Google confirms diversity exec no longer in role after problematic post

One of Google's top executives in diversity strategy and research has left his position after a 2007 blog post slamming the state of Israel resurfaced on June 1st. In the post, Kamau Bobb used antisemitic language, insinuating Jews have an "insatiable appetite for war and killing."

The post was quickly picked up by the *New York Post* and the *Washington Free Beacon*. "While Google has been a vocal supporter of diversity initiatives… it has not commented on the recent spike in anti-Semitic hate crimes," read a *Washington Free Beacon* article on the subject.

But the controversy likely didn't start with the right-wing press. It seems to have begun internally, with an email from a member of Google's Jewish employee resource group. On June 1st, an employee sent a note to the Jewish employee listserv, which has more than 3,000 members, writing that they were "deeply concerned about antisemitism within our DEI leadership."

The email read:

> *As the subject indicates, I'm very concerned about antisemitism within our leadership. Our Director of Diversity Strategy and Research appears to have strong opinion about Jews and Israel. I'll let you all have a look at his blog for yourselves, but here are some quotes that you'll find:*
>
> *"If I were a Jew I would be concerned about my insatiable*

> *appetite for war and killing in defense of myself.”*
>
> *“The ability of the United States and Israel to not only dictate the terms of my subjugation but characterize my desire to be free as rooted in hatred would burn my intellect and my sensibility as a human being.”*
>
> *“Looming large, like a grand dark cloud of human atrocity, is the slaughter of Palestinians by unrepentant Israeli Jews.”*
>
> *Does anyone else think this is totally inappropriate for someone in this kind of position? I’m scared that someone at this level has these kinds of feelings about Jews.*

The thread spiraled, garnering roughly 80 responses, with multiple calls for Bobb to be fired.

More moderate members of the group felt that while the blog post sounded problematic, the underlying sentiment resonated. “The language of this letter is very hurtful and antisemitic,” says a current employee who asked to remain anonymous. “That said, digging up an old blog from over a decade ago feels like a witch hunt.”

Later that evening, Bobb sent an email to the Jewish employee resource group, apologizing for what he had said. “What I wrote crudely characterized the entire Jewish community,” he wrote. “What was intended as a critique of particular military action fed into antisemitic tropes and prejudice. I think we can all agree, there is no easy solution to this situation. But that’s beside the point. The way I expressed my views on that conflict were hurtful.”

Now, Google has confirmed to *The Verge* that Bobb is no longer a member of the diversity team, though he remains at the company. “We unequivocally condemn the past writings by a member of our diversity team that are causing deep offense and pain to members of our Jewish community and our LGBTQ+

community," wrote a Google spokesperson in a statement. "These writings are unquestionably hurtful. The author acknowledges this and has apologized. He will no longer be part of our diversity team going forward and will focus on his STEM work."

Google did not respond to further questions about what focusing on "STEM work" means.

https://www.theverge.com/2021/6/3/22515377/google-kamau-bobb-blog-post-controversy