

August 8, 2021

Dear Seattle City Council and community members,

We are four Jewish residents of Durham, North Carolina. On April 16, 2018, the Durham City Council issued an [anti-Israel statement](#), opposing militarizing police and rejecting exchanges between the Durham Police Department and Israel. In the aftermath of this statement, our community has endured a significant trauma and ongoing negative consequences. We wanted to share our lived experience with you, to serve as a warning and help prevent similar outcomes in Seattle.

- Within two weeks of the vote, antisemitic flyers, swastikas, and graffiti appeared around town. (See examples of the flyers [here](#) and [here](#), and press coverage [here](#).)
- The Anti-Defamation League reported a massive increase in hate crimes targeting Jews. The ADL's [H.E.A.T Map](#) (Hate, Extremism, Antisemitism, Terrorism) for North Carolina showed an increase of **770%** in reported antisemitic incidents, from 38 in the three years 2015-2017 (before the Durham BDS resolution) to 331 incidents in the next three years (2018-2020, after the Council statement).
- The local newspaper published an [article by eleven area rabbis](#) who wrote that, to many Jews in Durham, the resolution felt like a “punch in the gut” and made them “feel marginalized and unjustly singled out.” This, too, received national [press coverage](#).
- National and international media (e.g., [AP](#), [Tablet Magazine](#), and the widely syndicated [Jewish Telegraphic Agency](#)) picked up the story. This coverage portrayed Durham as an intolerant and unwelcoming community, making it impossible to entice jobs and friends to move to this area.
- Three lawsuits were filed against the City of Durham, Durham City Council, and the Durham Human Relations Commission. Defending against these legal actions cost thousands of taxpayer dollars and many hours of valuable time from city council members, the city attorney, and other city officials. They also led to further negative press coverage (e.g., [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). The last case dragged on until April 2021, when the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals declined to hear the appeal.
- Residents hurt by the resolution spoke at every City Council meeting, taking even more of the council's time away from pressing municipal priorities and local issues.

Our beloved city of Durham now has a reputation of being hostile to Israel and inhospitable to Jews. Please, don't let this happen to your community.

We are available to discuss our lived experience and welcome any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

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