# Harvard reports reveal deep divisions and safety fears among Muslim and Jewish students



Harvard University has released two comprehensive reports detailing experiences of bigotry and abuse faced by Muslim and Jewish students amid a wave of protests that unsettled the Massachusetts campus last year. These reports, emerging from dual taskforces established in 2016, expose significant tensions within the university community, highlighting the complexity of political and ethnic identities in a highly charged environment.

The dual reports follow a year of extensive inquiry involving roughly 500 students and staff across 50 listening sessions, with Harvard President Alan Garber describing the accounts as “searing personal accounts.” The taskforces were created to tackle two distinct yet interrelated issues: one focusing on antisemitism and anti-Israel bias, and the other on anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-Palestinian discrimination.

Key findings revealed a stark contrast in campus safety perceptions, with 47% of Muslim respondents and 15% of Jewish respondents expressing feelings of physical insecurity, compared with 6% of Christian and non-believing respondents. Moreover, a majority of both Muslim (92%) and Jewish (61%) individuals reported fearing academic or professional repercussions for articulating their political convictions.

The taskforce addressing anti-Muslim bias documented that Arab-American students frequently endured derogatory slurs such as “terrorist,” “baby-killer,” and “towelhead,” particularly after displaying solidarity with Palestinians by wearing the keffiyeh. The report highlighted a pervasive culture of intimidation, linked to incidents of doxxing—targeted online exposure and harassment—of pro-Palestinian students falsely accused of terrorism support. The official discourse around Palestinian viewpoints was described as marginalised, heightening students' anxieties about expressing dissenting opinions.

Conversely, the antisemitism report painted a picture of a campus atmosphere in late 2023 that, for many Jewish and Israeli students, transformed into what was seen as an arena for “unfettered expression of pro-Palestinian solidarity and rage at Israel.” This atmosphere reportedly led to Jewish students feeling personally targeted. The taskforce deliberately avoided imposing a singular definition of antisemitism due to its contested nature, especially post-Hamas’ attack on Israel in October 2023 and the subsequent Gaza conflict. Instead, it prioritised lived experiences of exclusion and hateful conduct over externally developed definitions. The report observed that many Jewish and Israeli students found themselves “on the wrong side of a political binary,” facing bullying or allegations of supporting genocide due to their real or presumed Zionist views. A smaller cohort of anti-Zionist Jewish students active in protests expressed feelings of estrangement from mainstream Jewish campus groups.

In response to the reports, President Garber indicated that Harvard intends to promote “productive and civil dialogue” and “viewpoint diversity” by reviewing its admissions policies, faculty appointments, curricula, orientation, training programmes, and disciplinary procedures. Plans include a research initiative on antisemitism and a historical analysis of Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians at Harvard, alongside reforms aimed at making disciplinary processes more equitable and effective.

These developments come amid a broader context of federal scrutiny under the Trump administration, which has pressed Harvard and other universities to curtail what it describes as antisemitic activism and political bias on campuses. This pressure intensified following the escalation of conflict between Israel and Hamas in 2023. The administration froze $2.2 billion in research grants as it sought to enforce audits and reforms geared towards “viewpoint diversity,” measures Harvard has legally contested, describing them as unconstitutional interference.

The reports explicitly caution against external imposition of reforms, emphasising the necessity of internal consensus within the Harvard community to implement meaningful changes.

Reactions to the findings have been mixed. Corey Saylor, research and advocacy director at the Council on American Islamic Relations, reiterated the organisation’s position that Harvard remains hostile to Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians but expressed cautious optimism should the university enact substantive improvements. In contrast, Vlad Khaykin, executive vice president of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, sharply criticised the university’s delayed recognition of antisemitism, calling it “a disgrace of historic proportions” and emblematic of a wider academic trend legitimising antisemitic attitudes.

The Guardian is reporting that these detailed investigations underscore the ongoing challenges faced by universities in navigating free expression, political activism, and the protection of minority communities within diverse academic environments.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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6. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/30/harvard-reports-antisemitism-islamophobia-campus> - This report underscores the ongoing challenges faced by universities in navigating free expression, political activism, and the protection of minority communities within diverse academic environments, highlighting Harvard's internal reports on antisemitism and Islamophobia.
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