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ARTICLE

Chilling New Tactic: Anti-Zionists To Target Jewish Kids Camps



BY PNW STAFF FEBRUARY 18, 2026

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Imagine opening your email as a parent and discovering that activists are organizing a campaign against your child's summer camp--not because of safety concerns, not because of misconduct, but because your child is Jewish and the camp celebrates Jewish heritage.

That is not a dystopian novel plot. It is reality unfolding right now in Canada, where anti-Zionist groups have launched a coordinated effort to strip accreditation from Jewish children's camps across the country. For many observers, this is not merely troubling. It is chilling--a moment that signals something deeply unsettling about the direction of modern activism.

The campaign, backed by a coalition that includes the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement and several allied organizations, targets at least seventeen camps spanning multiple provinces. Their accusations read less like safety complaints and more like ideological indictments: camps celebrate Israeli holidays, staff have visited Israel, or counselors once served in the Israeli military--even in civilian roles such as social work. One camp was reportedly criticized simply for using za'atar seasoning in its food, labeled by activists as "appropriation." When political outrage reaches the point of policing spices at a children's camp, it is fair to ask whether the cause has lost its moral compass.

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Accreditation, after all, is not a political badge. It is a certification that a camp meets standards for health, emergency readiness, supervision, and child safety. Stripping that status has nothing to do with foreign policy and everything to do with undermining trust in institutions that care for minors. Even the Ontario Camps Association--a neutral body responsible for evaluating camps--warned that the rhetoric behind the campaign appears discriminatory and dangerously demonizing toward a single minority group. That statement should

have stopped the effort in its tracks. Instead, organizers boasted that hundreds of protest letters had already been sent demanding punitive action.

Activists insist they are opposing a government, not a people. Yet their target selection tells a different story. Governments do not attend canoe trips or learn campfire songs. Children do. When political movements fix their sights on youth spaces, they reveal that their quarrel is not limited to policy. It is about identity--about shaping which identities are socially acceptable and which must be pressured into silence. History shows that when a movement begins targeting children associated with a group it opposes, it has crossed from protest into intimidation.



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This escalation fits a broader pattern seen since the October 2023 Hamas attacks. Demonstrations in cities such as New York and Philadelphia have included chants praising Hamas or violent imagery directed at Israelis. What was once fringe rhetoric is increasingly normalized in public discourse. The campaign against camps suggests that the same hostility is evolving, expanding its reach from political institutions to cultural spaces and now to youth environments. Each step pushes the boundary of what society is willing to tolerate.

The context makes this especially alarming. Jews already face the highest rate of reported hate crimes among religious groups in Canada, a number that has risen sharply since the Gaza war began. Synagogues have been targeted, students harassed, and community events disrupted. Against that backdrop, a coordinated campaign against Jewish camps does not look like an isolated protest tactic. It looks like part of a pattern--one that many fear is testing how far public opinion can be pushed before resistance forms.

Jewish leaders are sounding the alarm. The UJA Federation of Greater Toronto described the effort as a deliberate act of intimidation directed at children and staff. That assessment resonates with families who see the campaign not as abstract activism but as a direct intrusion into spaces meant to be joyful, formative, and safe. Summer camp, for countless Jewish children, is where lifelong friendships are formed and cultural identity is strengthened. To target that environment is to send a message that even childhood is not off-limits.

Supporters of the campaign argue they are motivated by moral urgency, often invoking the accusation of genocide against Israel. But genocide is not a slogan; it is a specific legal determination requiring evidence and judgment under international law. No international tribunal has ruled that Israel is committing genocide. When the term is stretched beyond recognition to fit political narratives, it risks trivializing genuine genocides and undermining the credibility of human rights language itself.

There is also a profound contradiction at play. Many activist circles champion diversity, inclusion, and the celebration of identity. Yet in this case, a Jewish expression of identity is treated as grounds for sanction. That selective application of principles exposes a troubling double standard: diversity is applauded in theory but contested in practice when it involves Jews connected to Israel. Such inconsistency erodes the moral authority movements claim to possess.

The larger issue is not one set of camps or even one country. It is the precedent. If society accepts campaigns that single out children's institutions because of their cultural or religious character, it signals that ideological battles may override basic ethical boundaries. Today the focus is Jewish camps. Tomorrow it could be any community whose beliefs fall out of favor with vocal activists. Once the line protecting children from political targeting is crossed, it becomes easier to cross again.

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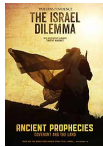
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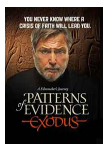
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