

Jewish outrage over inflammatory social media posts from employee of human rights mediator

The Australian Human Rights Commission is employing a lawyer who has posted support for Hamas and asked what would be left of Jews as a people without 'their violence, their toxicity, their racism?'

James Campbell and National Political Editor

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99 comments



Sky News host Rowan Dean says the "real hate preachers" can be found in Australia's universities.

The federal government body responsible for mediating complaints by the Jewish community against a number of Islamic preachers is employing a lawyer who has posted support for Hamas and asked what would be left of Jews as a people without "their violence, their toxicity, their racism?"

In March, Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), the peak body representing the Jewish community nationally, lodged a complaint with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) against two preachers in Western Sydney over speeches that were made late last year that it says were anti-Semitic.

The AHRC is responsible for mediating those complaints under the Racial Discrimination Act.

But Jewish leaders are concerned the AHRC is employing lawyer Sara Saleh, a former employee of the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network and who has claimed — among other things — that "Israel is connected to the oppression of Indigenous people worldwide".

On one occasion Ms Saleh said: "Looking at Israel's psychopathy today, October 7 should make a little more sense to ya'll" and on another: "Israeli colonial violence is illegal, immoral and illegitimate. Resistance is the only legitimate form of 'violence'.

She has reposted a statement that described Hamas as "an effective political player in the struggle against apartheid, oppression and colonisation" which has "achieved remarkable success in preventing Israeli violence in Jerusalem and freeing Palestinian hostages abducted by Israel".



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In an apparent reference to Jewish people, last month she tweeted: "What are they without their Zionism? If we take it away, their violence, their toxicity, their racism ... What is left of them as a people?"

Jeremy Leibler, President of the Zionist Federation of Australia, said those comments were deeply disturbing.

"It's inconceivable that the body responsible for resolving disputes as to racial discrimination has an employee who has shared a defence of Hamas, a listed terrorist organisation that intends to end Jewish life on earth," he said.

"If this employee has seriously suggested that Hamas' massacre of 1200 Israelis on 7 October can make any sense at all, then they need a new job."

A spokesman for the AHRC said Ms Saleh's posts had already been brought to its attention. "The Australian Human Rights Commission takes seriously the obligations for employees set out in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct," he said.

"The commission is aware of some of the posts at the centre of your inquiry, however it is inappropriate to comment on individual staff matters."

Ms Saleh was also contacted for comment.

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Jewish leaders are concerned the AHRC is employing lawyer Sara Saleh, who's pro-Palestinian views are publicly known.

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