



Toronto Palestine Film Festival

102A-1075 Bay St., Ste 148

Toronto, ON M5S 2B2

www.tpff.ca

info@tpff.ca or media@tpff.ca

April 12, 2013

Mayor Ford and City of Toronto Executive Committee Members
c/o Kelly McCarthy
10th Floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Ford and Executive Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the organizing committee of the Toronto Palestine Film Festival (TPFF) to express our concern over discussions regarding revisions to the City of Toronto's anti-discrimination and grants policies.

It is our understanding that the suggested revisions are intended to go beyond provincial and federal statutes and legislation to specifically target the use of the term 'Israeli Apartheid' in the 2013 Pride Parade. If this motion passes through council, it will set a troubling precedent for censorship and restrictions on freedom of speech for cultural and community organizations.

TPFF introduces different Palestinian narratives and perspectives to Toronto audiences through film, music, art, discussion forums and other cultural presentations. If the proposed changes to the City's anti-discrimination and grants policies were to be enacted it is likely TPFF would be forced to either censor the use of the term apartheid in our presentations and discussions or forgo City funding and access to City funded venues.

The precedent that would be set by the arbitrary prohibition of the use of terms and concepts in the proposed amendments threatens the independence of City funded organizations to operate in accordance with provincial and federal norms, and indeed the norms of democratic societies, with regard to free speech and censorship. In our view, the City should be pro-active in enabling discussion and debate on alternative perspectives rather than silencing them.

We therefore urge councillors to vote against this motion.

Yours Sincerely,

Tamara Sabarini
Toronto Palestine Film Festival Organizing Committee