



For Immediate Release

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Pride Toronto disallows phrase 'Israeli Apartheid' in 2010 Parade.

Pride Toronto announced today that it will be disallowing the use of the phrase 'Israeli Apartheid' in the 2010 Pride Parade.

Since 2007, messages including the term "Israeli Apartheid" have appeared in the Parade, and Pride Toronto has issued several statements in support of freedom of speech for all participants. However, in the past year, the organization has been subjected to extensive lobbying on this debate, and has received complaints of allowing discriminatory and exclusionary messaging.

"The issue has escalated to a point where Toronto's Pride festival is in a state of operational crisis," says Pride Toronto's Co-Chair Genevieve D'Iorio. "We are fortunate to have extensive City support for Pride. However, as a key partner, the City of Toronto has expressed the presence of the term "Israeli Apartheid" in the Parade may contravene its anti-discrimination policy."

A motion tabled recently before City Council calls for the City's support, funding and in-kind contributions to be revoked if the issue is not resolved. In response, on May 21st 2010 the Board of Directors voted to disallow the use of the term "Israeli Apartheid", or any combination of this notion, in the Pride Festival.

"It's important to understand that Pride Toronto does not take a position on the conflict in the Middle East," said Margaret Ngai, Interim Co-Chair. "We are obliged to respect and follow City policies in addition to legislations of all levels of government when considering freedom of expression."

D'Iorio says that the organization works diligently to find a balance between the varied voices at Pride. "We welcome the space for debates and discussions," she says. "We hope that over time, there will be a way for people to use language that can promote education and knowledge over anger and hatred. This path is necessary for sustainability, to keep our festival's voice alive, and heard worldwide."

For more information:

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About Pride Toronto:

Pride Toronto is the not-for-profit organization that hosts Pride Week, an annual festival held during the first weekend of July in downtown Toronto. Pride Toronto exists to celebrate the history, courage,

diversity and future of Toronto's LGBTTIQQ2SA* communities and is one of the leading cultural events of its kind in the world with a total economic benefit in 2009 of \$136 million.

Toronto's Pride Week has been named Best Festival in Canada by the Canadian Special Events Industry in 2004, 2005 and 2009, and is recognized as one of only eight Signature Events in the City of Toronto. It is ranked one of the TOP 50 festivals in Ontario by Festivals and Events Ontario (FEO) as well as one of the 18 Marquee Festivals of Distinction in Canada. With attendance of over 1,2 million, it is the third largest Pride celebration in the world and the largest in North America. For media accreditation for the festival, please visit <http://www.pridetoronto.com>.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, 2-Spirited and Allies