

WHEN YOU HEAR...



“FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA,
PALESTINE WILL BE FREE.”

WHAT THAT MESSAGE MEANS:

The phrase, "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," has emerged as a **HATEFUL** and **GENOCIDAL** statement.

Its origins and use in anti-Israel campaigns is a **denial** of the Jewish right to self-determination. This phrase is associated with groups that have not only opposed Israel's existence but have also resorted to violence to pursue their political aims.

The slogan's call for a **Palestinian state from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea** encompasses the land that is internationally recognised as Israel, which must be interpreted as a call for the **ELIMINATION** of the nation-state of Israel and its citizens.

The phrase has been popularized by Palestinian terrorist groups, including **Hamas** and the **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)**, groups which have been listed as **terrorist organizations** by Canada. The use of this phrase has been particularly combative amid the violence and wars between Israel and Hamas.



HOW THIS AFFECTS SCHOOLS & STUDENTS

This sentiment, when voiced in educational settings such as **elementary, high schools, and post secondary schools** can significantly affect the sense of **security** and **belonging** of **Jewish students**. The feeling of being targeted or ostracized for one's national or religious identity is contrary to the principles of a safe and inclusive learning environment that Canadian schools strive to uphold.

B'nai Brith Canada, a leading voice against antisemitism, emphasizes the importance of understanding the deep-seated implications of such slogans and the necessity for educational institutions to address them with sensitivity and resolve.

Those in positions of authority in our educational systems must take a **zero-tolerance** approach to the promotion of hate against identifiable groups within its student body. This requires **immediate intervention**, and **appropriate discipline** based on the circumstances. Hateful and genocidal slogans such as "from the river to the sea" cannot be normalized. Canadian schools must maintain a space where **all students, regardless of their background**, can engage in **learning and dialogue free from intimidation or prejudice**.

For more information visit bnaibrith.ca

The chant "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," is an example of criminal incitement and the willful promotion of **hatred against the Jewish community** when featured at **public rallies**, particularly when contextualized by other hateful components, which can include, but are not limited to:

- **the public display of iconography associated with listed terror entities,**
- **the tone of speakers,**
- **the wording of other chants in English, French and other languages,**
- **flags of terrorist entities,**
- **hateful and/or inciteful signage,**
- **hateful and/or inciteful content of public speeches,**
- **calls to boycott businesses,**
- **intimidation tactics, and**
- **historical conduct of speakers and organizers.**

Being harassed for one's national or religious identity is contrary to the principles of a **safe** and **inclusive environment** that Canada strives to uphold. B'nai Brith Canada, a leading voice against antisemitism, emphasizes the importance of understanding the deep-seated implications of such slogans and the necessity for police organizations across Canada to address them in a timely and resolute manner. Those in positions of authority must take a **zero-tolerance** approach to the promotion of hate against identifiable groups. Hateful and genocidal slogans such as "from the river to the sea" **cannot, and must not, be normalized.**

A NUMBER OF FOREIGN JURISDICTIONS HAVE BANNED THE GENOCIDAL PHRASE

As of November 2023, in **Germany**, chanting the phrase "from the river to the sea" is being prosecuted in the country as a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment of up to three years or a fine.

<https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/kurzmeldungen/DE/2023/11/meldung-exekutiv.html>

On October 11th an anti-Israel protest was banned in **Vienna** for chanting "from the river to the sea", as it was deemed that the slogan echoed support for Hamas. On October 25, 2023, Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer has said that hateful slogans such as "from the river to the sea," will become a criminal offense in his country.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/from-river-sea-prompts-vienna-ban-pro-palestinian-protest-2023-10-11/>

On December 5th, **Prague** city hall banned an anti-Israel protest over the use of the phrase, stating that the slogan implied calling for the destruction of Israel. Weeks later the Czech Interior Ministry stated that holding up signs and chanting the slogan could be considered a criminal offence.

https://eud.praha.eu/pub/deska/6000004/4/6000003%23MHMPAWO0A020%23MHMP0BRDQQQH%230/6000003%23MHMPAWO0A020%23MHMP0BRDQQQH/MHMP_2503664_2023.pdf

In **Estonia**, chanting the phrase or holding placards with the phrase on it amounts to incitement of hatred, and has been deemed as hate speech by Estonian authorities, under the country's revised 2023 hate speech laws.

<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/522012015002/consolide>

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People helping in the fight for human rights

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The Jewish community is **rightly concerned** with the **escalation of criminal hate incidents** stemming from repeated incitement activities. Criminal activity such as vandalism, harassment and violence can be expected as a **consequence of permitting repeated public hate speech and incitement rallies**.



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The Criminal Code of Canada provides clear recourse in such cases, specifically:

- **Section 319 (1) (Public incitement of hatred)**
Every one who, by communicating statements in any public place, incites hatred against any identifiable group where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace is guilty of
 - (a) an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or
 - (b) an offence punishable on summary conviction.
- **Section 319 (2) (Wilful promotion of hatred)**
Every one who, by communicating statements, other than in private conversation, wilfully promotes hatred against any identifiable group is guilty of
 - (a) an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or
 - (b) an offence punishable on summary conviction.

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On October 11th an anti-Israel protest was banned in **Vienna** for chanting "from the river to the sea", as it was deemed that the slogan echoed support for Hamas. In the subsequent weeks the Austrian government has debated banning the speech all together, as they have considered it "a call for murder."

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