statements, ensure fair process in complaints about speech, and guide government appointees MAP 9
3. **Capacity building** Build knowledge of Muslim, Arab and Palestinian lives, drawing on members' own expertise and experience MAP 9
4. **Partners and third parties** Consult on these experiences before renegotiating agreements with hospitals, federated colleges and school boards MAP 9, 10
5. **Temerty Faculty of Medicine** Address the "inordinate number of complaints" from medical faculty and learners MAP 10

What the working group found

"Incurious ignorance"

The most common pattern was not open bigotry but a general lack of knowledge of Muslim, Arab and Palestinian histories, cultures and lives, including Muslim religious obligations and the suppression of the study of Palestine MAP 8.

Stereotypes

Survey responses describe Muslims, Arabs and Palestinians being cast as terrorists, misogynists and antisemites MAP 8, 128.

Distrust and silence

Many do not use University complaint processes. They have no confidence in redress and fear reprisals, and some self-censor or turn to outside civil liberties groups and private insurance MAP 9.

Over-policed, under-protected

The pattern appeared in decisions on risk, safety and academic freedom, in responses to online harassment, and in how the University complies with national security rules MAP 9.

Medicine

The working group received "an inordinate number of complaints" from Temerty Faculty of Medicine faculty and learners, including about how affiliated hospitals handle complaints MAP 10.

Fundraising priorities

The Mississauga and Scarborough campuses have no academic fundraising priorities related to Muslim, Arab or Palestinian life, history or culture MAP 10, 110.

Requests the working group made that went unmet

- The Office of Research Security, Campus Safety (St. George) and the Office of Safety & High Risk declined to meet and sent written answers only MAP 9, 43, 121.
- The Division of University Advancement declined to meet MAP 39, 109.
- The University's asset management corporation, the Business Board, the Vice-President for Operations & Real Estate Partnerships, and the Mississauga Principal's and Dean's offices declined or did not respond MAP 121.
- The President did not answer the working group's specific questions on where the University is invested MAP 102.
- The Dalla Lana School of Public Health did not respond to follow-up questions MAP 52.

Asks not yet acted on

Requests the report records as refused, unanswered or still unresolved, and the recommendation the working group now makes on each.

What was asked	Who asked	What happened	What the report now recommends
Name Hearing Palestine an academic priority for fundraising	Hearing Palestine's leaders, every year since its 2020 founding MAP 30	Refused by the Faculty of Arts & Science every year, in a process its leaders called "procedurally opaque at best" MAP 30, 110	Revisit Palestine-related proposals at Mississauga, Scarborough and Arts & Science, with feedback if not adopted (Rec. 15B) MAP 151
A report and recommendations on Islamophobia	The 2017 advisory table and the 2019 Anti-Islamophobia Working Group MAP 12	Neither produced a report with recommendations MAP 12	Advisory groups to be consulted on carrying out the working group's recommendations (Rec. 3) MAP 148
Treat anti-Muslim, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian hate as seriously as other hate	Survey respondents and consultations, repeatedly MAP 26	A perception that the University gives these forms of hate insufficient importance MAP 26	Required training for managers and leaders (Rec. 6); clear duties for Deans and leaders to redress incidents, with escalation if they don't (Rec. 21B) MAP 148, 152
Fair process when someone's speech is complained about	Repeated requests MAP 63	The working group found a need for more transparency and protection for procedural fairness MAP 63	Guidance on notice, evidence and fairness for "call-ins" and complaints (Recs. 24E, 26, 39) MAP 153, 154, 156
Protection from reprisal	University members, repeatedly MAP 89	Many still do not complain, for fear of reprisals MAP 9, 114	Regular communication on how to file complaints, with protection from reprisals (Rec. 54A) MAP 159
Prayer space, without custodial costs falling on student groups	Muslim Students' Associations, students' unions and staff MAP 95	Space is limited by availability, custodial costs and teaching needs; a new St. George space and equity office work are under way MAP 95	A budget for custodial care, and Centres for Muslim Life in 10-year real estate plans (Rec. 43) MAP 157
Religious accommodation that works at the department level	Students MAP 116	Students still face challenges securing accommodation in their departments and divisions MAP 116	Share the equity office's accommodation resources widely, with best-practice guidance (Rec. 55F) MAP 160

Key recommendations

The five areas the report's executive summary sets out, with the office named in each recommendation MAP 9, 10. The report treats divestment and investment, and space for Muslim religious observance, as additional recommendations on narrower issues MAP 10; these are on page 5.

1 Over-policing, under-protection MAP 9

- **Vice-Presidents, Legal, Risk & Safety and Research & Innovation:** review risk and safety assessments, including under national security rules, for possible bias, and add the racial, gender, ethnic, place-of-origin and religious identity of complainants and respondents to the annual complaints report. Rec. 16 MAP 151
- **Provost and Vice-Provost, Students:** tell Campus Safety on all three campuses, as soon as reasonably possible, that handing out flyers is not "postering" and should not be policed as such. Rec. 18 MAP 152
- **The University:** condemn online platforms with a nexus to a foreign government; fund cybersecurity and legal help, and removal of personal information from data brokers; and support alumni doxed in 2023–24. Rec. 13 MAP 150, 151
- **Provost:** issue guidance that administrators show transparency and restraint before changing an already publicized event after complaints, with detailed written reasons and policy-based justification for cancelling or delaying it. Rec. 35 MAP 155

2 Protecting speech and academic freedom MAP 9

- **Provost and Vice-President, Communications:** revise the April 2024 memo on institutional statements to remove the Kalven Report, expressly reject "institutional neutrality," and stop it being extended to academic or public programming. Rec. 23 MAP 153
- **The University and Provost:** publish fair-process guidance for "call-in" conversations about speech, including notice and an evidence threshold such as "clear and convincing"; require administrators who hold such conversations to complete training within six months of taking the role; and reform the complaints process. Rec. 24, 26 MAP 153, 154
- **Vice-Provost, Students:** refuse use of space only on content-neutral grounds, in writing with reasons, never based on how third parties might react, and explain how to appeal. Rec. 29 MAP 154
- **Governing Council secretariat:** prepare guidance for government-appointed members on institutional autonomy and academic freedom, and require all members to complete training on anti-Muslim, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian discrimination before their terms begin. Rec. 32 MAP 155

3 Capacity building MAP 9

- **Mississauga and Scarborough campuses, and St. George Deans:** create Muslim, Arab and Palestinian advisory groups, to be consulted on carrying out these recommendations, planning, communications and recruitment. Rec. 3 MAP 148
- **President and Provost:** create an external Muslim, Arab and Palestinian Community Advisory Council, including alumni. Rec. 7 MAP 148
- **Provost:** create a $1,000,000 start-up fund to incubate academic priorities on Muslim, Arab and Palestinian life, history and culture; plan the growth of the Muslims in Canada Archives; and expand Arabic, Urdu and Farsi teaching. Rec. 50 MAP 159
- **Dean of Arts & Science and Chief Librarian:** expand the Institute of Islamic Studies' research on these forms of discrimination; speed up Palestine Studies library guides; and propose an Islamic Studies librarian every year until funded. Rec. 51, 53 MAP 159

4 Partners and third parties MAP 9, 10

- **The University:** at the next negotiation with affiliated hospitals, propose a protocol on who handles complaints about speech, with fair process and evidence requirements. The working group would prefer a stronger role for the University. Rec. 38 MAP 156
- **Provost and President:** review agreements with partners such as hospitals and school boards so that complaints about members' off-site speech are handled with protection for free speech and fair process. Rec. 40 MAP 156
- **Deans:** complain promptly to the licensing body when a professional refuses to complete a student's placement because of the student's lawful speech, and protect the student's studies. Rec. 41 MAP 157

5 Temerty Faculty of Medicine MAP 10

- **Provost and Deans of Faculties linked to hospitals:** with the hospital network, publish best-practice guides on these forms of discrimination, with training for clinical faculty who supervise learners, and fair-process guidance for professionalism complaints. Rec. 36 MAP 156
- **Medicine, Public Health and other health sciences Faculties:** develop a shared plan on Muslim, Arab and Palestinian communities and health equity, including study of discrimination's effects on public and mental health. Rec. 37 MAP 156

Other recommendations

A selection of the report's remaining recommendations. All 57 are in Appendix G MAP 147–161.

Area	Recommendation	Rec.
Data	Separate Arab and Palestinian identities in the student census and employee survey; run a representative campus-climate survey MAP 147	1–2
Palestine studies	Revisit Palestine-related fundraising proposals, with feedback; support the proposed Centre for Palestine Studies at Scarborough MAP 151	15
Prayer space	Fund custodial care for prayer space; explore Centres for Muslim Life in 10-year real estate plans MAP 157	43
Investment	Publish human rights risk reporting; consider an absolute prohibition on investments that aid violations of peremptory norms of international law MAP 158	47
Palestinian scholars	Help rebuild Gaza's educational institutions; fully fund Palestinian postdoctoral fellows, scholars and at-risk students MAP 158	48
Staff	Track complaints and report trends yearly; address limited Muslim, Arab and Palestinian senior leadership; support affinity groups MAP 159, 160	54
Students	Recruitment and access funds, scholarships, culturally attuned mental health supports, and wider sharing of accommodation resources MAP 160	55

Recommendations are summarized from the report's wording. The working group notes that its recommendations will need collegial governance to decide how best to respond MAP 9.

ABOUT MCRO

The Muslim Communities Research Observatory is an independent research observatory. We collect and synthesize rigorous research on Muslim communities, turn it into policy briefs, dashboards and toolkits, and help leaders and organizations put that evidence to work. Contact: admin@mcro.ca

Source (numbers are page numbers): **MAP** Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian Discrimination Working Group (2026). *Over-Policed, Under-Protected: Final Report and Recommendations of the Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian Discrimination Working Group at the University of Toronto.* University of Toronto, November 2026. Survey figures are from a non-probability sample.