



January 20, 2022

President Joan Gabel  
Office of the President  
University of Minnesota

Dear President Gabel:

On behalf of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas (JCRC) and Minnesota Hillel, we write briefly because sometimes a problem is so manifest that the fewer words said the better.

Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) invited a speaker, [Mohammed El-Kurd](#), who among many antisemitic statements notoriously accuses Israelis of harvesting and eating the organs of dead Palestinians. This is the very definition of blood libel, which we've discussed with Vice Presidents Croson and Phillips and has also been communicated to you and your administration by Jewish students as recently as last night.

Moreover, in advance of his talk tomorrow night on the Jewish Sabbath, El-Kurd tweeted: "Fuck Israel and fuck the genocidal death cult that is Zionism." At best, such unhinged profanity contributes nothing to the discourse on a highly complex and polarizing issue. At worst, such incitement only deepens hatred and menace on campus and in the broader community.

If this is the will of the SJP, it is their legal right to demonstrate in the marketplace of ideas. Such speech as inflammatory and hateful as it is – contributing little to the University community and reinforcing SJP's self-imposed estrangement from our wonderful University and its guiding principles – is still protected speech.

The University, however, must come to grips with the repeated expressions of incendiary antisemitism suborned by campus groups. Saying nothing or doing nothing in opposition to such foul Jew hatred is no longer a viable option. The University also has a voice, and it must speak in defense of its values here.

As seen, again, in the Congregation Beth Israel hostage taking, terrorists are stalking American Jews. It's time for all of us, including the University, to publicly and with specificity take a stand against antisemitism from wherever it may occur on the political spectrum.

We and the communities we represent look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Steve Hunegs  
Executive Director, JCRC

Benjie Kaplan  
Executive Director, Minnesota Hillel