

Exposing Islamist Anti-Semitism

Jewish American MD career-ending consequence is unfair

Qanta Ahmed



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Physicians have personal opinions as human beings, regardless of identity. Their professional careers must not suffer because of what they say or write on social media platforms.

This is especially true now as rampant antisemitic comments by pro-Palestinians are spreading.

There must be equity to the responses on all sides.

This was not the case with Dr Darren Klugman, a Jewish father and physician, founder in 2020 of Johns Hopkins Medicine's Pediatric Critical Care Program. As director of the center in Baltimore, Dr Klugman had his board certifications revoked and was suspended from his role at Hopkins last November – and not reinstated.

All of this was for comments deemed offensive that he published on X (formerly Twitter) the day after the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel. He is no longer

listed on Johns Hopkins faculty websites, though he is **featured** in a tender story of a pediatric cardiac care patient.

On a different occasion, as of July, another staff member is under investigation for publicly posting and stating what appears to be antisemitic comments since 2023. Reportedly of Pakistani heritage, they continued to post content of this nature while still practising.

This duality of consequence is ironic at best as last month **Michael R. Bloomberg** donated **\$1 billion in new funding** to Hopkins medical school from Bloomberg Philanthropies to provide financial aid for qualifying students in the form of free tuition and expenses. Bloomberg's commitments are to public health and American values as well as the broader Jewish community.

The disparate treatment between these two examples came to the attention of Maryland State Legislator Dalya Attar who wrote to President Ron Daniels of Hopkins seeking an investigation. This is in progress, eight months after Dr Klugman was suspended.

Dr Klugman offered a written apology regarding his emotional X posts which he made after watching disturbing Hamas footage from fellow physicians in Israel of the murder and abduction of Jewish children and babies. Dr Klugman's mother and stepfather live in Israel.

As a result of his posts, Dr Klugman became the subject of a targeted hate campaign, including death threats on his cellphone while at home with his family.

The campaign was launched by an anti-Zionist action group, and Dr Klugman was named 'Zionist hater of the week' and his personal details were published.

Dr Klugman was labelled a 'Genocide Supporter' and Hopkins immediately received a barrage of antisemitic vitriol demanding Dr Klugman's termination.

His professional email correspondence containing his apology and the context of his social media postings with Hopkins academics was immediately leaked.

Promptly, an American Islamic group held a press conference further demonising Dr Klugman and filed a complaint against the Maryland Board of Physicians – a complaint also shared with the anti-Zionist activist group.

Within hours, Hopkins representatives called Dr Klugman informing him he was not permitted patient contact and was placed on suspension to ensure that the 'university ... is providing a safe, healthy, diverse, and inclusive environment'.

Less than one week later, the American Board of Pediatrics suspended his triple board certifications – pediatrics, pediatric cardiology, and pediatric critical care – an unprecedented move. This decision has been since appealed and remains with lawyers, though no announcement has been made.

Shortly after that, a pro-Palestinian Health Care activist group held a rally in front of the Hopkins hospital grounds with students and faculty.

They chanted, 'Israel is racist', called for an 'Intifada Revolution', and urged removal of Dr Klugman from the hospital; stating Dr Klugman was celebrating the massacre while calling for Palestinian genocide.

There has been some fairness rendered. As a result of their accusations and remarks against Dr Klugman, one person was temporarily suspended from their position as a member of the Maryland Commission on Hate Crimes Response and Prevention. Yet no physician faculty member of Hopkins has been sanctioned for antisemitism.

In February, the **Committee of Concerned Scientists**, an independent group of academicians, wrote to Hopkins University regarding his punishment of Dr Klugman, who remains unable to practice, and due to this scandal, unable to take new employment.

I met Dr Klugman after I spoke to the American Jewish Medical Association in New York City. New York plastic surgeon Dr Yael Halaas formed the group in 2023 to address the virulent antisemitism American doctors are now facing.

I am familiar with this brand of antisemitism, though as a witness. Almost 25 years ago, as I practiced medicine in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as a US-trained, triple board certified critical care physician, I encountered a fellow physician espousing Holocaust denial during rounds of patient care.

More recently as a private citizen, I traveled to Iraq and Pakistan to meet Yazidi and Kurdish survivors of Islamic State of Iraq (ISIS), child soldiers of the Taliban and (ISIS). I gathered several eyewitness accounts from militaries in Pakistan, Iraq, and Israel about their experiences combating Islamist ideology.

Days after the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023, I travelled at my own expense to the Gaza Envelope arriving on October 19 to bear witness to the places of the atrocities, gather testimony of **eyewitness survivors** and examine, as a physician, the remains of the murdered in **Israel's morgues**. I was provided unfettered access by both the Israeli Defense Forces and members of **Israel's medical academia** throughout my 10-day exploration.

Yet in the West, Islamist antisemitism remains poorly understood. Dr Klugman's case is correlated to this brand of antisemitism.

By November 2023, the program that Dr Klugman founded had the lowest **mortality** of any program in Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, or DC at 1.8 per cent and was the busiest congenital heart program in Maryland, performing 200-220 cases per year. He built a program centred on some of the most vulnerable patients hailing from the **poorest demographics** in the United States.

His work is invaluable as congenital heart disease is the most common birth defect in the United States accounting for fewer than 1.1/100 live births. Approximately 25 per cent of congenital heart disease births have complex congenital heart disease.

Dr Klugman's pioneering work came to an abrupt end over his hasty comments on X, while a physician colleague continues to practice in their field, even though they have a history of making public inflammatory antisemitic comments.

Physicians historically take an oath of ethics, known as the Hippocratic oath, one that demands the highest codes of moral conduct. There is no room for this kind of hypocrisy.

Those who express volatile, emotional opinions publicly need to be treated equally without jeopardy to their profession.

Dr. Qanta A. Ahmed, is an author, Senior Fellow with the Independent Women's Forum and Life Member of the Council on Foreign Relations. @MissDiagnosis

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