

Meric Gertler
President
University of Toronto
president@utoronto.ca

Jutta Brunnée
Dean of Law
University of Toronto Faculty of Law
deansoffice.law@utoronto.ca

April 23, 2021

Dear President Gertler and Dean Brunnée,

Re: CAUT censure over IHRP hiring cancellation

We are representatives of Butterfly (Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Support Network) and Immigration Legal Committee - community organizations that partnered with the International Human Rights Program (IHRP) at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law from 2019 to 2021 on a Law Foundation of Ontario-funded legal resource project: “Migrants know your rights: facing immigration arrest, detention, and deportation” as well as a spinoff resource: “Ontario’s Emergency COVID ID Requirement”.

The work that the IHRP, Butterfly, and ILC has done with this project is something that everyone involved is extremely proud of. With the able assistance of community members and law students, we produced a comprehensive and timely guide providing legal and practical information about rights as they apply to diverse groups of people without full immigration status. As well, we produced flash cards translated into multiple languages to provide a much more accessible format for our audiences. Finally, workshops and video resources were produced in multiple languages to provide training and capacity building to peer leaders and migrant community groups.

We write to express our concern over the derailing of the hiring of Dr. Valentina Azarova for her scholarship on Israel and Palestine as well as the university’s refusal to apologize and redress the situation - despite its own investigation revealing emails and calls that confirm the existence of external influence from lobbyist groups to derail the hiring.

The disqualification of the hiring of Dr. Azarova for her human rights scholarship in Israel and Palestine is an affront to the principles of social justice, human rights, and academic freedom - principles that lie at the core of the IHRP’s mandate and the core of our organizations’ respective mandates as well.

As a result, we wish to inform you that we will be observing the censure recently invoked by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and will not be renewing our partnership with the IHRP or otherwise accept appointments or speaking engagements at UofT until this matter is addressed and Dr. Azarova is given an apology and her hiring reinstated.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Elene Lam
Executive Director
Butterfly (Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Support Network)

MacDonald Scott
Member
Immigration Legal Committee