

THE 7 OCTOBER ATTACKS AND THE RISE OF ANTI-ZIONIST ANTISEMITISM IN THE UK

LFI POLICY BRIEFING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 7 October 2023 attacks on the Jewish state by Hamas and other terrorist groups devastated Israel and unleashed an unprecedented rise in antisemitism worldwide which – despite a ceasefire being in place in Gaza for a year – has not abated.

The nature of antisemitism also changed following the attacks with antisemitic incidents – which began surging exponentially even before Israel's operations in Gaza – now increasingly anti-Zionist in nature.

Anti-Zionist antisemitism – first promulgated by the Soviet Union and now a major feature of far-left and Islamist extremism – denies the Jewish right to national self-determination. The Islamist terrorist who attacked the Heaton Park synagogue in Manchester on the Jewish high holidays last October directly referred to Israel; other terrorists targeting Jews have also done so.

Antisemitism begets antisemitism, with massive spikes in antisemitic attacks following the Heaton Park attack as well as the slew of Iran-orchestrated attacks against the Jewish community in the spring.

As this report details, anti-Zionist antisemitism is now institutionally embedded across the UK, especially in the public sector – with many Jewish students and NHS staff and patients unable to visibly identify as Jews and facing regular antisemitic harassment. An obsession with Israel – which detracts from threats to Britain's national security and increases the threat to the Jewish community – increasingly dominates our politics. As Hamas sought to isolate Israel from the world, so too are Jews being frozen out of society in their own country.

Following the Manchester attack, the government has implemented a range of commendable steps to protect the Jewish community – from increased support for security to creating new powers to curb intimidation at anti-Israel protests.

However, Jewish life in Britain is still facing an existential threat today. Higher and thicker walls are not the answer to a social ill which requires structural realignment, including addressing the manner in which anti-Zionism sits at the heart of the antisemitism crisis facing the country.

LFI is recommending a series of new measures – many drawn from courageous Jewish communal groups who are at the forefront of defending British values – including:

- Require all public bodies to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism in full and without amendment.
- Establish an independent reviewer of antisemitism in the public sector, who will produce and publish an annual report, and ensure all public bodies collect data and report on antisemitic incidents and complaints.
- Work to increase awareness of the threat posed by anti-Zionist antisemitism, especially in areas like higher education. Establish a statutory framework for the investigation and disciplinary handling of hate crime incidents in higher education and universities; the Charity Commission, Office for Students and other regulatory bodies should be empowered to ensure proper conduct and strengthen students' union accountability, implementing sanctions where unions fail to address antisemitism; higher education should be designated a priority area for the Protecting What Matters social cohesion action plan; formalised taskforces should be established to better coordinate action by the police, universities and government to combat criminality and extremist activity on campuses, including the provision of clear public order guidance for universities and the police to strengthen enforcement of new and existing powers.

- Develop a dedicated strategy to address the role of algorithms, gaming platforms, encrypted online networks and generative AI systems in facilitating the spread of antisemitic conspiracy theories, extremist narratives and online-to-offline radicalisation.
- Adopt a new counter-extremism strategy to address the culture of impunity surrounding “[hateful extremism](#)” identified by the Commission for Countering Extremism in 2021; follow the lead of Australia’s Combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism Act and introduce a new legal framework to allow organisations to be designated as “prohibited hate groups” with a range of accompanying offences; permanently ban Tehran’s annual Al Quds’ Day march; and create an aggravated offence for “hate preachers” - religious, spiritual or other leaders who advocate or threaten violence.
- Establish a cross-departmental task force to tackle the [Iranian domestic threat](#) and identify and dismantle soft influence networks that advance the regime’s objectives under the cover of cultural, academic, charitable or media activity. This would include imposing sanctions against Press TV, Tasnim News, Fars News and other platforms linked to the Iranian regime.
- Conduct a thorough review of links between Iran and the charitable and NGO sector akin to previous reviews of espionage and abuse in the sector carried out with regards to China.
- Using new tools under the National Security Act, designate Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence Services which, alongside the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), has planned kidnappings and assassinations against British citizens. Identify and sanction Iranian regime oligarchs, elites and proxies in the UK, including expelling the supreme leader’s representative in the UK. As Australia and other states have now done, the UK should also expel the Islamic Republic’s ambassador.

FOREWORD: THE LESSONS OF HEATON PARK

The Yom Kippur Islamist terrorist attack on the Heaton Park synagogue in Manchester one year ago represents the worst day in living memory for British Jews.

As this important report argues, what the Islamist group Hamas and other terrorists unleashed on 7 October was not only horrendous violence against Israelis, but also a campaign of hate against Jews around the world which has yet to abate.

For the last three years, honouring the victims of the Hamas-led pogrom against Israel has taken place amid both the continuing threat to Israel by Iran and its allies and an antisemitism crisis in the UK.

Despite years of warnings from the Jewish community that year-on-year levels of unprecedented antisemitism would lead to a fatal attack, our worst fears were realised on Yom Kippur 2025.

Melvin Cravitz and Adrian Daulby died when an Islamist terrorist attacked congregants attending services on the holiest day of the year. Had it not been for their courage and other members of the Heaton Park congregation – including my Dad, Alan Levy – many more would have lost their lives. The Heaton Park community not only continues to live with the trauma of that day, but in the fear of further violence.

“Jews are being frozen out of everyday life.”

One year on, the threat to the Jewish community remains as real and present as ever. Just last month, two Iranian nationals were arrested by counter-terrorism police for plots against Jewish communal targets in Manchester. These arrests come on the back of a series of terrorist attacks against the Jewish community earlier this year, allegedly orchestrated by an operative linked to Tehran.

As this report highlights, alongside this immediate threat to life, the Jewish community exists amid a climate of fear and anxiety. As we mark the third anniversary of Hamas’ pogrom, hateful anti-Israel protests are once again filling our streets – only the latest iteration, and one manifestation, of a long-running campaign of intimidation targeting Israel and the Jewish community.

Terrorist attacks and plots, and much of the everyday antisemitism now routinely encountered by Jews, have one thing in common: they are anti-Zionist. Anti-Zionism – first seeded by the Soviet Union – is now the dominant motivation behind antisemitism in Britain today. The CST recorded 1,926 antisemitic incidents across the UK in the first half of 2026 – the second-highest total ever reported in the first six months of any year – and nearly a year on from a ceasefire in Gaza. Both the Heaton Park attacks and the Iran-linked attacks this spring witnessed further surges in antisemitism. Violent and shocking displays of antisemitism embolden and encourage antisemites.

As this report outlines, every layer of British society has been impacted by anti-Zionist antisemitism – from our schools to our hospitals to our politics. Jews are being frozen out of everyday life.

Forcing Jews to live behind higher and thicker walls is a fundamental perversion of Britain’s cherished values of equality and fairness. It is a betrayal of our history as a country long-welcoming of Jews. While Andy Burham’s commitment to tackle antisemitism – and recent steps already taken by the government – are welcome, we cannot confront this hateful ideology without honestly and clearly recognising its anti-Zionist nature – and then acting robustly on that acknowledgment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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INTRODUCTION: THE NORMALISATION OF ANTI-JEWISH HATE

Recently released [documents](#) detailing Hamas' objectives for the 7 October 2023 attacks reaffirm that the terror group wasn't simply aiming to murder and kidnap as many Israelis as possible, but was also attempting to thwart peace in the region – in particular Israel-Saudi Arabia normalisation – and any accompanying steps toward ending the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

This should not come as a surprise. Hamas lauded its terrorist campaign to derail the Oslo peace process two decades ago and have worked against a two-state solution, and the establishment of a Palestinian state, ever since. Victorious in the years of chaos they sowed in the Middle East, Hamas – an integral part of Iran's "axis of resistance" – also instigated the largest rise in global antisemitism since the first half of the 20th century.

Regardless of theology, Islamist terrorists in the Middle East have always viewed their holy war against Israel as having two fronts: One against the state, and one against the people. From the 1994 AMIA Jewish community centre bombing in Argentina, which killed 85 and was carried out by Iran-backed operatives, to the slew of attacks against Jews in Britain and Europe orchestrated earlier this year by Tehran, Jewish communities are the soft underbelly of the axis of resistance's war against Israel.

“For the first time in nearly a century, Jews in the west are questioning their future and once again leaving a suitcase by the door.”

However, the unprecedented levels of anti-Zionist antisemitism which are gripping the world did not take root during the Gaza conflict. They were strategically indoctrinated for decades – the 7 October attacks were simply the spark. This is clear in the upsurge of attacks against Jews from the very day of Hamas' pogrom in Israel – well before Israel began operations in Gaza. Moreover, nearly one year after a ceasefire in Gaza which ended major hostilities between Israel and Hamas, the Community Security Trust (CST) [reported](#) in August 2026 that antisemitic incidents in the UK had risen 21 percent in the first six months of 2026 compared to the same period last year.

As we have tragically witnessed over the last year from attacks against Jews, such as that at Manchester's Heaton Park synagogue during the Jewish high holidays last autumn, in which two people died, and the Iranian-backed campaign across the UK this year, antisemitism begets antisemitism. The 7 October attacks did not unleash a passing wave of antisemitism but raised the level of the water. Anti-Jewish hate has now become normalised and structurally embedded within the UK. For the first time in nearly a century, Jews in the west are questioning their future and once again leaving a suitcase by the door.

Following the Manchester attack, the Labour government has announced significant and indeed historic steps to protect the Jewish community in Britain. Nonetheless, the continued rise in incidents demonstrates that discrete steps, such as increased funding for protection and training in sectors like education and health, are no longer enough. Nor should Jewish children have to be educated in schools surrounded by rings of security. What is now needed is a strategy that gets to the very root of the hate and antisemitism festering in our society. That requires us, as too few have, to acknowledge the principal driver of antisemitism in Britain today – the obsessive demonisation and delegitimisation of the State of Israel and its people.

ANTI-ZIONIST ANTISEMITISM: THE IDEOLOGY DRIVING JEW-HATE

Hamas' 7 October attacks on Israel didn't plant the seeds for the current antisemitism crisis we are facing; they were deliberately sown in the decades which preceded it.

[Anti-Zionist antisemitism](#) is an obsessive hatred of the Jewish state and a determination to deny the Jewish people alone the right to self-determination. Put simply, an obsessive hatred of Israel, that singles out the Jewish state in particular for blame and criticism, is nothing less than a thinly veiled attempt to deny the Jewish right to a national homeland – a right acknowledged for every other people.

The [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\)](#) working definition of antisemitism refers in its examples to “denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, eg by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour” and “applying double standards by requiring of [Israel] a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.” It rightly notes that criticism of the Israeli government similar to that which would be levelled at any other government does not constitute antisemitism.

Very few people, if anyone – including hardened extremists – will openly admit they are antisemites. Indeed, they often shield themselves by saying explicitly they are not, while draping themselves in the mantle of “anti-racism”. However, it has become too common for activists, especially on the left, to claim they are anti-Zionist, which, they are keen to point out, is not antisemitic. In truth, there is now a widely used lexicon of slurs to camouflage anti-Jewish racism: on university campuses, for instance, the reference “Zio” is directed at Jews as a hateful antisemitic shorthand. The centuries-old tropes and conspiracy theories directed against Jews are now simply directed against the Jewish state.

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As scholar Izabella Tabarovsky [explained](#) in a previous LFI paper, anti-Zionist antisemitism is a pernicious strategy with a decades-old pedigree – particularly on the left. Anti-Zionism can be traced to the very first years of the Soviet Union's existence, but this conspiratorial strategy gained global traction following Israel's victory in the 1967 six day war. As Tabarovsky writes:

Convinced that the Jewish state could not have overcome Soviet-trained and Soviet-equipped Arab armies on its own, Moscow went searching for hidden factors to explain their defeat. Connecting Israel's victory with the budding pro-emigration movement among Soviet Jews, and the campaign among western Jews in their support, the Soviet security apparatus concluded that a massive conspiracy operated against Soviet interests globally. Leading this conspiracy were the dark forces of “international Zionism” and Israel in cahoots with American imperialism.

In the years that followed, the USSR printed hundreds of books and tens of thousands of articles highlighting the sinister nature of Zionism and Israel, prioritising the west and employing left-wing platforms to spread these malicious conspiracies. Embedded within all of this propaganda was the caveat that these arguments are not antisemitic, but anti-Zionist – an argument which has become mainstream, is regularly repeated and is core to delegitimising Israel's existence and the Jewish right to national self-determination. Crucially, however, this claim is conclusively rejected by British Jews, 89 percent of whom today [consider](#) anti-Zionism to be a form of antisemitism.

The ideology of anti-Zionist antisemitism has gone from a propaganda tool of the USSR in the late 20th century to a global movement in the 2000s. It underpins the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign and the accusations of apartheid and genocide which are frequently and falsely levelled against the Jewish state.

Anti-Zionist antisemitism should be considered a defined ideology, rather than simply a feature of other extremist ideologies like far-right nationalism or Islamist extremism. An ideology is a worldview where a set of beliefs serve as a lens through which to explain entirely distinct issues. The presence of anti-Zionist antisemitic conspiracy theories in topics ranging from the [9/11 attacks](#) to the Ceuta immigration [crisis](#) underlines this point. Israel and the Jewish right to a homeland have become the latest incarnation of classical antisemitic tropes about global Jewish control and power.

The link between previously episodic rises in antisemitism and conflict in the Middle East has long been established. What is different now is the presence of CST data [showing](#) that when events triggering a surge in anti-Jewish hate occur, as they did during the decade following 2000, those successive spikes

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in antisemitic incident levels have generated a gradual, long-term increase in the baseline level of antisemitic incidents recorded in the UK. Heightened antisemitism is the new normal and anti-Zionist antisemitism has become the dominant feature of antisemitism today.

This is borne out in the nature of antisemitic incidents reported since the 7 October attacks. In the CST’s report of antisemitic incidents [recorded](#) during the first six months of 2026, 787 antisemitic incidents – 41 percent of the total – referenced or were linked to Israel, Palestine, the Hamas terror attack or the subsequent conflict. Each of these cases also showed evidence of anti-Jewish language, motivation or targeting. According to the CST, variations on the terms “Zionism” or “Zionist” were employed on 204 occasions, often as by-words

for “Jewishness” and “Jew”, or alongside other antisemitic sentiments. By contrast, in the six months prior to the 7 October attacks, between January and June 2023, just 16 percent of antisemitic incidents included Israel-related language or imagery – demonstrating the changing nature of antisemitism in the UK.

As anti-Zionist antisemitism emerges as the primary threat to the Jewish community, for victims of relentless intimidation, harassment and violence, the antisemitism crisis facing the UK is real and amounts to an existential challenge.

ANTISEMITISM AND THE “SUSTAINED CAMPAIGN OF VIOLENCE”

The onslaught of anti-Zionist antisemitism in the UK began only hours after the Hamas attack started and while civilians were being murdered and houses razed to the ground. Soon after midday on 7 October 2023, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) [sought](#) and obtained police approval for a mass protest to be held a week later.

But even before that, anti-Israel rallies were being staged in the UK: a PSC rally in Brighton on 8 October was allegedly [told](#) that “yesterday was a victory” and that what the “freedom fighters in Gaza” had done “was so beautiful and inspiring to see”. At an anti-Israel rally in Manchester, the president of Manchester Friends of Palestine [told](#) the press that people were “full of pride”, claiming that, in Gaza, “for the first time they are actively resisting, they are not on the defence”, and insisting “we are full of pride, we are really, really full of joy [at] what has happened.” And in London on 9 October, a rally

outside the Israeli Embassy saw flares and firecrackers which “appeared celebratory”, in the [words](#) of Lord Walney, the then UK government independent adviser on political violence and disruption.

In the years that have followed, thousands of anti-Israel demonstrations have been held across the UK, many of them [featuring](#) support for proscribed terrorist groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis.

One demonstration in the wake of the 7 October attacks saw activists wearing pictures of paragliders, a reference to the paragliders used by Hamas to attack the Nova music festival, at which over 370 people, largely under the age of 30, were murdered and at which horrific acts of rape and sexual violence were perpetrated.

Deeply callous demonstrations have also been deliberately timed to take place on the anniversary of the 7 October attacks (demonstrations are also planned for this year). In 2025, then prime minister Keir Starmer condemned protests on the anniversary of the attacks, [saying](#): “This is not who we are as a country. It’s un-British to have so little respect for others. And that’s before some of them decide to start chanting hatred towards Jewish people all over again.”

More widely, demonstrations have [targeted](#) Jewish places of worship, [witnessed](#) antisemitic abuse and have resulted in the widespread intimidation of Jews. Calls for “jihad”, rhetoric about “resistance”, and chants of “globalise the intifada” and “no justice, no peace” are rightly heard by many Jews (and non-Jews) as supportive of violence. (Some 95 percent of British Jews [consider](#) the phrase “globalise the intifada” as a call for violence against Jews). Unsurprisingly, polling [indicates](#) that 90 percent of British Jews say they would avoid travelling to a city centre if a major anti-Israel demonstration was taking place, leading the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) to suggest that “our urban centres have effectively become no-go zones for Jews”.

“Just 10 percent of British Jews believe the Crown Prosecution Service – and 13 percent the courts – does enough to protect them.”

As the massive, frequent protests continued to intimidate Jewish communities in London and throughout the UK, concerns were regularly [raised](#) about enforcement by police services, including where support for, and glorification of, terrorist groups repeatedly featured. As polling [conducted](#) by the CAA shows, these concerns have led to a collapse in confidence in the police and prosecution services. Less than one-tenth of British Jews believe that the authorities are doing enough to address and punish antisemitism; only 16 percent of British Jews are confident that if they reported an antisemitic crime, it would be prosecuted if there was strong enough evidence; eight in 10 British Jews think that the police do not do enough to protect them and three-quarters are dissatisfied with how their local police force has been policing anti-Israel marches in their local cities; and just 10 percent of British Jews believe the Crown Prosecution Service – and 13 percent the courts – does enough to protect them.

Confidence in policing was further undermined in 2024 when supporters of the Israeli football team Maccabi Tel Aviv were banned from attending a Europa League match in Birmingham. The ban was based on an inaccurate report prepared by West Midlands Police. Following a series of investigations, significant errors were found including overstating Maccabi supporters’ role in disorder in Amsterdam in 2024 and a reference to a non-existent game between Maccabi and West Ham. Police were also found to have failed to engage the local Jewish leadership early on in the decision-making process. The former chief constable of West Midlands Police is being [investigated](#) for gross misconduct, along with three other officers.

Many of the largest demonstrations have been organised by the PSC and other anti-Israel aligned organisations – many of which do not support Israel’s right to exist and therefore do not support peace

between Israel and Palestine through a two-state solution. The PSC's annual income – [reportedly](#) £3.8m in 2025 – has risen sharply since 2023 (when it stood at £700,000), with the organisation playing a highly influential role in local politics in some areas.

Along with support for terrorist groups, many anti-Israel demonstrations have likewise [included](#) outspoken support for Iran's oppressive regime, its theocratic leaders and Iranian terrorists. Indeed, there is mounting evidence that the Islamic Republic is [forcing](#) the diaspora to attend anti-Israel protests.

The Islamic Republic's war against Israel and the Jewish world took a violent new turn in early 2026, when four ambulances belonging to the Jewish charity Hatzola were set alight. Further incidents in the following weeks included attacks against synagogues and culminated in the stabbing of Jewish victims in Golders Green. By the end of April, at least 17 Iran-linked attacks had been [carried out](#) in western Europe, with a group calling itself Harakat Ashab al-Yamin al-Islamia (HAYI) claiming responsibility for many of these acts. An Iran-linked operative was later arrested for having orchestrated what the chief rabbi, Sir Ephraim Mirvis, [called](#) a "sustained campaign of violence".

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Given this context, a recent poll of British attitudes toward the Jewish community demonstrates how insecure Britain is perceived to be for Jews. Only 38 percent of Britons [believe](#) the UK is safe for Jews. This is hardly surprising given that antisemitic views are widely held across the population, with 28 percent of Britons believing Jewish people hold most of the world's wealth and power (43 per cent reject this and 30 per cent express uncertainty). Forty per cent of Britons believe “some aspects of current Israeli policy bear comparison with those of the Nazis”. [Troubling views](#) held within the Muslim community are also pronounced, with 64 percent believing “Jewish people have too much influence in areas like the media, the economy, politics and wider society”. According to polling [published](#) last December, British Jews overwhelmingly (some 96

percent) feel that the country is less safe for them since the 7 October attacks, with a majority doubting they have a long-term future in the UK and 61 percent suggesting they have considered leaving Britain. Fifty-nine percent saying they try not to show visible signs of their Jewishness due to concerns relating to antisemitism.

On such worrying foundations, the Jewish community is under attack like never before. The CST [recorded](#) 1,926 antisemitic incidents across the UK in the first half of 2026, the second-highest total ever reported in the first six months of any year, exceeded only by the 2,019 incidents recorded from January to June 2024 in the months following the 7 October attacks. This is an increase of 21 percent from the 1,598 incidents recorded in the first half of 2025.

The consistently high rates of antisemitism reported year-on-year since the 7 October attacks as compared to previous years suggest a deplorable new normal for British Jews. The 1,926 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first six months of 2026 is more than the total for the entire year of 2022 – the last full year before the 7 October attacks. There is a 99 percent increase between the first six months of 2023 as compared to the first six months of 2026.

The first half of this year featured further elevated levels of antisemitic incidents following the outbreak of Israel and the US' war with Iran, which began on 28 February. While increases in antisemitic

incidents in the UK have long paralleled conflict in the Middle East, this is only part of the story. HAYI's spree of attacks against Jewish communities, beginning with the arson of four ambulances belonging to Hatzola, precipitated further antisemitic incidents. On the same day, CST recorded what was at the time the joint highest daily total for antisemitic incidents in the first half of 2026, with 25 reports of anti-Jewish hate. On 5 May, the site of a disused synagogue in east London was subject to another arson – also linked to HAYI. In the three-week period after the arson on Finchley Reform Synagogue, CST [recorded](#) 327 antisemitic incidents, an 83 percent rise from 179 reports of anti-Jewish hate in the three weeks preceding the attack.

The Iranian regime's callous strategy to instigate a wave of antisemitism against Jews mirrored the significant rise of antisemitism following the Islamist terrorist attack on the Heaton Park synagogue last October. The 2025 attack represented the worst attack on the Jewish community in modern times, but the UK's Jewish leaders had warned for years that such an event was only a matter of time. As the CST has [reported](#), the jump in antisemitic incidents on the day of the attack and the following day were the two highest daily totals for antisemitic incidents in 2025. One year on, law enforcement [foiled](#) another planned terrorist plot in Manchester targeting the Jewish community.

In the first six months of 2025, the highest daily total for antisemitic incidents [recorded](#) by the CST came on 29 June, the day after punk-rap group Bob Vylan chanted "Death to the IDF" at Glastonbury Festival. These chants, together with the band's use of the slogans "From the river to the sea" and "Free, free Palestine" and their references to a record company boss using offensive language referring to "Zionists", was broadcast live on the BBC. The corporation later [admitted](#) the broadcast broke its guidelines.

There continues to be a perception that the escalation in antisemitic attacks began rising in parallel with Israel's operations in Gaza, which began in the weeks following the 7 October attacks. But the figures suggest otherwise. The real causal story is far more disturbing, with, in total, 31 antisemitic incidents [reported](#) to the CST on 7 October 2023 itself. "The significant increase in anti-Jewish hate was, if anything, a celebration of Hamas' massacre by people whose own hatred was emboldened and, in their minds, legitimised by the brutality enacted on civilians in southern Israel," [argued](#) the CST. This figure rose further over the coming days, peaking on 11 October with 80 cases of anti-Jewish hate reported – the highest incident total for any single day ever recorded by CST. The week immediately following the Hamas attack on 7 October saw 416 antisemitic incidents reported to CST, higher than any subsequent week. Israel's ground operations in Gaza had yet to begin by this point.

Like the spikes in antisemitic incidents reported following the attack on the Heaton Park synagogue and Iranian-orchestrated attacks in 2026, the attacks by Hamas and other terrorists in 2023 ignited an antisemitism crisis that has not abated despite the end of major hostilities in Gaza. As the CST has previously [noted](#): "Violent attacks on Jews, whether in Britain, Israel or elsewhere, sometimes generate more anti-Jewish invective from antisemites who feel emboldened to express their prejudice." In short, Israel doesn't cause antisemitism – antisemites cause antisemitism.

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ANTISEMITISM WITH IMPUNITY?

As antisemitism proliferates across the British population, it has taken particular root in specific sectors and institutions – where action to address antisemitism has been slow, individual complaints have gone unaddressed and the Jewish community has justifiably lost confidence. Accompanying the structural embedding of anti-Zionist antisemitism is a crippling obsession with Israel and Palestine in UK politics, to the detriment of issues more pressing to UK national security.

University campuses

No sector of British society has been more impacted by the rise of anti-Zionist antisemitism than students on university campuses. In its latest reporting, CST [found](#) an increase of 14 percent in university-related antisemitic incidents from 2024-25 to 2025-26. According to CST, Israel, Gaza, Hamas, the 7 October attacks and the subsequent conflicts in the Middle East constituted the most common discourse present in university incidents. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of incidents contained such references alongside anti-Jewish language, motivation or targeting, while 55 percent of incidents demonstrated “explicitly anti-Zionist motivation alongside antisemitism”. “While criticism of Israel and Zionism is not inherently antisemitic, the data in this report continue to demonstrate that anti-Zionist language is frequently deployed in conjunction with hostility towards Jews and Jewish organisations,” the CST noted.

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As with the general population, students exhibit a startlingly high rate of antisemitic attitudes with one in five (20 percent) saying they would be reluctant to, or would never, houseshare with a Jewish student; 26 percent suggesting that calling for Zionists to be removed from campus is not antisemitic; and 24 percent believing it is not antisemitic to say that Zionists control the media/government. These views are not surprising given the climate of fear and intimidation which has been allowed to take hold,

with 49 percent of students reporting that they have heard slogans or chants glorifying Hamas, Hezbollah or other proscribed groups on campus.

Anti-Israel protests and actions – which included prolonged and intimidating campus occupations – [increase](#) the chances of students encountering justifications for the 7 October attacks, with the connection between these protests and antisemitism clear. Universities where protests are more frequent have seen higher levels of antisemitism, and four in ten (39 percent) students who witness regular Israel-Palestine protests have seen Jewish students harassed often. As the CST has [suggested](#), while no single factor can explain the higher prevalence of antisemitic incidents apparently linked to the Jewish state on campuses, “a longstanding tradition of student anti-Israel activism can contribute to an environment in which some individuals respond to the current war in the Middle East in an antisemitic way”.

What Jewish students face on a daily basis is harrowing: incidents have included physical assault, the glorification of terrorism against Jews and social exclusion. Chants and slogans [include](#), “Gaza, Gaza, make us proud, put the Zios in the ground”; “Glory to our martyrs, victory to the resistance”; and eulogies to the architect of the 7 October attacks, Yahya Sinwar.

On many campuses, anti-Israel and antisemitic “activism” has become so disruptive as to impact learning and research, with professors and students subject to intimidation and abuse designed to exclude them from campus.

In 2024, for instance, the University of Exeter was [warned](#) that the “current situation” on the campus was “unacceptable” for Jewish students with “extremely aggressive” weekly anti-Israel protests which were accompanied by chants of “genocide,” “murderers” and “from the river to the sea” and incidents of lecturers describing the 7 October massacre as “resistance,” and PhD students making “viciously antisemitic” comments in an online group.

Bristol University [saw](#) masked anti-Israel protesters disrupt open day lectures – who were then permitted or encouraged by staff to deliver speeches labelling the university “complicit in the genocide in Gaza” because it had failed to break ties with arms companies.

And at Oxford University, disruption [led](#) to the cancellation of some exams, while others took place amid noisy anti-Israel protests.

Oxford was by no means unique in this regard. A second-year student at Queen Mary, University of London [recounted](#): “During my biology exam, chants calling for the fall of Israel, to globalise the intifada, and praising the terrorists of October 7th were screamed through a megaphone right under the window of my exam room. I had to try my best to ignore the chants and focus on doing my best on the exam I had worked so hard studying for, which was extremely difficult. Once I finished the exam, I walked out of the building to be faced with 50-100 students standing in a group, some with face coverings, continuing that same chanting.”

Jewish students [reported](#) the disruption of vigils to mark the anniversary of the 7 October attacks – in one instance, other students surrounded a vigil and called for “intifada” – while, just days after the Heaton Park synagogue attack, pro-Palestinian student groups [staged](#) protests timed to coincide with the second anniversary of the Hamas pogrom.

Complaints from students facing antisemitic harassment have often fallen on deaf ears, with students reporting antisemitic incidents being framed as legitimate activism or investigations being either too slow or not taking place at all. High-profile cases – such as that of former Bristol University lecturer and Iranian-backed Press TV presenter David Miller, who will be allowed to return to work after [voicing](#) anti-Zionist views and reportedly [describing](#) Jewish students at British universities as “political pawns by a violent, racist foreign regime engaged in ethnic cleansing” – have further damaged confidence in university inclusivity.

Academics, too, have been subject to intimidation and harassment. Israeli-born economics professor Michael Ben-Gad, for instance, had his teaching [disrupted](#) by masked activists who accused being of being a “Nazi” and a “war criminal” and threatened to behead him.

“On many campuses, anti-Israel and antisemitic “activism” has become so disruptive as to impact learning and research.”

The health service

Antisemitic incidents within the NHS have increased significantly since the 7 October attacks and have included the spreading of the Jewish blood libel by health professionals, comparisons of Israel's actions to Nazism, the glorification of terrorism and the assignment of collective blame.

Confidence in the NHS and UK health services among the Jewish community has thus been undermined, with Jewish patients [deferring](#) treatments over a lack of trust in health professionals and Jewish medical practitioners [facing](#) “routine ostracism”. Polling [released](#) last month found that almost two-thirds of British Jews fear receiving unequal NHS treatment because of their identity, while over one in three who have used the NHS since the 7 October attacks say that they were uncomfortable due to their Jewish identity.

After voluminous reports of antisemitic incidents in the NHS – often carried out by health professionals against patients – Lord Mann, the government's independent adviser on antisemitism, was tasked with uncovering the scale of the problem. His [findings](#) are as shocking as the situation facing students on campus and included “continuous negativity to people because of their identity, extreme behaviours including serious race hate incidents, and related consequences, for example, patients not wishing to present for treatment and staff no longer wishing to work within the NHS”.

“Almost two-thirds of British Jews fear receiving unequal NHS treatment because of their identity.”

Mann's conclusions came as little surprise. The online activity of some NHS staff members has been shocking. One consultant, for instance, reportedly [called](#) Hamas' Sinwar a “legend”; denied atrocities committed by Hamas; and peddled conspiracy theories about Israel harvesting human organs. She also reportedly [called](#) for Israel to be “dismantled”; described Israelis as “demons” who should “not be allowed near humanity”; and termed Hamas “freedom fighters”. Her medical license was suspended and then reinstated in July 2025. She remains on the GMC register.

Another medical professional [reportedly](#) called the 7 October attacks “a welcome punch on the nose”; led anti-Israel protests at which there were chants of “jihad”; and was a long-standing executive committee member of the Hizb ut-Tahrir's UK operation. The Islamist group was subsequently proscribed as a terror organisation by the UK government. The GP was suspended by the NHS and then reinstated in July 2024. He remains on the GMC register.

Posts from other medical staff reportedly [include](#) comments such as “Israel is a Nazi terrorist state”; conspiracies about “the Zionists' weaponisation of pop culture”; calls for Israel to be “deleted” from the planet coupled with remarks that “Dead/suffering Israelis are the only thing that brightens the day lately”; and [suggestions](#) that “the Israeli flag is modern-day swastika” and that “virtually every Jew has some feelings of supremacy”.

As with students on university campuses, ostracism on the basis of Jewish identity has [driven](#) Jewish practitioners to question their place in the health profession after complaints about antisemitic incidents going unaddressed, including one staff member who complained about a post from a colleague referring to Jews “drinking blood” and remaining in post, while Jewish professionals have encountered denials of Israel's right to exist.

Jewish doctors have [spoken](#) of a “culture of fear” and “toxic atmosphere” since the 7 October attacks. As one female GP said: “Jewish staff are called baby killers and guilty of genocide and other hateful, untrue slurs. There is a silent campaign to intimidate by lecturers and senior staff wearing keffiyehs [the black and white Palestinian scarf] and Free Palestine badges to work.” Mann [noted](#) in his report: “In healthcare the Jewish experience is in some ways unique compared to other ethnic groups ... Jewish

staff are the only religious group where discrimination from managers and colleagues exceeds discrimination from patients.”

Like Jewish staff, Jewish patients have been at the sharp end of rising antisemitism within the NHS. A review carried out by Baroness Amos into antisemitism in maternity and neonatal care, for instance, [found](#) antisemitic attitudes by staff have led Jewish families to hide their identity in the hope of receiving better care.

A man in his sixties admitted to a hospital in Greater London [said](#) that he had been ignored as he called for help from his hospital bed only to find “Boycott Israeli Apartheid” stickers on the window to his room and on the headboard of his bed. “I think it was quite clear that this was a sticker that said I’m Jewish – ‘Do whatever you feel like doing because he’s Jewish’,” he later suggested.

In other incidents, a patient waiting to be discharged from hospital was reportedly [told](#): “Get your Jewish ambulance to come and get you,” while a surgeon operating on a Jewish cancer patient allegedly [told](#) him that Jews killed Palestinian children “for fun”. The patient said the surgeon was making an incision in his forehead at the time. “The guy has a knife. He’s working on me,” he said. “It’s about as vulnerable as you could be in terms of a patient and doctor interaction.”

The body that which represents British doctors, the British Medical Association (BMA), has done little to address concerns in the NHS. At this year’s annual representative meeting, a motion was [carried](#) rejecting the IHRA definition of antisemitism – even though the BMA has not adopted it. By a large majority, the conference also [passed](#) a motion calling for a halt to the recommendations of the Mann review. “The only topic worldwide raised by the International Relations Committee at the [conference was] Gaza, Israel and Palestine,” noted Professor David Katz, a longstanding member of the BMA. Last year, the conference [voted](#) to have no communication with the Israeli Medical Association and for its expulsion from the World Medical Association. Over three-quarters of 203 Jewish and/or Israeli doctors working in the UK have either [left](#), or are considering leaving, the BMA due to the organisation’s stance on Israel and an overall atmosphere of hostility.

As with the university sector, there is [evidence](#) antisemitism is proliferating in health services with impunity. Of the 732 complaints relating to antisemitism [made](#) to the GMC regulator between 7 October 2023 and 31 January 2026, nearly 90 percent of cases were closed at the regulator’s “triage” stage. According to the CAA, who obtained the data via a freedom of information request, when the 25 cases that were still in progress at the time are excluded, the GMC took action in less than one percent of antisemitism cases. The impact of the post-7 October attacks surge in anti-Zionist antisemitism is once again clear: in the period 1 January to 6 October 2023, the GMC [reportedly](#) received just eight complaints relating to antisemitism.

In a conversation with the British Islamic Medical Association in June 2025, a senior GMC official reportedly [stated](#): “We’re getting far, far more complaints around antisemitism than we are Islamophobia. And we’re far more likely to close them as compared to the general body, if you will, of complaints.” She also stated that “absolutely no work is underway to adopt” the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

However, the scale of the problem across the health service is difficult to discern because NHS England does not maintain a national, centralised register for tracking antisemitic incidents or other forms of racism, stating instead that data regarding such incidents would need to be obtained from individual NHS trusts and integrated care boards.

“NHS England does not maintain a national, centralised register for tracking antisemitic incidents.”

The 'Israel obsession'

Alongside rising anti-Zionist antisemitism since the 7 October attacks is a myopic fixation on Israel and Palestine in the UK's democratic institutions, with much of this driven by hardened anti-Israel organisations.

Despite local authorities having no responsibility for foreign affairs, the PSC [claims](#) that it has successfully pressured at least 34 councils into proposing motions to divest from Israeli-linked companies since June 2024. It also reports that a total of 1,468 councillors have signed its pledge to take all appropriate steps to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people, stand up to Israel for its "crimes of genocide" and "apartheid", and ensure councils are not "complicit", including through divestment of pension funds from "complicit" companies.

"MPs intervene considerably more on issues related to Israel than they do on the NHS."

The London borough of Hackney's recent decision to end its decades-old twinning arrangement with Haifa in Israel – a city renowned for its inclusion and mixed neighbourhoods – and its move to divest its pension fund from companies "complicit in territorial human rights violations" came after significant lobbying from the PSC.

At the national level, since 2024 parliament has [granted](#) 17 urgent questions relating to Israel and Gaza – nearly one in every 10 urgent questions considered. That figure does not include wider Middle East debates, where discussion frequently returns to Israel. Interventions on Israel-Palestine by some far-left "independent" MPs [outweigh](#) contributions about their own constituency.

More broadly, an [analysis](#) published in November 2024 revealed that MPs intervene considerably more on issues related to Israel than they do on the NHS – with 4,369 contributions related to Israel and only 1,895 on the NHS between 7 October 2023 and 18 October 2024. In comparison with other foreign affairs issues, the Russian invasion of Ukraine – which is of far greater strategic significance to the UK – was referred to only 1,449 times. The war in Sudan, in which 25 million people are said to be in dire need of humanitarian assistance, was discussed only 225 times.

Despite the immediate threats posed to the UK from Russia and Iran, from February 2022 – the time of Putin's invasion of Ukraine – to June 2026, there were 95 debates in parliament about Israel, 80 on Russia and 62 regarding Iran. This reveals a bizarre imbalance; one that can only be explained by a fixation which is diverting attention away from actual national security threats. Indeed, as the brutal repression of protesters was being carried out by the Iranian regime earlier this year – in which up to 30,000 people are [thought](#) to have been slaughtered in a matter of days – there remained far more parliamentary attention on Israel than on Tehran's actions, which, the UN's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran has [said](#), constitute crimes against humanity. Thus while there were three debates in the House of Commons on Iran between 27 December 2025 and 27 February 2026, there were six debates about Israel and Palestine.

Nowhere in mainstream British politics is the obsession with Israel more evident than in the Green party. As Starmer slammed the door on antisemites in the Labour party, the door to the Green party has been left ajar.

In the 2024 general election, and especially since the election of Zack Polanski as its leader, the Greens have consciously sought to weaponise the issue of Israel and inject it into British domestic politics. Indeed, the Greens have explicitly employed anti-Israel campaigning as a key mobilisation strategy. In its successful Gorton and Denton by-election campaign in February, for instance, campaign leaflets [argued](#) that "Labour must be punished for Gaza" and accused the government of being "active participants in the murdering of Palestinians."

It is telling that, in his first speech to the Green party annual conference as leader last year, Polanski [made](#) no mention of Iran, China or Russia – the only mention of Ukraine was a passing reference to his Jewish ancestry – while devoting several passages to Gaza.

It is also instructive that the Greens chose Mothin Ali as their deputy leader – a man who was forced to apologise after [saying](#) on the day of the 7 October attacks that Palestinians had the right to “fight back”. Mothin has also been [accused](#) of amplifying an antisemitic hate campaign against Rabbi Zecharia Deutsch, the former Leeds University Jewish chaplain.

The culmination of the reorientation of the Greens away from environmental issues and toward a fixation on Israel came at the party’s annual conference where members [passed](#) a resolution equating Zionism with racism. Zionism, the Greens decided, would be “treated as any other form of racism” by the party.

“The Green party has explicitly employed anti-Israel campaigning as a key mobilisation strategy.”

Jewish Green party members condemned the motion and the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council [labelled](#) it an attack on the Jewish community, rightly warning that “branding most British Jews and Jewish institutions ‘racist’ stokes anti-Jewish hatred”.

As Dave Rich, director of policy at the CST, [noted](#): “The idea that Zionism is racism was ... the policy of the National Front, back in the 1980s. That’s the political company the Green party is now keeping, in historical terms. But unlike the fascist NF, the Greens have five Members of Parliament and 1,300 local councillors. It’s a chilling and unprecedented development.”

Unsurprisingly, the Greens have now developed a problem with antisemitism akin to that which roiled the Labour party under Jeremy Corbyn. Amid multiple [allegations](#) against its candidates during the local elections in May, two Green candidates standing for Lambeth council in south London were even arrested for allegedly stirring up racial hatred online with antisemitic posts, while another candidate [posted](#) online calling for “every single Zionist” to be killed.

[Reports](#) of Green activists using a WhatsApp group to claim British Jews are a “weapon” of Israel, describing hostility towards Jews as “understandable” and discussing “killing Zionists” indicates just how deep the rot has sunk into the party’s grassroots.

The Greens have reaped some political benefit but at the cost of weakening social cohesion and – by failing to take stringent action against the antisemites within its ranks – amplifying anti-Zionist antisemitic narratives, tropes and discourse.

Polanski’s response to the spate of attacks suffered by the Jewish community this spring was reportedly to [suggest](#): “There’s a conversation to be had about whether it’s a perception of unsafety or whether it’s actual unsafety.” As the motion denying Israel’s right to exist threatened to pass at the Green party’s conference, Polanski [refused](#) to say if Israel has a right to exist during a hustings for the Holborn and St Pancras by-election in which he is a candidate.

The Labour party should call out the sectarian and divisive politics deployed by the Greens, while also exposing the party’s multiple weaknesses on national security, crime and the economy. It cannot and should not attempt to compete with the party for the support of those whose obsession with Israel leads them to excuse, justify or propagate antisemitic hate speech.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

From 2016 to 2019, the Labour party – one of the world’s oldest and most influential political movements – was gripped by an anti-Zionist antisemitism crisis. Under Corbyn’s leadership, the party became a safe haven for entryists, harbouring members who peddled antisemitic conspiracies and who had spent a lifetime using every available vehicle to denigrate the world’s only Jewish state.

When Starmer became leader, his first act was to address the Jewish community and commit to returning the party to being an inclusive place for Jews and to “tear antisemitism out by its roots”. He was as good as his word, and large numbers of British Jews once again felt the party lived up to the values of equality and anti-racism it had long professed.

Following the terrorist attack on the Heaton Park synagogue last October, the government recognised the antisemitism crisis for what it is and began to take significant steps to protect British Jews and fight for British values.

- It committed historic funding to protecting the Jewish community, including to the Jewish community protective security grant. £10m was announced after Heaton Park and £25m in the wake of Iran-backed attacks in spring 2026. In June, the government announced £250m in funding across the next three years which will deliver over 500 additional officers across England and Wales, boosting security in Jewish neighbourhoods and around schools, synagogues and community centres.
- To address the onslaught of anti-Israel protests – many of them, as noted, featuring antisemitism and glorification of terrorism – the Crime and Policing Act 2026 included measures to address protests outside places of worship, the use of face coverings, and repeated disruption.
- The government committed £7m of funding to tackle antisemitism in schools, colleges and universities. This includes a tackling antisemitism in education innovation fund and £1m to UJS to give non-academic professional staff from over 80 percent of universities the skills to recognise and address antisemitism. New guidance on Jewish student safety and well-being is expected.
- The government accepted all of the recommendations issued by Mann’s NHS review, including expanding training to cover discrimination and antisemitism in greater depth and a review of workwear in the health service.
- The government has also commissioned a series of reviews to better understand the nature of antisemitism including an [independent review of public order and hate crime legislation](#) as well as an [independent review into antisemitism in England’s schools and colleges](#).

These measures represent the most comprehensive steps yet taken by a UK government to confront antisemitism, and it is encouraging that the government is recognising both the external and internal conditions abetting the crisis.

- The government’s amendments to the National Security Act to create new designation powers for state-backed entities – and its immediate use to designate the IRGC – has been rightly commended. IRGC members can no longer be active in any respect in the UK, including attending or speaking at meetings. It is also now a criminal offence for anyone in the UK to associate with the IRGC, profess support for it, share any materials created by the IRGC or attend any meetings with IRGC representatives.
- The government’s Protecting What Matters social cohesion action plan sets out a number of steps that will help to get at the roots of the antisemitism crisis and extremism more broadly including new powers for the Charity Commission to act against charities promoting extremism;

providing higher education with greater capability to meet its anti-terrorism duties under the Prevent programme; and embedding the 2024 extremism definition across government.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The robust steps taken by the government are highly welcome. But higher and thicker walls are not the answer to a social ill which requires structural realignment, including addressing the manner in which anti-Zionism sits at the heart of the antisemitism crisis facing the country. The government should therefore:

- Require all public bodies to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism in full and without amendment.
- Establish an independent reviewer of antisemitism in the public sector, who will produce and publish an annual report, and ensure all public bodies collect data and report on antisemitic incidents and complaints.
- Work to increase awareness of the threat posed by anti-Zionist antisemitism, especially in areas like higher education.
- Establish a statutory framework for the investigation and disciplinary handling of hate crime incidents in higher education and universities. The Charity Commission, Office for Students and other regulatory bodies should be empowered to ensure proper conduct and strengthen students' union accountability, implementing sanctions where unions fail to address antisemitism; higher education should be designated a priority area for the Protecting What Matters action plan; formalised taskforces should be established to better coordinate action by the police, universities and government to combat criminality and extremist activity on campuses, including the provision of clear public order guidance for universities and the police to strengthen enforcement of both new and existing powers.
- Develop a dedicated strategy to address the role of algorithms, gaming platforms, encrypted online networks and generative AI systems in facilitating the spread of antisemitic conspiracy theories, extremist narratives and online-to-offline radicalisation.
- Adopt a new counter-extremism strategy to address the culture of impunity surrounding "[hateful extremism](#)" identified by the Commission for Countering Extremism in 2021; follow the lead of Australia's combatting Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism Act and introduce a new legal framework to allow organisations to be designated as "prohibited hate groups" with a range of accompanying offences; permanently ban Tehran's annual Al Quds' Day march; and create an aggravated offence for "hate preachers" - religious, spiritual or other leaders who advocate or threaten violence.
- Establish a cross-departmental task force to tackle the [Iranian domestic threat](#) and identify and dismantle soft influence networks that advance the regime's objectives under the cover of cultural, academic, charitable or media activity. This would include imposing sanctions against Press TV, Tasnim News, Fars News and other platforms linked to the Iranian regime.
- Conduct a thorough review of links between Iran and the charitable and NGO sector akin to previous reviews of espionage and abuse in the sector carried out with regards to China.
- Using new tools under the National Security Act, designate Iran's Ministry of Intelligence Services which, alongside the IRGC, has planned kidnappings and assassinations against British citizens.
- Identify and sanction Iranian regime oligarchs, elites and proxies in the UK, including expelling the supreme leader's representative in the UK.
- As Australia and other states have now done, the UK should also expel the Islamic Republic's ambassador.

CONCLUSION

While decades old, anti-Zionism has become the latest and most devastating variant of antisemitism in modern times. Recognising this simple truth is the first step towards addressing the scourge of antisemitism which we have witnessed since the terrible events of 7 October 2023. Without that recognition, measures to combat antisemitism, however well-meaning and well-intentioned, will fail to address the core of the problem and thus help to turn back this tide.

Antisemitism is a problem for Jews, but it is not the responsibility of Jews to solve it. No group suffering from racism should be abandoned to tackle the issue of racism alone. This is the responsibility of government and wider society.

But it also the case that antisemitism is a direct threat to the traditional British values of equality, fairness and justice.

These values are core to the Labour party's identity, and the battle for them is the struggle of our time.

History has taught us that what begins with the Jewish community never ends there. This should not, of course, be the reason we act decisively to tear antisemitism out by its roots in British society. British Jews simply deserve better than to be victimised for who they are in their own country.

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