

25.2.2026

To the President of the University of Haifa, Professor Gur Alroey,

Academia for Equality expresses its profound concern and unequivocally condemns the remarks made by the President of the University of Haifa, Gur Alroey, as reported in his interview in the newspaper **Makor Rishon** on 13.2.2026. It is deeply troubling to witness a university president express such overt contempt and racism toward the Palestinian students who attend the institution he leads, while accusing members of the university's faculty, whose political views he does not share, of political incitement.

In the interview, Professor Alroey was questioned about the significant presence of Palestinian students—over one third—at the university. Rather than celebrating this diversity, as previous university leaders have done, he openly expressed dissatisfaction with this reality. Alroey depicted this demographic as a problem, suggesting it should be addressed through increased Jewish settlement in the Galilee. He further endorsed the Judaization of the Galilee and praised his university's sense of national loyalty, claiming that Palestinian students “are good citizens” only because they “speak Hebrew,” “are not involved,” and “have no political opinion.” Such statements reflect not only authority and condescension, but also a troubling expectation that Palestinian students suppress their political identities and aspirations. It is difficult to imagine a university president elsewhere speaking similarly about Jewish students without being accused of blatant antisemitism. Alroey also disparaged “progressive faculty members,” labeling them as troublemakers—an unfounded and inflammatory accusation evidently meant to intimidate researchers who hold differing views.

These remarks must be understood within the broader context of the university's troubling conduct in recent years. Immediately following October 7, 2023, the University of Haifa became the first institution to suspend Palestinian students for social-media statements, doing so without due process or hearings. In his interview, Alroey fails to acknowledge the harassment and systematic targeting of Palestinian students who express political views. Additionally, faculty members who sought to challenge these arbitrary suspensions and advocate for fair application of disciplinary procedures were met with harsh reprimands.

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As a result, under Alroey's leadership, protest activity at the University of Haifa has been virtually nonexistent for the past two years. These patterns suggest the interview aimed more to bolster Alroey's personal profile—particularly among readers of a nationalist-leaning publication—than to promote dialogue, pluralism, or academic freedom at the university.

It is necessary to remind Professor Alroey that universities are meant to expand the boundaries of knowledge and human potential. They should foster curiosity, nurture diverse ideas, encourage debate, and ensure every member has the resources to achieve their intellectual best. University presidents, at their best, are intellectual leaders who demonstrate integrity, inspire collective purpose, and uphold the pursuit of knowledge as a public good. It is both regrettable and alarming to witness a university president in Israel so openly disregard these foundational values.

Sincerely,
Academia for Equality Board

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