

Dear Members of the Committee,

While I participated in the listening sessions, their format limited my ability to share the complexities and personal impact of this issue I face as an Israeli student on campus. Today, I hope to do just that.

At Stanford, I wear many hats with pride: an LL.M candidate, an officer dedicated to defending my home in the IDF, and a leader finding community in the Students for Israel Association. But above all, I'm a father. Recently, the thought of bringing my 18-month-old to campus fills me with dread.

This fear wasn't always there. Since October, a shift has occurred. I felt overwhelmed and alarmed by the beliefs and actions of the young generation of Stanford students: their radicalism, with some of them justifying or denying the Hamas terrorist attack, denying the rape of Israeli women and the murder or kidnapping of babies and children; their violent calls to action against my country; their misinformation and lack of historical knowledge of the situation. Chants like "from the river to the sea" and "globalize the intifada" land on my ears as clear calls to violence against me and my family, especially as someone who grew up during the early 2000s Intifada and witnessed firsthand the bombings and attacks on my city. The sting of potential erasure remains, even if the historical knowledge is unknown to all who chant these horrific slogans. It pains me to see the exclusive focus on Palestinian casualties while Israeli losses, equally tragic, fade from memory, if they were even ever acknowledged to begin with.

Missing a recent social event wasn't just about avoiding protests. It was about the sinking feeling when I learned my best friend's home in a civilian city was bombed that day. While respecting free speech, chants interpreted as calls for the destruction of my country and people create a hostile environment for students like me. This wasn't unique; many in the listening sessions felt dehumanized.

I urge the university to act, not to silence, but to foster understanding and safety. Here's what I propose:

1. Acknowledge the Impact: Publicly denounce chants like "Intifada" and "From the River to the Sea" can be deeply hurtful and intimidating to Israeli students, and also, to some Jewish students. Recognize the emotional weight they carry and their potential to create a hostile environment.

2. Foster Open Dialogue: Organize facilitated discussions where students from diverse backgrounds can respectfully engage in fact-based dialogue, share perspectives, and learn from each other. Let's bridge the gap of understanding and build empathy.

3. Provide Targeted Support: Offer resources and support specifically for students who feel targeted or unsafe due to their background. We need a safe space to voice concerns and access support without fear of judgment.

I'm not seeking to silence anyone. I believe in the power of respectful disagreement and open dialogue. However, my son deserves to feel safe on campus, regardless of the day or route. With your commitment to action, we can create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and help build a bridge towards understanding.

Sincerely,

Ehud Ephraim

LL.M candidate, class 24'