

NEWS U.S. News

Philadelphia is ‘case study’ in how Jew-hatred creeps into civic life, per report

“This is the most comprehensive investigation yet into how local infrastructure has been weaponized to promote hate,” Canary Mission told JNS of its new report.

AARON BANDLER

University of Pennsylvania security staff stand watch over the campus at an anti-Israel encampment in Philadelphia, April 29, 2024. Credit: Matthew Hatcher/AFP via Getty Images.



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(June 5, 2025 / JNS) Canary Mission released a new [report](#) on Wednesday that uncovers a network of anti-Israel activists and Marxist groups that have fomented antisemitism in Philadelphia.

The report, which spans more than 180 pages, profiles nearly 700 anti-Israel activists who are part of the network and documented 77 anti-Israel events that occurred in the city between Oct. 7, 2023, and December 2024.

“Philadelphia has become a case study in how antisemitic and anti-American extremism can infiltrate and dominate civic life through coordinated activism across education, politics and grassroots organizing,” Canary Mission told JNS.

“Our report reveals how groups like the Philly Palestine Coalition, with the support of radical professors, educators and elected officials, have turned the city into a hub for pro-terror and anti-Israel mobilization,” the watchdog said. “With nearly 700 activist profiles and documentation of 77 events, this is the most comprehensive investigation yet into how local infrastructure has been weaponized to promote hate.”

“This network is expanding, and our work is far from over,” Canary Mission said.

The report details what it calls a “three-point plan to spread anti-Israel hatred in Philadelphia: coalition building in the community, student activism at multiple universities and infiltration of the K-12 education system.”

The result, it says, “a comprehensive map of Philadelphia’s anti-Israel organizations and their role in spreading antisemitism across the city, its communities, college campuses and public spaces.”

The report centers on the Philly Palestine Coalition, an “alliance of Palestinian, black and indigenous communities working to uplift Palestinian liberation.”

On Oct. 13, six days after Hamas’s terror attack in southern Israel, the coalition **stated** that “the anticolonial, armed resistance out of the Gaza Strip was provoked by decades of Israeli state-sanctioned violence,” and “as people living under a 56-year occupation, Palestinians have every right to defend themselves, their land, their families and to oppose the colonial violence they face from their occupier.”

Canary Mission told JNS that the coalition “has successfully fused campus activism with broader community mobilization, enabling rapid citywide protest coordination.”

The group’s message has spread “into schools, cultural institutions and local government,” Canary Mission said. “Their model of coalition-building—combining university groups, racial justice orgs, labor unions, interfaith collectives and radical political groups—has now been exported across Pennsylvania, with new coalitions forming in Lancaster, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh.”

‘Sharing tactics’

Some of the “core figures” involved in the coalition, and in an anti-Israel **encampment** on the University of Pennsylvania campus in April 2024, have ties to anti-Israel agitation at Columbia University, Canary Mission told JNS.

“This shows not only ideological alignment but actual activist mobility and coordination across state lines,” the watchdog said. “These individuals are not operating in silos. They’re part of a national movement that is sharing tactics, leadership and logistical support.”

“This underscores just how intentional, organized and dangerous this campaign really is,” it added.

Among other major players in the anti-Israel “university ecosystem” are the Students for Justice in Palestine chapters at Penn, Drexel University and Temple University, as well as Penn Against the Occupation, which the report describes as the main anti-Israel group at the Ivy League school. Jewish Voice for Peace, the Council on American-Islamic Relations and Marxist groups, like the Democratic Socialists of America and the Party for Socialism and Liberation, are also part of the network,

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per the report.

Per the report, the Penn encampment began with a coalition march in front of Philadelphia City Hall.

“While university encampments at Penn, Temple and Drexel may appear student-driven on the surface, our report reveals they were in fact heavily bolstered by external agitators,” Canary Mission told JNS.

The coalition “played a lead role in organizing a majority of these campus events, providing coordination, protest materials and political messaging that tied into broader street-level activism across Philadelphia,” it said.

The report also delves into how the anti-Israel network has infiltrated K-12 education in the city, noting that the U.S. Department of Education concluded that the School District of Philadelphia failed to keep Jewish students safe, “despite receiving repeated and extensive complaints from Jewish parents and advocacy groups,” the report stated.

The district and the U.S. department reached an **agreement** in December 2024, part of a flurry of 11th-hour agreements that the Biden administration reached to settle Title VI complaints.

The report also details “activist educators,” who teach in the district. The district’s K-12 curricula and lesson plans describe Israel as engaging in “apartheid” and “segregation,” per the report.

Additionally, the report contends that there is “a cadre of local politicians who have repeatedly offered legitimacy, protection and political cover to extremist movements.”

One of those politicians is Chris Rabb, a Pennsylvania state representative and a Democrat, who has voiced support for the Philadelphia CAIR chapter and shouted “free Palestine” while speaking at an anti-Israel rally in front of City Hall in June 2024, according to the report. Rabb also visited school encampments and expressed support for the anti-Israel student protesters.

The report also states that Rick Krajewski, a Pennsylvania state representative and a Democrat, and Jamie Gauthier and Nicholas O’Rourke, both members of the Philadelphia City Council, visited the Penn encampment and expressed support for it.

O’Rourke proposed a ceasefire resolution before the City Council, but ultimately opted to pull it due to a lack of support, and has used slogans like “from West Philly to the West Bank,” per the report.

“The Democratic Socialists of America have successfully installed figures like Rick Krajewski, Nicholas O’Rourke and Nikil Saval in office—local equivalents of figures like Zohran Mamdani in New York,” Canary Mission told JNS. (**Mamdani**, an anti-Israel New York state representative, is running for New York City mayor. Saval is a Pennsylvania state senator.)

“These politicians, often in open collaboration with groups like the Philly Palestine Coalition and CAIR, serve as movement validators,” Canary Mission said.

Asaf Romirowsky, a Middle East historian and executive director of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East who lives in Philadelphia, told JNS that the Canary Mission report highlights a lot of the key players in the anti-Israel movement in the city and provides “a good snapshot of the challenges that we face here in Philadelphia.”

Overall, Romirowsky, who is also executive director of the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa, thinks that Philadelphia doesn’t “have the same kind of attacks on Jews on a day-to-day basis like you saw on the streets of New York,” but “it is pronounced, and it’s here.”

“I think that it’s getting worse, like how it’s getting worse around the country,” he told JNS. Romirowsky pointed to the arson attack on Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro’s house as “a catalyst.”

Romirowsky called for the state government to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.

“If Oct. 7 didn’t validate that to anybody’s mind—that anti-Zionism and antisemitism are one and the same—people need to wake up,” he told JNS.

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