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# Kyrie Irving Indefinitely Suspended After Anti-Semitic Posts

Emma Ferguson, Staff Reporter

Brooklyn Nets guard and National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) Vice President, Kyrie Irving, was suspended indefinitely after posting on Instagram and Twitter promoting the anti-Semitic film adaptation of the book "Hebrews to Negroes" Oct. 27.

After being publicly reprimanded by both NBA commissioner Adam Silver and Nets Owner Joe Tsai, the latter issued a five-game suspension contingent on Irving completing a series of tasks including issuing a public apology verbally and on social media and attending a meeting with Silver and local Jewish leaders.

A post on Twitter from Tsai Nov. 11 read, "Clara [Tsai's wife] and I met with Kyrie and his family yesterday. We spent quality time to understand each other and it's clear to me that Kyrie does not have any beliefs of hate towards Jewish people or any group."

While Irving hasn't posted an apology yet, he posted a cryptic tweet on Nov. 13 that reflects the sentiments Tsai mentioned in his post. Not holding anti-Semitic beliefs does not help with the harmful messages like Irving's cause to Jewish communities.

"The issue you present has taken a big weight on the Jewish community, especially with how much of a ripple effect antisemitism has," Gabriella Robinson, the co-president of the Jewish Student Union at Seattle University, wrote in a statement to the Spectator. "Celebrities like Kanye West and Kyrie Irving's standpoints on antisemitism have done a great deal of damage to our community that infringes on our safety on a daily level."

Since Irving's suspension, there has been a public outcry about his freedom of speech being stifled. But Caitlin Carlson, an associate professor of communication with expertise in hate speech and media law, disagrees with that characterization.



Luca Del Carlo

“The First Amendment protects us from government censorship or interventions on speech, not from private companies. You have a right to free expression, you don’t have a right to have a job. In an employment environment, the employer can absolutely put conditions on what it is you are able to say and not say as a condition of employment,” Carlson said.

This is not the first time Irving has come under fire for things he’s posted and said as he has had a slew of past controversies, most notably about him being a flat-earther and being against vaccinations. Aidan Bernal, a fourth-year civil engineering major and basketball fan, is not shocked that Irving has been caught up in another media storm.

“I’m not surprised with the action itself, basically doing something to go against public opinion and make yourself look like you know better than everyone else, like ‘I know the real truth.’ He’s been doing that for a really long time. But to do something that bad?” Bernal said. “I think the anti-Semitic stuff is taking it to a new level.”

Another basketball fan Matthew Conde, a fourth-year marketing major, was also not surprised that Irving has again come under fire for the content he’s posted. Conde thinks controversies like these have an effect on his basketball career.

“There’s just no place for hate,” Conde said. “That’s why a lot of teams hesitate to get him because he brings that drama off the court and it takes away from team chemistry. And when orienting your team towards winning a championship, you don’t want someone like that on your team no matter how good they are.”

While there has been a recent rise in anti-Semitic hate speech, Jewish communities have been fighting those sentiments for thousands of years.

“Unfortunately, this fight is not new, the best support that can come from non-Jews is empathy and commitment to preaching the right message and helping us to stand for our safety and rights at this time,” Robinson said.

It is still unclear when Irving’s suspension will be lifted or if he will ever complete the tasks set by Tsai to adequately apologize for the hateful message he spread. Until then, Irving will not be playing any games for the Nets, something that could affect the team’s performance, especially considering Nic Claxton’s eye contusion, Ben Simmons’ knee injury and Seth Curry’s recent ankle surgery. Regardless of whether Irving returns to the court, his anti-Semitic statements have already further threatened the safety of a marginalized community.