

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement on the Pride Parade and Community Day: Refuting False Narratives and demanding the resignation of Simon Gamache

Tio'tia:ke/Mooniyang/Montreal, this August 20th, 2024 – This press release seeks to correct the misleading narrative propagated by Fierté Montréal, the SPVM, and mainstream media regarding the events leading up to and during Community Day and the pride parade. This is a unified statement from Helem, Mubaadarat, IJV, and the Faction Against Genocide, in Solidarity (F.A.G.S.), affirming our position as Queers of Conscience. We reject the influence of Zionist, imperialist, colonialist, and corporate entities that have attempted to co-opt our struggles through pinkwashing and corporatization. Their corporate zionist parade, going against the true spirit of pride as a protest, will not be done in our name. We firmly oppose the ongoing genocide in Palestine and the exploitation of our identities to justify it. Not in our name.

Setting the record straight;

Events leading up to Pride

Helem, IJV, and Mubaadarat engaged in months of negotiations with Fierté Montréal, urging them to denounce and sever ties with Zionist sponsors and parade participants. Fierté was presented with a list of 4 demands, along with evidence supporting each demand.

Despite refusing all four demands, Fierté expressed that they were "trying" to find legal pathways to exclude the zionist groups from the march due to the fact that they had breached Fierté Montréal's [rules and regulations](#) regarding harassment and discrimination. This was clearly a tactic to silence our movement, and was repeated to us up until the start of the festival.

Fierté's concerns have only been to protect their image and sponsorships, and not to, as their website clearly states, "amplif[y] the voices of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities to assure their representation, their inclusion and the recognition of their rights in society." Although their website presents a clear "mission, vision, and values" statement, Fierté missed the chance to show any willingness to put these values to the test.

Community Day

Fierté had committed to ensuring the safety of Helem and Mubaadarat during festival activities. At community day, these groups were confronted by racist and Islamophobic instigators. There were more than 10 incidents of harassment, one of which was witnessed by Fierté Montreal's team. Helem and Mubaadarat rallied to provide security and solidarity to one another.

Parade day

Fierté allowed zionist groups, sponsors, and the display of Israeli flags in the march, betraying the trust of the community and endangering marginalized people.

Two independent actions with a shared goal: denounce the ongoing genocide

Helem and Mubaadarat decided to participate in the parade, giving visibility to the existence of LGBTQ+ SWANA and Arab communities, while bringing attention to the ongoing genocide. **Independent Jewish Voices** collaborated with these two groups to denounce pinkwashing and demonstrate the solidarity between Jewish and Arab communities. This group interrupted the annual moment-of-silence by staging a die-in. The die-in included a soundtrack of fighter jets and various voices crying, all the while select members covered themselves in red paint.

The F.A.G.S. disrupted the parade with one clear message: no pride in genocide. The group aimed to expose Fierté's bad-faith attempts to silence criticism and prevent disruption. The F.A.G.S. was in solidarity with the die-in organizers and community groups such as AGIR and AfroPride, allowing them to march. The action specifically targeted Zionist and corporate contingents in the parade.

The longest blockade lasted nearly an hour, stopping the Fierté Montréal float and others. Reclaiming the spirit of Pride as a radical act of protest, demonstrators held their ground in the face of verbal and physical abuse from both police and zionist bystanders.

These joint actions emphasize the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression and movements. We wholeheartedly believe that Queer liberation can only be achieved with a free Palestine. **None of us are free until all of us are free.**

While the Helem, Mubaadarat, and IJV contingent faced harassment, attempts to stop their action, and security that was there to protect Fierté's image, the F.A.G.S. faced severe police brutality. The SPVM physically assaulted demonstrators, destroyed banners, and issued threats. In response, autonomous members of the first group joined the F.A.G.S. demonstration, solidifying the unity between the two actions. We keep us safe.

The F.A.G.S. : So-called Negotiations and Police Brutality

During the disruption, two members of Fierté Montréal's board of directors came, promising that a pride representative would come talk to the demonstrators shortly, but no representative arrived. Meanwhile, police presence intensified. After months of being ignored, gaslit, and dehumanized, it became clear that Fierté cared more about its image than what "pride" should mean; protecting the lives and safety of marginalized and minority communities.

As we felt increasingly unsafe, we realized that Fierté's "negotiation" was a stalling effort to deploy more violence against us as they rerouted the parade. For the safety of demonstrators, we dispersed our efforts. The police followed us in the streets and into the metro, long after our action was over, further proving Fierté's security efforts were against us and not to protect us.

Fierté and the SPVM's claims of a peaceful resolution are blatant lies. Their actions demonstrate a prioritization of corporate interests over the safety and well-being of Queer individuals.

Our Updated Demands

1. We demand a **public apology from Fierté Montréal** for deploying violent police against us, dehumanizing our community, and endangering both protesters and parade attendees.
2. We demand a **retraction of statements made by Simon Gamache** on Sunday, August 11th, stating that Fierté had successfully negotiated with protesters and that the situation was resolved peacefully.
3. We call for Fierté Montréal to **implement a BDS plan**. Dissociating from the Zionist apartheid is achievable as demonstrated by other prides such as CapitalPride.
4. We demand **the resignation of Simon Gamache** and all those complicit in the violence perpetrated against the F.A.G.S., Helem, Mubaadarat, and IJV contingents.
5. If future editions of Fierté Montréal happen, we demand that they **implement the demands previously submitted** by Helem, Mubaadarat and IJV.

Fierté's website states their goal to "call attention to [the community's] fights and realities in the wider public and the institutions", stating they intend to "buil[d] lasting bridges with the communities and [to adapt their] actions and approaches to better support [the community's] demands and aspirations." **We call on them to put these words into action.**

In Conclusion

The events of the past weeks have starkly highlighted the urgent need to reaffirm the true essence of Pride; a celebration rooted in resistance, solidarity, and justice. Fierté Montréal's actions have not only betrayed the spirit of Pride but have also endangered marginalized communities by prioritizing corporate interests over genuine advocacy and safety.

Our collective stand, encompassing Helem, Mubaadarat, Independent Jewish Voices, and the F.A.G.S., demonstrates our unwavering commitment to intersectional justice and the liberation of all oppressed peoples. We call on the broader community to support our demands and hold Fierté Montréal accountable for its failures.

As Queers of Conscience, we stand united in our resolve: From Turtle Island to Palestine, no pride in genocide, and no compromise on justice. Our movement will continue to challenge pinkwashing and the exploitation of our identities for political gain.

Resources

[Photos and documents](#)

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Helem Montreal, Mubaadarat, IJV, and the F.A.G.S.

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