

DEMILITARIZE FROM DURHAM 2 PALESTINE STATEMENT

April 16, 2018

On April 5, 2018, Mayor Steve Schewel [introduced a statement to Durham City Council](#) regarding police exchanges with Israeli police or military forces.¹ The statement “affirms as policy that the Durham Police Department will not engage in such exchanges” and that the Council “opposes international exchanges with any country in which Durham officers receive military-style training.” Furthermore, the statement recognizes the need for demilitarization of police in our city. During this meeting each Council member voiced their support for this statement and the accompanying policy barring any future police exchanges with Israel or other foreign countries. **The Demilitarize from Durham 2 Palestine Coalition supports Durham City Council’s adoption of this policy.**

The need for this new policy was prompted by a number of factors: the mistreatment of Palestinians and Black Israelis by Israeli forces; the mistreatment of people of color in the United States by police forces here; and the widespread participation in these exchanges by police departments around the country, including in Durham.

Police departments across the United States have taken the opportunity to receive “intensive counter-terrorism training” by “experts” from the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), Israeli intelligence and security services, and Israeli Police. For instance, Durham was listed last September as a participant in a one-week “National Counter-Terrorism Seminar” held by the [Anti-Defamation League \(ADL\)](#).² Trainings in Israel are advertised proudly on the résumés of both the [former](#)³ and [current](#)⁴ Chiefs of Police. The clear purpose of these trainings, as evidenced by descriptions in materials from the [ADL](#) and [other organizations](#) facilitating such exchanges, is the study of “counter-terrorism tactics.”^{5,6,7} Despite recent assurances that Chief Davis’ specific visits “[had nothing to do with terrorism tactics](#),”⁸ her previous department in Atlanta has boasted that their program was one in which “[officers learn tactics on preventing acts of terror](#).⁹

We must ask, then, what “tactics” Israeli forces employ in order to “prevent terror.” 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 to [maintain a racially segregated society in which one group is made inferior via the denial of rights and dignity](#).¹⁰ Groups including the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Israel’s B’Tselem, and former Israeli soldiers providing testimony have cited the Israeli police and military forces for a long list of abusive tactics. One tactic is [over-surveillance of the public](#), often based on racial profiling and regardless of innocence.¹¹ Another tactic is the [disproportionate response to non-violent or non-threatening protests](#).¹² Yet another is the use of [arbitrary and sustained detentions without due process](#).^{13,14} There is, of course, the violence and other ill-treatment used against [both African Israelis and Palestinians, including children](#), detained inside Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territories.^{15,16} And finally, there is

the [de-facto shoot-to-kill policy](#) when dealing with Palestinians suspected of terrorism, [regardless of whether or not they pose an immediate threat](#).^{17,18}

This is not to say that policing in America has somehow been less abusive than in Israel. On the contrary, the legacy of violent and racist policing meant to benefit the well-off stretches back much further in our country. This legacy is both historic and ongoing. We do not wish for anyone in America to suffer at the hands of Israeli-style policing— just as we do not wish for the Palestinians or anyone in Israel to become victim to the “tactics” provided by U.S. police. American police departments that have participated in Israeli police and military trainings share the negative qualities seen in Israeli policing. The infamous “Demographics Unit” of the [New York Police Department](#)¹⁹ mirrored the [discriminatory over-surveillance of Muslims](#)²⁰ seen in Israel. The tactics used by the [St. Louis city and county police forces](#)²¹ in Ferguson, MO, prompted Palestinians [to offer advice on minimizing the harmful effects of tear gas](#) to protesters there.²² The [variety of abuses](#)²³ seen from the [Baltimore Police Department](#)²⁴ have [made them synonymous, in the Israeli press](#),²⁵ with police brutality. And under former Chief Lopez the Durham Police Department, like police in Israel, used [tear gas as a method of controlling local protesters](#).²⁶ Despite recent overall declines in traffic stops due in part to recommendations made by Durham FADE (Fostering Alternative Drug Enforcement), [2016 data nonetheless revealed](#) that once a motorist was stopped by the Durham police, searches were more likely to occur in vehicles with Black or Hispanic drivers. In fact, Blacks were victim to over 80% of traffic searches yielding no contraband while comprising only 40% of the population.²⁷ The Council confirmed in last week’s statement that “black motorists are still more likely to be stopped than white motorists.”

The City Council’s new policy addresses two connected injustices: the militarization of police in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and the militarization of police in the United States. Our coalition’s support is founded on the recognition that those injustices are linked— both methodically, in their tactics, and materially, in the monetary support militarizing both states’ forces. The statement sets as a goal “a time when we are beyond policing” and when safety and security are provided in other forms. Members of our coalition intend to hold the Council to this goal. We are here to support an encompassing vision for public safety that abandons violence and militarization. We will promote other markers of wellness, such as providing our people with affordable healthcare, equitable housing, meaningful education, a living wage, and other resources. We will resist unjust sentencing and bail policies and jail conditions. We will oppose the historical and ongoing marginalization of Black, poor, undocumented, Muslim, LGBTQ, and other communities. We will demand equitable and dignified treatment for every resident in our city. And we will demand it for all people, from Durham to Palestine.

1Notes:

1 <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4432460-Durham-City-Council-Statement-on-Militarization.html#document/p1> ("Statement from the Durham City Council")

2 <https://jvptrianglenc.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/adl-ncts-participants.pdf> (Anti-Defamation League solicitation for candidates to attend a "National Counter-Terrorism Seminar" (NCTS) in Israel held on Sept. 9-17, 2017, and listing the Durham Police Department as one of the police departments whose "[e]xecutives trained in NCTS.")

3 <https://www.dolanconsultinggroup.com/instructor/jose-lopez/> ("Chief Lopez has also attended the National Counter-Terrorism Training through the Anti-Defamation League in Israel.")

4 <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9799> ("Established the APLI International Exchange program coordinating all aspects of Israeli exchange and curriculum for annual Atlanta Police visit, and coordinates annual APD Command delegations to Israel.")

5 <https://jvptrianglenc.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/adl-ncts-participants.pdf> (Anti-Defamation League solicitation for candidates to attend a "National Counter-Terrorism Seminar" (NCTS) in Israel)

6 <http://www.jinsa.org/jinsa-programs-all> (Jewish Institute for National Security of America / JNSA, "The program takes delegations of senior law enforcement executives to Israel to study methods and observe techniques used in preventing and reacting to acts of terrorism and sponsors conferences within the United States, bringing Israeli experts before much larger groups of law enforcement leaders.")

7 <http://gilee.gsu.edu/> (Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange / GILEE, "GILEE's focus has been on anti-terrorism training ever since its establishment in 1992.")

8 <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4432456-Memo-from-DPD-Chief-Davis-to-City-Manager-Bonfield.html#document/p1> ("...my training experience in Israel had nothing to do with terrorism tactics, military tactics, or the use of or exposure to, military equipment.")

9 <https://www.atlantaga.gov/home/components/news/news/2912> ("The APLI program includes training on international law enforcement issues where officers learn tactics on preventing acts of terror, responding to suspicious objects and organizing volunteers for emergency response.")

10 <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/12/19/separate-and-unequal/israels-discriminatory-treatment-palestinians-occupied> (Massive report by Human Rights Watch documenting the systematic and comprehensive discrimination against Palestinians and privileging of Jewish settlers and their rights in the Occupied Territories.)

11 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/12/israeli-intelligence-unit-testimonies> ("As a soldier in Unit 8200, I collected information... All Palestinians are exposed to non-stop monitoring without any legal protection. Junior soldiers can decide when someone is a target for the collection of information. There is no procedure in place to determine whether the violation of the individual's rights is necessarily justifiable. The notion of rights for Palestinians does not exist at all.")

12 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE15/002/2014/en/> (Amnesty International 85-page report in 2014 on excessive force in the West Bank, concluding: "Israeli forces have repeatedly violated their obligations under international human rights law by using excessive force to stifle dissent and freedom of expression, resulting in a pattern of unlawful killings and injuries to civilians. They do so with virtual impunity due to the authorities' failure to conduct thorough investigations.")

13 <https://www.un.org/press/en/2011/gapal1185.doc.htm> (Report to the UN on the arbitrary detention of Palestinians, particularly children, in Israeli prisons and detention centers without due process, "describing a practice of 'regular, continuous and comprehensive' torture, suffered by 90 per cent of prisoners.")

14 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21624&LangID=E> (May, 2017 - UN Special Rapporteur on the status of human rights in the Palestinian territories, challenged "Israel's use of administrative detention, which involves imprisonment without charge, trial, conviction or meaningful due process, as well as the possibility of unrestricted renewal of their detention," noting that "Israel's use of administrative detention is not in compliance with the extremely limited circumstances in which it is allowed under international humanitarian law, and deprives detainees of basic legal safeguards guaranteed by international human rights law.")

15 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/report-israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/> (Amnesty International Report for 2016/17: "Israeli soldiers, police and Israel Security Agency (ISA) officers subjected Palestinian detainees, including children, to torture and other ill-treatment with impunity, particularly on arrest and during interrogation... Complaints that the Israeli police used torture or other ill-treatment against asylum-seekers and members of the Ethiopian community in Israel were also common.")

16 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/11/palestine-israeli-police-abusing-detained-children> (Human Rights Watch Report, April 2016, concluding: "Israeli security forces are abusing Palestinian children detained in the West Bank. The number of Palestinian children arrested by Israeli forces has more than doubled since October

2015. . . . Israeli security forces are using unnecessary force in arresting and detaining children, in some cases beating them, and holding them in unsafe and abusive conditions.”

17 <http://gisha.org/press/4650> (B'Tselem and 8 other Israeli human rights organizations sign a statement in 2015 noting: “[T]here has been a worrying trend to use firearms to kill Palestinians who have attacked Israelis or are suspected of such attacks. Several incidents have been documented and reported, raising concern that the chosen response to such persons is the harshest possible, with lethal or – at the very least – unnecessary consequences. In instances when Jews have been suspected of attacks, none of the suspects has been shot. Politicians and senior police officers have not only failed to act to calm the public climate of incitement, but on the contrary have openly called for the extrajudicial killing of suspects. They have also urged civilians to carry weapons.”)

18 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/02/israel/palestine-some-officials-backing-shoot-kill> (2017 Human Rights Watch report documenting “numerous statements since October 2015, by senior Israeli politicians, including the police minister and defense minister, calling on police and soldiers to shoot to kill suspected attackers, irrespective of whether lethal force is actually strictly necessary to protect life.” … “Statements by senior Israeli officials, including those at the top of the chain of command, encourage violation of both the international standards regarding the use of force as well as the rules of engagement that Israel issues to its soldiers and police officers. In some cases, officials directly responsible for the conduct of law enforcement officers have publicly encouraged them to kill rather than to arrest suspected attackers when feasible. In other cases, senior political and religious officials who are employed and paid by the government have encouraged the killing of suspected Palestinian attackers, and other senior officials have failed to repudiate those statements.”)

19 <https://www.wnyc.org/story/nypd-allows-top-cops-wide-range-financial-interests-little-oversight/> (November 16, 2016, WNYC - “Current Commissioner James O’Neill... did report that the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs paid between \$5,000 and \$48,000 for his trip to Israel with other law enforcement officers from around the country.”)

20 <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/16/nyregion/police-unit-that-spied-on-muslims-is-disbanded.html> (April 15, 2014, New York Times (NYT) - “The New York Police Department has abandoned a secretive program that dispatched plainclothes detectives into Muslim neighborhoods to eavesdrop on conversations and built detailed files on where people ate, prayed and shopped, the department said.” … “After years of collecting information, however, the police acknowledged that it never generated a lead.”)

21 <http://www.ebony.com/news-views/the-fergusonpalestine-connection-403#axzz54LnIg83p> (Ebony Article entitled “*The Ferguson/Palestine Connection*: “The St. Louis County Police Department that killed Michael Brown and initially placed Ferguson on siege has trained with the Israeli military.” … “Over 9,000 American officials have trained with Israeli police and military units on responding to civilian protests and terrorism. These operations reflect failure to distinguish between the apparent duty of police to protect civilians and military responses to war. This fusion has had life-costing implications for Americans, specifically black, Muslim and Arab people.”)

22 <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/15/world/middleeast/advice-for-fergusons-protesters-from-the-middle-east.html> (NYT Aug. 14, 2014: “In addition to echoing the messages of solidarity sent through Twitter to the protesters in [Ferguson] Missouri, Egyptians and Palestinians also offered something more useful: practical advice about how to deal with tear gas.”)

23 <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/04/the-brutality-of-police-culture-in-baltimore/391158/> (*The Atlantic*, April 22, 2015, “*The Brutality of Police Culture in Baltimore*,” concluding: “Years of abuses are every bit as egregious as what the Department of Justice documented in Ferguson, Missouri, and as deserving of a national response.”)

24 <https://blog.amnestyusa.org/middle-east/with-whom-are-many-u-s-police-departments-training-with-a-chronic-human-rights-violator-israel/> (Amnesty International report August, 2016: “When the U.S. Department of Justice published a report Aug. 10 that documented ‘widespread constitutional violations, discriminatory enforcement, and culture of retaliation’ within the Baltimore Police Department (BPD), there was rightly a general reaction of outrage. But what hasn’t received as much attention is where Baltimore police received training on crowd control, use of force and surveillance: Israel’s national police, military and intelligence services.”)

25 <https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-israeli-police-militarization-is-no-surprise-1.5359033> (full text available at <https://jvptrianglenc.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/haaretz-article.pdf>) (*Haaretz*, the longest running Israeli newspaper, May 6, 2015, “*Israels Police Force Is Becoming Alarmingly Militarized - and Its No Surprise Why*: “The images out of Israel this Sunday looked like they could have been filmed in downtown Baltimore. Young Israelis of Ethiopian descent were being chased down the streets of central Tel Aviv by horse-mounted police officers, dodging stun grenades, fending off tear gas canisters and trying to evade the water cannons headed their way. The center of Tel Aviv, Israels most vibrant, economically powerful city, looked like an urban battlefield. The images, while infuriating, were of course disturbingly familiar. They paralleled in certain ways the riots that took place in Baltimore... In both cases, black men and women, members of a marginalized ethnic minority that

has been systematically neglected and discriminated against, have been facing off against an alarmingly militarized police force. In both cases, demonstrations against police brutality were met with more brutality. But while there are indeed similarities between the protests in Tel Aviv and those in Baltimore, the scene was also not-so-vaguely reminiscent of another battlefield, one more familiar to Israeli citizens: the West Bank."

26 <http://www.wral.com/durham-police-to-closely-monitor-vigil-planned-for-teen/13234635/> (WRAL.com Dec. 19, 2013, Arrests, *Tear Gas End Durham Vigil*: "Although the assembly was billed as a peaceful event, Durham police massed in riot gear, with tear gas masks on their hips and billy clubs in hand, even before Huerta supporters arrived.")

27 <http://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article149576884.html> (May 10, 2017 - N&O article on Durham Police Department data from 2010-16 showing persistent disparities between black and white drivers in terms of police traffic stops and searches incident to such stops.)