

June 30, 2025

Open letter to:

Mr. Eric Jolliffe, Chairman and CEO, Regional Municipality of York
Ms. Erin Mahoney, Chief Administrative Officer, Regional Municipality of York
Ms. Lisa Gonsalves, Commissioner, York Region Community and Health Services
Mr. Chris Spearen, General Manager (Acting), York Region Paramedic and Seniors Services
Mr. Jeremy Watts, Chief (Acting), York Region Paramedic Services

Open Letter Calling for Reinstatement of Paramedic Katherine Grzejszczak

Dear Mr. Jolliffe, Ms. Mahoney, Ms. Gonsalves, Mr. Spearen, and Chief Watts:

We are writing to you because of our deep concern about the decision of the York Region Paramedic Services to terminate Katherine Grzejszczak, a paramedic within the York Region Paramedic Services, as reported last Thursday in a [Toronto Star article](#) and confirmed in an email from York Region's Manager of Corporate Communications, Jennifer Mitchell. We understand Ms. Grzejszczak has served as a paramedic for 15 years.

Apparently, York Region received a complaint about a recent Facebook comment by Ms. Grzejszczak, in which she expressed her strong opposition to Israel's war in the Middle East, the starvation of children in Gaza, and the killing of journalists, municipal and health care workers, and fellow first responders. She also thanked her union, CUPE Ontario, for which she is an Executive Board member, and the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, for encouraging participation in demonstrations against Israel's bombing of Iran.

Her critique of the Israeli government was not altogether different from that expressed by former Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert in an [op-ed](#) in *Haaretz* on May 27, 2025, titled "Enough Is Enough. Israel Is Committing War Crimes", and which he elaborated in an [interview](#) with New York Times journalist and podcaster, Ezra Klein, on June 11, 2025

Whether one agrees or disagrees with the content of Ms. Grzejszczak's Facebook comment, she was exercising her *Charter*-protected right to freedom of expression – a right that York Region as a municipality has an obligation to respect and uphold.

Paramedics play a vital role in our health care system and are to be judged on whether they meet professional standards of care, not on their political beliefs. Given there has been no suggestion that Ms. Grzejszczak's political beliefs have resulted in any inappropriate treatment of any patient, your decision to fire her was entirely unwarranted and a violation of her rights and your *Charter* obligations.

We call upon you to immediately reinstate Ms. Grzejszczak.

Respectfully,

James L. Turk
Director
Centre for Free Expression
Toronto Metropolitan University

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