



NEWS RELEASE

SURVEY OF PROMINENT CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES FINDS GREATER RADICALISM IS BACKFIRING ON ANTI-ISRAEL GROUPS

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre Commissioned Study Reflects Overwhelming Support for University Presidents on Israel Boycott Issues, Opposition to Student Funding of Anti-Israel Groups

TORONTO—November 21, 2007—Toronto’s university campuses have had years of Israel-related controversy, often pitting the students’ associations against university presidents. To get an objective measure of what students think, the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies (FSWC) commissioned COMPAS Research to survey almost 900 students at the University of Toronto and Ryerson University.

By a margin of 9:1, students on the two campuses embrace the anti-boycott positions of the two university presidents on the issue of boycotting Israeli academics. At Ryerson, where the student’s union called out for boycotting Israelis, the university president’s anti-boycott stance was nonetheless backed by a margin of 5:1. At the University of Toronto, opposition to a boycott was even more overwhelming –14:1.

Students surveyed would be opposed if anti-Israel activism was funded directly or indirectly by compulsory student fees given to the students association. By a margin of 8:1, students told the pollsters that anti-Israel activists should not be given student union funds to support such activity.

Almost no students believe that compulsory fees should be redirected to the “anti-Israeli Apartheid” activists. The number of students who believe that it is right for student fees to be used to fund anti-Israel boycott efforts is small and matched by an equal number who would ban any such activity from campus, even if funded on a voluntary basis.

“The Survey is very re-assuring, showing that the large majority of students are highly democratic and sensible,” said Avi Benlolo, President and CEO, FSWC. “At best they would find it strange – at worst disturbing – if student associations used compulsory student fees to fund efforts to mischaracterize the only democracy in the Middle East.”

About Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies is a Canadian human rights organization dedicated to fostering tolerance and understanding through community involvement, educational outreach and social action. It has 25,000 members across Canada, and confronts

important contemporary issues including racism, antisemitism, terrorism and genocide. The Center is affiliated with the world-wide, Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, an accredited Non-Government Organization with status at international agencies, including the United Nations, UNESCO, OSCE and the Council of Europe. With over 400,000 members of all faiths around the world, the Simon Wiesenthal Center has offices in New York, Miami, Paris, Jerusalem, Buenos Aires and Toronto. Simon Wiesenthal died in 2005 after devoting his life to preserving the memories of the victims of the Holocaust, while simultaneously seeking justice for the war criminals. Visit: www.fswc.ca.