

To: Durham Human Rights Commission
From: Demilitarize! Durham2Palestine Coalition (D2P Coalition)
Date: September 4, 2018
Subject: D2P Coalition Response to Voice for Israel and Jewish Federation HRC Complaint

In May, 2018, the Voice for Israel and the Jewish Federation of Durham-Chapel Hill (hereafter “Jewish Federation”) filed a complaint with the Durham Human Rights Commission regarding the City Council’s new policy that prohibits the Durham police from participating in military style training with any government, including Israel. The following is a response by the Demilitarize! Durham2Palestine Coalition (hereafter “D2P Coalition”) to the many allegations in this complaint.

ALLEGATION: Jewish Voice for Peace seeks to create a discriminatory environment against Jews, promotes hate and promotes/enables anti-Semitism

RESPONSE: First, Voice for Israel and the Jewish Federation fail to appreciate that the efforts to change the Durham City policy on police exchanges with Israel were undertaken by the Durham2Palestine (D2P) *Coalition*, and that Jewish Voice for Peace Triangle NC chapter (“JVP”) is just *one* member of this Coalition. The D2P Coalition coalesced around a mission to end police exchanges between Israel and Durham as part of a larger goal of moving precious resources away from militarization, war, occupation and policing, and towards investing in Black & Brown communities (jobs, healthcare, housing, etc.). The Coalition has 10 founding partners, including SpiritHouse, Durham For All, the Abrahamic Initiative on the Middle East (AIME), Black Youth Project 100 - Durham Chapter (BYP100), JVP-Triangle NC, the Muslim American Public Affairs Council (MAPAC), and the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapters at Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill. The Coalition also has 18+ official endorsers, including People’s Alliance, Alerta Migratoria, Southerners on New Ground (SONG), Watts Street Baptist Church Peace and Reconciliation Mission Group, Justice Ministry Council of the Eno River Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship and Triangle Showing Up for Racial Justice (TSURJ). Each organization connected to the Coalition is committed to protecting human rights and opposing racism, Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism.

By singling out and demonizing JVP, Voice for Israel and the Jewish Federation are not only erasing the work of coalition member organizations most impacted by militarization and policing; but they are also making public a long-standing schism within the Jewish Community over two very different political orientations: 1) Defend Israel unconditionally and squash criticisms of its human rights abuses of Palestinians and Israelis of color, or 2) Bring such human rights violations to light and demand accountability of the Israeli government, military and police and of those in the U.S. whose complicity enables an ongoing Occupation. Virtually every major organization committed to protecting human rights (including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the United Nations), as well as Jewish Human Rights organizations within Israel (e.g. B’Tselem) have been outspoken in their criticisms of the Israeli government’s policing and treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank, Jerusalem, Gaza and Israel proper. See the D2P Coalition Statement, with cites to Human Rights Groups’ websites and their documentation of Israeli human rights violations. (Attachment 1).

Notwithstanding this reality, complainants Voice for Israel and the Jewish Federation never voice publicly any criticisms of the Israeli government, military or police. They never raise questions about Israel's Occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem or Gaza. For example, they never voiced a single criticism or concern about Israel's recent sniper killings of over 160 unarmed civilians in Gaza, including a medic and a journalist, as the people in Gaza protested Israel's 10 year-old blockade and virtual imprisonment that has created a human rights crisis. Contrast that with The New York Times, Doctors Without Borders and scores of human rights organizations within and outside of Israel, who have issued scathing criticisms of Israel for these shocking killings when non-lethal force would have easily met all of Israel's alleged concerns.

Jewish Voice for Peace has a different approach. JVP is inspired by Jewish traditions to work for justice, and understands such work as central to our commitment to human and civil rights. JVP's work is part of a broader struggle and commitment to end racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and all forms of oppression. JVP works to build Jewish communities that reflect the understanding that being Jewish and Judaism are not synonymous with Zionism or uncritical support for Israel.

Utilizing its mailing list of over 225,000 persons (largely, but not exclusively, Jews) and its 70+ local chapters (like JVP-Triangle NC) , JVP promotes the following mission:

Jewish Voice for Peace opposes anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim, and anti-Arab bigotry and oppression. JVP seeks an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem; security and self-determination for Israelis and Palestinians; a just solution for Palestinian refugees based on principles established in international law; an end to violence against civilians; and peace and justice for all peoples of the Middle East.

JVP members are inspired by Jewish tradition to work together for peace, social justice, equality, human rights, respect for international law, and a US. foreign policy based on these ideals.

JVP guiding principles and major policies include the following:

JVP represents a growing portion of Jewish Americans who feel compelled to let the world know that many Jews oppose the actions of the Israeli government, military and police in regards to their treatment of Palestinians.

JVP opposes attempts to silence critics of Israel by conflating legitimate criticism with anti-Semitism.

JVP supports any solution to the Israel-Palestine situation that is consistent with the full rights of both Palestinians and Israeli Jews, whether one binational state, two states, or some other solution, believing it is up to Israelis and Palestinians to reach a mutually agreed upon solution.

JVP proudly endorses the Palestinian civil society call for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) until Israel abides by international law. JVP rejects the assertion that BDS is inherently anti-Semitic. JVP believes BDS is the most effective grassroots means for applying nonviolent pressure to change Israeli policies.

JVP's mission, guiding principles and major policies are more fully set out in Attachment 2.

JVP and the D2P Coalition have a fundamentally different approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict than Voice for Israel and the Jewish Federation. Although the D2P Coalition members strongly believe that the facts on the ground support our position that the Israeli military and police have committed and will continue to commit egregious human rights violations, we acknowledge that this is a political debate that divides the Jewish community. This reality, and the fact that progressive minded Jews are heavily invested and active in this critical response towards the actions of the Israeli government, military and police, make it abundantly clear that this debate is NOT about anti-Semitism.

ALLEGATION: It is anti-Semitic and a “blood libel” to link in any way Israel’s counter-terrorism training of US police forces and the hostile police actions toward minorities in the US.

RESPONSE - It is accurate and certainly not anti-Semitic for the D2P Campaign and JVP to make the following two links. Link one: The increased militarization of police forces across the US has brought suffering to Communities of Color¹ in this country and scores of [deaths of young Black and Brown people](#).² Policing in the US has a long history of violence and harm against Black and Brown communities, and the DPD is no exception. From traffic stops that target Black drivers, to SWAT teams entering Black people’s homes illegally, to checkpoints that occupy immigrant neighborhoods, to racial profiling, to police murders of Black, Brown, and disabled people, everyday militarization of police around the country, including Durham, endangers all of us and Communities of Color in particular. It is possible that even Voice for Israel and the Jewish Federation agree with this first link.

Link two: Having the Durham police force undergo “counterterrorism”³ training offered by a country like Israel that is criticized by major human rights organizations inside and outside of its borders for using aggressive and deadly militaristic tactics against Palestinians and Jews of Color is likely to move our police force in a more militaristic direction. Such movement is likely to exacerbate the harmful impact of policing on Communities of Color.

¹LSE US Centre article based on June, 2018 report - *Police Militarization and the Use of Lethal Force*. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2018/07/05/evidence-suggests-the-militarization-of-police-forces-leads-to-more-civilian-deaths/>

²USA Today - March 29, 2018: [Police killings of black men in the U.S. and what happened to the officers](#).

³We are using the term counterterrorism since this is the term used by the trainers. We find it important to state that this term is often a euphemism used to obscure the institutionalization of racial profiling, infiltration and surveillance of activists and communities of color, and other human rights violations.

Virtually all major human rights organizations have cited the Israeli police and military forces for racial profiling, over-surveillance of the public, disproportionate responses to non-violent or non-threatening protests, arbitrary and sustained detentions without due process, and operating a defacto shoot-to-kill policy of suspected terrorists even when these alleged suspects do not pose an immediate threat. See Attachment 1. Groups including the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Israel's B'Tselem, and former Israeli soldiers (e.g. [Breaking the Silence](#)) have cited the Israeli police and military forces for this long list of abusive tactics. Human Rights Watch has noted that the outcome of policing by Israel in Occupied Palestinian territories has not been to improve the well-being of, or to promote the public safety of, the policed community, but serves to maintain a racially segregated society in which one group is made inferior via the denial of rights and dignity.⁴ Amnesty International's most recent report for 2017-18⁵ cites Israel for scores of major human rights violations against Palestinians, including its racial profiling/arbitrary arrests and detentions; its subjecting of "Palestinian detainees, including children, to torture and other ill-treatment with impunity, particularly during arrest and interrogation," its unlawful killing of scores of Palestinians, including children, many of whom "were shot and unlawfully killed while posing no immediate threat to life;" its "excessive and sometimes lethal force" used against unarmed protesters; its limitation of freedom of assembly, speech and dissent; and its "collective punishment" of the people of Gaza and the creation of a human rights crisis by its blockade of Gaza.

Israel's treatment of Jews of Color within the country - most of whom are Israeli citizens - has also become the focus of human rights groups, as such Jews "complain of police brutality, a lack of good jobs and discrimination from employers."⁶ Jews of Color also point to Israel's forced deportation of African asylum seekers as a racist trend to keep Israel more "white."⁷

This well-documented history of the Israeli police's overly militaristic approaches to Communities of Color within its own purview should not serve as a model for Durham. Thus, the Council's action was extremely appropriate and timely. The Council's new policy specifically sets out the Council's concern about the militarization of police forces around the country and the impact that racial profiling and militarization cause for Communities of Color. The Council correctly concluded that such exchanges do not support the kind of policing that it wants here in Durham, as we move to a time "when we are beyond policing—when everyone has a good job and excellent health care and a safe, warm, affordable place to live."

⁴Human Rights Watch 2017/18 Report and massive *Separate and Unequal* Report documenting the systematic and comprehensive discrimination against Palestinians and privileging of Jewish settlers and their rights in the Occupied Territories.

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/israel/palestine>
and <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/12/19/separate-and-unequal/israels-discriminatory-treatment-palestinians-occupied>

⁵Amnesty International Report: Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories 2017/18
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/report-israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/>

⁶Newsweek magazine article, October 7, 2016 - [Why Ethiopian Jews Face Increasing Discrimination and Police Brutality in Israel.](#)

⁷[thegrio.com 1/8/18](#)

ALLEGATION: There is no relationship between the City of Durham Police Department and the State of Israel. The City Council’s singling out of Israel was gratuitous and without any facts to support it.

RESPONSE: Voice for Israel and the Jewish Federation’s position is factually false and thus they misunderstand (or intentionally obfuscate) why it is entirely appropriate to mention Israel specifically in the new Durham policy.

First, Israel is the only country in the world that has ever provided counterterrorism training to Durham police officers - specifically former Durham Police Chief Lopez and two of his Durham Commanders. In a WRAL.com April 16, 2016 report, former Chief Lopez confirms he and two of his Commanders engaged in anti-terrorism training with the Israeli police. Furthermore, our current Durham Police Chief, Cerelyn Davis, while working with the Atlanta police force, established an exchange program with the Israeli police and military (labeled “APLI” - Atlanta Police Leadership Institute) that centered on so-called counterterrorism techniques. According to Chief Davis’ [online resume](#), APLI “coordinat[ed] all aspects of Israeli exchange and curriculum” for the Atlanta police. According to the City of Atlanta website, the APLI program partners with the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE) and, in conjunction with Israel, provides participants with training in “counterterrorism.” The Atlanta website further states that the APLI program includes training “where officers learn tactics on preventing acts of terror.” (The claim that the APLI exchange program with Israel only promotes some type of benign “leadership development” or “refugee assistance” training is simply not true.) The connection of these programs to Israel and their promotion of Islamophobia has been much criticized in the media.⁸

Second, Israel is the only country in the world that solicits and engages local police leaders from across the United States to engage in their counter terrorism training programs. This is evidenced by the 2017 Anti-Defamation League recruitment brochure presented to Council and included here as Attachment 3 (ADL Israel police exchange brochure 2017). This brochure is just one example of how Israel, through its US collaborating organizations, attempts to convince local US police departments to send leaders to participate in an all expense-paid trip to Israel and receive anti-terrorist training.

There is no question that these trainings are about “counterterrorism.” In addition to the APLI and GILEE citations above, the ADL brochure (Attachment 3) lists the training topics as preventing and responding to terrorist attacks, intelligence gathering, and the evolution of terrorist tactics. Two other major providers of these trainings state that they are to strengthen law enforcement counterterrorism practices and security tactics. Even the Atlanta Mayor characterized these trainings as pertaining to counterterrorism techniques.⁹ See also the APLI quotations above. There is simply no denying that these trainings are inextricably linked to the militarization of Israel’s police and security forces and serve to export that mindset and those tactics to police departments in the US.

⁸<https://mondoweiss.net/2016/01/enforcement-training-terrorism/>

⁹<https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/rania-khalek/atlanta-mayor-rejects-demand-end-israel-police-training>

Third, Israel is the only country in the world that, through its agents, advertises that *the Durham Police Department* has participated in exchanges with Israeli police and security forces as part of an effort to recruit more US police leaders to sign up for these trainings. An example of this is found in the ADL brochure, which lists Durham as one of the US police departments participating in the Israeli counter-terrorism training. It is important to note is that all of this is done without the knowledge or permission of the City of Durham.

For these reasons, it would have been entirely appropriate for the Durham City Council to name only Israel and limit its new policy to possible Durham-Israel police exchanges. Yet the Council chose not to do so. The new Durham City Council policy states: *“The council opposes international exchanges with any country in which Durham officers receive military-style training since such exchanges do not support the kind of policing we want here in the City of Durham.”* (emphasis added). And while the policy correctly and necessarily captures the history of Durham police exchanges, which have been exclusively with Israel, Mayor Schewel has made it clear publicly that all countries, including Israel, will be held to exactly the same standard in terms of meeting this new policy.¹⁰

Complainants would have us believe that there is a problem naming Israel in this new policing policy. *The problem* is what Israel is doing – amassing a dismal human rights record in its policing of Palestinians and Jews of Color and then creating this deadly exchange between police forces that shares worst policing practices and only contributes to the militarization of US police forces. And since Israel is the only country in the world providing these police exchange junkets, the only country in the world that has trained Durham police leaders in so-called counterterrorism, and the only country in the world that advertises its training of Durham police officers across the US, it would be duplicitous and confusing NOT to mention Israel. If we were talking about any country in the world other than Israel, we would not hesitate to name them in the policy in light of their quintessentially unique role in the training at issue. The only reason this is raised as an issue by the conventional Jewish community is because they continue to promote the falsehood that any criticism of Israel is by definition anti-Semitic.

ALLEGATION: JVP’s actions are not only anti-Israel; they also promote and enable anti-Semitism. Voice for Israel and the Jewish Federation allege two examples of this: The City Council “shamefully gave a podium” during the April public hearing to a person who made anti-Semitic comments, and the discovery of anti-semitic posters and flyers from a white nationalist group in Downtown Durham a few weeks later.

RESPONSE: All member groups of the Demilitarize! Durham2Palestine Coalition condemn anti-Semitism in all its forms. The claims that the City Council is somehow complicit in the anti-Semitic statements and posters cited is outrageous and without any factual basis.

It is true that the statements made by a speaker at the Durham Council meeting (“Synagogue of Satan”) were anti-Semitic. The D2P Coalition opposed these statements that night and oppose them now. Both of the D2P Coalition speakers who spoke after these remarks made it crystal

¹⁰<https://www.heraldsun.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article216301995.html>

clear that this person was not speaking on behalf of the Coalition and that the Coalition condemns anti-Semitism and rejects any support that might come from a place of anti-Semitism. (We were not alone in this, as the Mayor and City Council members interrupted the speaker to denounce his statements and name them as anti-Semitic.) It is worth acknowledging that this particular speaker also has a history of constructive work in the community, and members of the D2P Coalition approached him after the public hearing to address these unacceptable remarks.

To contend that the City Council “shamefully gave a podium” is itself shameful and false. The City Council is steadfast in its commitment to provide an opportunity for Durham residents to voice their opinions about important matters before the Council. Council and Mayor Schewel went out of their way to insure that all voices were heard during the April 18th public hearing. Voice of Israel and the Jewish Federation took full advantage of this opportunity, putting forward dozens of speakers. The City Council cannot anticipate what each speaker might say; in fact, Mayor Schewel immediately rebuked the speaker in question for his anti-Semitic remarks. Our Council’s commitment to provide space for citizen voices should be a source of pride, not shame.

The actions of the white nationalist groups that put out posters in May were anti-Semitic - the D2P Coalition and JVP condemn these actions. Yet this did not result from some alleged “environment” created by the new policy as complainants would have you believe. These actions of white supremacy groups have been around for decades, and are fueled by the rise of hatred, racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia that has been part of the Trump campaign and administration¹¹ from the very beginning. The particular anti-Semitic and racist flyers in Durham were distributed by a group called [the Nationalist Socialist Legion](#). Over the last two years, this group has posted white supremacist flyers at universities in fourteen different states and held rallies in over a dozen states.¹² It is the rise of white nationalism and neo-Nazi groups like the National Socialist Legion, not the new City Council policy, that emboldens right wing misanthropes to post racist and anti-Semitic flyers in Durham and in dozens of states and universities across the country.

The D2P Coalition has been and will continue to oppose white nationalism. It is also worth mentioning that at least two members of our local JVP chapter were in Charlottesville protesting neo-Nazism on August 11-12, 2017. Voice for Israel and the Jewish Federation should be ashamed of lumping together City Council members or members of the Demilitarize! Durham2Palestine Coalition with such hatemongers.

ALLEGATION: The City Council’s actions violate the spirit of North Carolina’s anti-BDS law (N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 147-86.80 – 147.86.83), and may implicate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of

¹¹For example, President Trump made alt right leader Steve Bannon a focal point of his election campaign and his first White House administrative team. At the time, Bannon was chair of Breitbart News Network, a site he declared “the platform of the alt-right,” had made many white supremacist comments himself, and freely admitted that the white nationalists attracted to his alt-right politics are racist and anti-Semitic.

¹²<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/vanguard-america>

1964 and N.C. Gen. Stat. §143-422.2 (North Carolina’s public policy “to protect and safeguard the right of all persons to seek, obtain and hold employment without discrimination”).

RESPONSE: North Carolina’s anti-BDS law is an affront to free speech and has been condemned by progressive organizations across the country. Even so, it has no application whatsoever to this new policy for a host of reasons, including the following: the law only applies to companies, not state institutions; the law only concerns actions with an economic impact of greater than \$20,000,000; and the law does not cover actions, like the City Council policy, that impact more than just the State of Israel. As mentioned above, new Durham City Council policy states: *“The council opposes international exchanges with any country in which Durham officers receive military-style training since such exchanges do not support the kind of policing we want here in the City of Durham.”*

The argument that the new City Council policy might implicate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and N.C. Gen. Stat. §143-422.2, two statutes focused exclusively on discrimination *in employment*, is simply ludicrous. No self-respecting civil rights attorney would pursue such a frivolous employment claim or contend that these employment statutes have any bearing on this debate.

ALLEGATION: **The City Council’s statement has created a painful and unnecessary divide in our community, causing many Jews and Israel supporters to feel targeted and unwelcome in the City of Durham.**

RESPONSE: We regret that any individuals might feel unwelcome in Durham for any reason. And there are several reasons why this is not a viable argument in this situation.

First, the HRC will surely keep in mind that the purpose of the new policy is to prevent the further militarization of our own police, which makes People of Color in Durham feel “unwelcome” and actually endangers them *every single day*. They do not have white privilege and many do not have class privilege to fall back on when they are targeted.

Second, the Jewish members of our coalition point out that a major cause of this problem is too many leaders within the Jewish establishment have been on a mission for years to conflate criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism. It is a message that many congregants receive week after week in their temples, and organizations like Voice for Israel make a regular part of their messaging. This indoctrination causes some Jews to misconstrue basic and justified criticisms of the actions of the Israeli military and police as attacks on Jews and Judaism. We, including our Jewish community, would be loathe to apply this dichotomy in other instances. Imagine conflating criticism of the policies and actions of the US government under President Donald Trump with anti-Americanism. Many of us think it is our duty as true Americans to raise our voices against the actions of our government when such actions violate people’s rights. Yet the conventional Jewish community continues to promote the idea that Jews and others who are critical of Israel are enemies of the Jewish people and not real Jews.

Third, it is inevitable that whenever the City Council or a public body like the HRC takes a particular position on a matter of public concern, some people who oppose the action may feel alienated and less “welcome” in their own city. For example, when the Durham City Council adopted a resolution supporting same-sex marriage in 2009, it undoubtedly made many conservative and religious members of our community feel “unwelcome” in Durham. When the Durham City Council adopted a resolution endorsing the efforts of non-tenure-track, contingent faculty at Duke University to form a union, this likely alienated those business leaders and others who feel unions are anathema to the city in which they reside. When the HRC in 2016 adopted a resolution criticizing what immigration officials and ICE were doing to immigrant children in Durham, it is only to be expected that those Durham residents who feel threatened by immigrants came away with a sense of being “less welcome” in our community. And the list goes on and on - the Council’s resolution against the Death Penalty, for example.

TWO ADDITIONAL POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. The complainants and their supporters do not have clean hands.

Voice for Israel, the Jewish Federation and their supporters have long claimed to speak for the entire Jewish community, yet engage in an ongoing practice of making Jews who are critical of Israel in any fashion feel extremely “unwelcome” as members of the Jewish community - even in their places of worship. Just last weekend, the Federation and Voice for Israel held an event entitled “Jewish Community Responses,” purporting to be a gathering of the *entire* Jewish community to discuss a response to the new Durham City Council policy on police exchanges. Instead of platforming the diverse array of Jewish community perspectives, the speakers, including a Christian pastor, were from groups that were unilaterally opposed to the City Council policy. Upset that the “entire” Jewish community did not include a single voice in favor of the City Council policy, a group of progressive Jews asked to be included in the event. They were denied. A couple of Jews who attended the event submitted questions for consideration during the Q and A period, and virtually all of them were ignored. When two Jews attempted to pass out copies of their letter to the editor about being made invisible within the Jewish community on these types of issues, they immediately found themselves in the presence of 6-8 police officers and escorted out of the building under the threat of being arrested. At least one member of the crowd shouted, “You’re not Jewish!” as these two Jews were being forced to leave. So much for making everyone feel welcome!

Unfortunately, there are even more egregious examples of the length that advocates of the Federation and Voice for Israel position will go to target anyone critical of Israel. Supporters of the complainants started an internet trolling campaign targeting two young queer female Jewish religious teachers from Durham who, completely outside of school environment and their teaching duties, were supportive of the non-violent BDS movement. This campaign subjected these women - Sandra Korn in particular - to a barrage of appalling misogynist name-calling and profanity-laced attacks. These hateful emails, Facebook messages and tweets also called Sandra a Kapo, Judenrat, and other hateful names. See Attachment 4 - Letter to Federation from Concerned Jews 5/21/18. Unfortunately, the Federation took no action to address these complaints and has since fired (non-renewed) Sandra even though she is the

most senior and experienced teacher on the staff with an exemplary teaching career. There have also been attempts by supporters of the complainants to have Sandra fired from her job at Duke University Press (by forwarding some of Sandra's personal tweets to her boss) and to have Sandra removed from the Judea Reform Synagogue Board of Directors. These supporters have also contacted a scholarship office to try to revoke the financial aid of a Palestinian student member of the D2P coalition based on his political involvement; they have called the Mayor a Nazi sympathizer; they have yelled "White Lives Matter" to an African-American member of the D2P Coalition; they have called D2P coalition members liars in the press; all without justification.

The ongoing attacks on Jews and others who dare to be critical of the actions of the Israeli government, military and police go well beyond what is described above and make them feel extremely "unwelcome" in our community. At one point the D2P Coalition and JVP Triangle NC considered filing a HRC "counterclaim," highlighting all of the outrageous and intolerant actions undertaken by members of Jewish organizations, including complainants and their supporters. Yet we realized that the essence of the problem is that the Jewish community is a community divided, and it is inappropriate to ask the HRC to take any action that implies it is favoring one side's ability to voice its political positions over another and deciding which Jews speak on behalf of the Jewish community. This leads to our final point.

2. On the issue of police exchange programs, the role of the HRC should be limited to promoting healthy communication.

The new City Council policy on police exchanges is not about discrimination against a certain class of people or religion or race - all areas that warrant HRC attention. Rather it is a legitimate effort to shift the Durham police force away from further militarization which harms our community in general, and our Black and Brown communities in particular. And it is an accurate reflection of the history of police exchanges with Durham police leaders - that they have been exclusively with Israel and promoted by Israel or its agents. The complaint brought by Voice for Israel and the Jewish Federation makes clear that there is a real debate within the Jewish community about whether or not it is appropriate to criticize Israel for its actions. Complainants and their supporters want to conflate any criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism. Siding with those levying false complaints of anti-Semitism as part of a campaign to protect Israel's image and oppressive policies at all costs seems antithetical to the values of Durham and the HRC.

On the other hand, it is well within the jurisdiction of the HRC to "provide open channels of useful communications among the various racial, religious, ethnic and economic groups in the city." Ironically, here, the complainants have made this appear to be a dispute between two factions within the *same* religious community - those Jews who support Israel uncritically and those Jews who take issue with some policies and practices of the Israeli government. So by complainants framing this as a dispute between different political orientations within one religion, these tensions would not fall under the purview of the HRC. That said, Jewish Voice for Peace Triangle NC would be amenable to any efforts by the HRC to "provide open channels of . . . communication" between JVP and The Jewish Federation and Voice for Israel - provided that

such communication is “useful.” It is also critical to recognize the ethnically Palestinian and other non-Jewish residents of Durham who are part of the D2P Coalition and whose voices deserve the attention of the Human Rights Coalition.

As a final note, we ask the HRC to keep in mind the population that the Durham City Council rightfully wants to protect from the further militarization of police forces that flows from police exchanges with Israel. These are the final words of the new policy:

Black lives matter. We can make that phrase real in Durham by rejecting militarization of our police force . . . and that is what we are doing in Durham now.

The actions of the HRC should not include siding against those whose oppression a policy seeks to remedy.

Thank you for your consideration.

The D2P Coalition, including JVP Triangle NC

The Demilitarize! Durham2Palestine Campaign Coalition:

AIME (Abrahamic Initiative on the Middle East)

Black Youth Project 100 - Durham Chapter

Durham for All

Inside Outside Alliance

Jewish Voice for Peace - Triangle NC

Muslim American Public Affairs Council

Muslims for Social Justice

SpiritHouse

Students for Justice in Palestine - Duke

Students for Justice in Palestine - UNC-CH

The Demilitarize! Durham2Palestine Official Endorsers

Alerta Migratoria

Balance & Accuracy in Journalism

Black Workers for Justice

CityWell Church

Coalition for Peace with Justice

Coalition for Health Care of North Carolina

Durham People’s Alliance

Episcopal Church of the Advocate

Justice Ministry Council of the Eno River Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship

Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia
NC Piedmont Democratic Socialists of America
NC Stop Torture Now
Salaam Shalom support group of Church of Reconciliation in Chapel Hill
Southerners on New Ground
Triangle Chapter Resource Generation
Triangle SURJ
Veterans for Peace
Watts Street Baptist Church Peace and Reconciliation Mission Group