

April 12, 2018



Mayor Steve Schewel  
Members of City Council  
City of Durham  
101 City Hall Plaza  
Durham, NC 27701

Dear Mayor Schewel and City Council Members:

On behalf of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), I write to express concern over potential misconceptions by the Durham City Council about law enforcement programs in Israel run by the ADL. We have worked with law enforcement on issues related to combating hate crimes and extremism, and strengthening community engagement for decades. And having seen the tremendous benefits these trips provide we want to set the record straight about certain false accusations made against such programs.

The *Demilitarize! From Durham2Palestine* petition is part of a national campaign organized by *Jewish Voice for Peace* (JVP), a small and unrepresentative group whose fiercely anti-Israel organizational views are overwhelmingly rejected by the larger Jewish community, its institutions, and leaders. The group uses manipulative tactics and false propaganda with the sole intent of demonizing Israel—the only democracy in the Middle East and a critical American ally.

We respect the right of every person to make their own decisions about beliefs and associations. But formal adoption by the City Council of any document or statement that singles out training programs in Israel as having a negative, race-based effect on U.S. law enforcement's conduct and practices would be neither justified nor fair. *The Demilitarize! From Durham2Palestine* petition promotes the malicious and erroneous charge that American police exchange programs with Israel, like the ones led by ADL, play a role in police militarization, and oppression and brutality against Americans of color. This accusation is ludicrously false.

During our exchanges, American law enforcement leaders spend time in Israel learning how to prevent and respond to terror attacks. Israeli law enforcement officials are internationally-recognized as experts in terrorism prevention and response, due to their unfortunate vast experience dealing with terror. They have valuable expertise on how to balance the need for security with protections accorded by the laws and values of a democratic country. The online petition also fails to acknowledge that the programs we run have included meetings with not only the Israel National Police, but also with the Palestinian Civilian Police. Participants learn about local police operations, training, information sharing, and strategies for fighting terror while also being responsible for everyday police work.

American law enforcement leaders who participate in these programs return to the U.S. better able to protect their communities from terrorism and respond to attacks ranging from bombings to active shooter situations. It is also worth noting that the U. S. government—through the State Department and the Justice Department— has, for decades, in Democratic and Republican

administrations, regularly conducted law enforcement exchange trainings with its closest democratic allies.

ADL is one of the nation's most respected civil rights and human relations organizations. The League is the leading organization in the fight against hate in all of its forms, and we have built our reputation over 100 years of service. Forty-five states and the District of Columbia have hate crimes laws based on or similar to ADL's model. We chaired the coalition of more than two hundred civil rights organizations which worked for more than a decade to help secure enactment of the historic Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which was signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2009.

And, as a central part of our mission, we understand the necessity of working with law enforcement. Aside from our exchange programs, ADL regularly trains law enforcement at the local, state, and federal levels. Our trainings include focused sessions on: managing implicit bias, which help officers recognize their own unconscious biases and how they affect their work and daily interactions with the public; understanding law enforcement's role as protectors of all of the people they serve and as guardians of civil rights and individual freedom; and prevention and response to hate and bias-motivated crimes. ADL submitted testimony for the Obama Administration's forward-looking Task Force on 21st Century Policing and played a lead role in helping to craft the International Association of Chief of Police Model Policy on Hate Crime.

Far from training that "helps the police terrorize Black and Brown communities," ADL's law enforcement programs, including those in Israel, are designed to equip officers with the knowledge, understanding, and sense of accountability necessary to help safeguard all of our communities and ensure that our civil rights and liberties are rigorously protected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Doron F. Ezickson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Doron F. Ezickson  
Washington, D.C. Regional Director  
Anti-Defamation League