

Home Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: Responses to antisemitism, HC 39

Thursday 14 May 2026

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Watch the meeting

Members present: Dame Karen Bradley (Chair); Lewis Atkinson; Mr Paul Kohler; Margaret Mullane; Chris Murray; Peter Prinsley.

Questions 1-56

Witnesses

[I](#): Russell Langer, Director of Public Affairs, Jewish Leadership Council; Karen Newman, Vice President for Security, Resilience and Communities, Board of Deputies of British Jews; Dr Dave Rich MBE, Director of Policy, Community Security Trust; and Danny Stone, Chief Executive, Antisemitism Policy Trust.

[II](#): Lord Mann, Independent Advisor on Antisemitism.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Russell Langer, Karen Newman, Dr Dave Rich MBE and Danny Stone MBE.

Chair: Can I welcome our witnesses to this session that we are holding to explore the rise in antisemitism and what response there could be to that? Before we begin our questions and I ask the panel to introduce themselves, I want to make a short statement about the sub judice resolution and its application to our proceedings this morning. We are holding this evidence session in response to recent violent attacks targeting Jewish communities in London and elsewhere. We will be focusing on the drivers of antisemitism and the responses to it. In doing so, we are conscious that there are live cases currently before the courts that must not be placed in jeopardy by anything said in Parliament, in compliance with the House's sub judice resolution. To help manage our discussions on an issue of national importance, Mr Speaker and I agree that it is appropriate to use the discretion given to the Chair in respect of the resolution on matters sub judice to allow passing references to attacks in north London as long as they do not engage in discussion or speculation around the motivation for, detail of or immediate response to any specific individual attacks or incidents.

Moving on to declarations of interest, I should declare that I am a member of Conservative Friends of Israel.

Peter Prinsley: I am a member of Labour Friends of Israel, a member of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, a trustee of the Norwich Hebrew Congregation, and of course I am a Jewish MP.

Chris Murray: I am a member of Labour Friends of Palestine and the Middle East.

Q1 **Chair:** Russell, could you start the introductions?

Russell Langer: I am Russell Langer, director of public affairs at the Jewish Leadership Council.

Karen Newman: I am Karen Newman. I am the vice-president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, which is democratic, cross-communal and representative of the community as a whole.

Dr Rich: I am Dave Rich, director of policy at the Community Security Trust.

Danny Stone: I am Danny Stone, chief executive of the Antisemitism Policy Trust. We provide the secretariat to the APPG against antisemitism and to Lord Mann as the Government's independent adviser on antisemitism.

Q2 **Peter Prinsley:** Good morning, everybody. I am the MP for Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket, although I am a member of the Norwich



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Hebrew Congregation. This question is to Dave Rich: could you describe the scale of the recent increase in antisemitism in the UK, please?

Dr Rich: Good morning, and first of all, thank you for inviting us to address this issue today. There have been two declared terrorist incidents targeting the Jewish community in this country in the last seven months, whereas there had been none for several decades before then. In between those incidents, there has been a series of other arson attacks at Jewish and Jewish-linked locations in north London. That in itself indicates a significant change in the scale of violent attacks targeting the Jewish community, but there is a backdrop to this.

Since the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, CST has recorded over 11,300 antisemitic incidents across the whole of the UK. These have been happening at unprecedented levels. In 2025, the average monthly total of antisemitic incidents was double what it was in the 12 months prior to the 7 October attack. More recently, since the attempted petrol bombing of Finchley Reform synagogue on 15 April, we have seen a 30% increase in antisemitic incidents reported to CST. The day of the firebombing of four Hatzola ambulances in Golders Green on 23 March was the joint highest daily total for antisemitic incidents so far this year. The day of the Heaton Park synagogue attack in October 2025 was the joint highest daily total for antisemitic incidents last year.

In terms of hate crimes, incidents and terrorist activity, we are in an unprecedented situation right now. I have worked at CST for 32 years and we have never, ever had a period like this in all that time.

Q3 **Peter Prinsley:** That is obviously terrible. Would you say that there is a particular type of incident that has seen the greatest increase?

Dr Rich: In terms of the breakdown of types of incidents, violent incidents, thankfully, remain a relatively small proportion—around 5% to 6% of the antisemitic incidents reported to CST. The vast bulk of incidents are verbal abuse, antisemitic comments in person or online, graffiti, hate mail—that kind of thing. What has changed is not so much the breakdown in the type, but the locations where these incidents happen. We are seeing many more antisemitic incidents reported from within schools, workplaces and the health service from parts of society where antisemitism was marginal. One of the big changes over the last two and a half years is that antisemitism has moved from the margins to the mainstream in many parts of society, especially in online spaces.

Q4 **Peter Prinsley:** That fits with my experience of the situation, particularly in rural schools, where we have seen an astonishing increase in antisemitism in East Anglia. Could you talk about how the CST data is gathered? How complete do you think it is?

Dr Rich: The antisemitic incidents we record are reported directly to us by victims, witnesses, family members, Jewish organisations—synagogues, schools and so on—and security guards who are protecting Jewish community buildings, and there is also data sharing with police, so it



comes from a range of sources. Every incident is reported into CST—we do not harvest the internet for incidents; that is a separate part of our work.

In terms of how complete it is, we work on the belief that a huge chunk of hate crime is not reported. There is not much data on this, but the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights did a survey of Jewish experiences and perceptions of antisemitism. The most recent one that included the UK, in 2018, showed that only around 21% of incidents of antisemitic harassment are reported to anyone in this country. We work hard to encourage reporting to CST and to the police, but the reality is that for a lot of Jewish people, this has become a normal part of life. For a lot of Jewish people, the motivation to report is not there because it is becoming so common in their day-to-day experience.

- Q5 **Peter Prinsley:** I completely agree with that. It has moved from a situation where there were remarks at the edge of a dinner party to something that is everybody's everyday experience. Moving on, is the situation in the UK different to some other countries? Is there something uniquely bad about what is going on here?

Dr Rich: It is the opposite, actually. This is a global phenomenon. In other countries with significant Jewish communities, especially liberal democracies—the United States, Australia, western Europe—you see the same patterns of a huge surge in antisemitism after the October 7 attack. You see the same kinds of spikes in relation to events in the middle east. You even see the same language being used, the same slogans and catchphrases in the articulation of antisemitism and the same methods. Since 7 October, synagogues have been firebombed on five different continents, and there is no other type of prejudice that works in quite that globally synchronised way.

You will always have local phenomena that produce local spikes. As I said, we had a spike in antisemitic incidents here after the Heaton Park synagogue attack in October, but we also had a spike in incidents after the Bondi attack in Sydney. This is a global phenomenon; every Jewish community is facing the same challenges.

- Q6 **Peter Prinsley:** In this country, we have the CST. Obviously, we are very lucky to have the CST. In other countries, do they have something similar? Are there lessons we can learn from other countries about how best to deal with this, or are they learning from us?

Dr Rich: We are always looking to learn. Most Jewish communities will have some type of security infrastructure. That is the sad reality of the Jewish experience over many decades: the terrorist threat is faced by every community, everywhere, so similar kinds of security exist. CST is probably the biggest and the most widely developed of all those across Jewish communities in the world. We are always looking to learn from each other, partly because, as I say, these threats are global. Where there might be learning is more in how Government and police are addressing these issues across different countries and societies, because Jewish communities are broadly using the same kinds of approaches.



Q7 **Chair:** Does anyone else want to add to that?

Karen Newman: To add to what Dave said, the Jewish community, in how it feels about all this, was starting from a different point. As he said, we are used to having security and going past security to go into synagogues every week, which is in itself a bit bizarre, but that has been normal for us for a while now.

What is new is that people worry about being Jewish in all sorts of settings. If they go out, did they remember to take their kippah off? Do they want to keep it on? How does that feel? That is completely new, and that is what impacts on how safe we feel in our country. One of the things we feel very strongly about is that this is not about whether or not you like Jews; this is about what kind of Britain you want to live in.

Russell Langer: Picking up on that point about the international context, the important point I would make is what Dave made clear: what changed was the two incidents categorised as terrorist incidents that we have had over the past seven months since the Heaton Park attack in Manchester. However, security was not a new thing for the Jewish community in concept. I went to school in this country behind security. Growing up, I went to synagogue behind security. This is not a new concept, but we always saw those attacks happening elsewhere. Those attacks happened in France. We saw them in America and, in a way, maybe felt a bit safe behind those high walls and thicker doors in our synagogues. That has now been trashed.

When I was in Manchester with the community the day after the attack there, the key message I kept hearing was, "We've had enough of living like this." I do not think enough of the British public really recognise that that is what Jewish life is like in lots of countries, including in the UK. A lot of the immediate responses were rightly about security and protecting the Jewish community. That is obviously vital. However, for too long, we have focused just on security, as though this is a problem we can fix with a fence. We need to move beyond that.

Danny Stone: The context in which we operate, and in which we discuss all of this, is one in which I have been slightly reassured since the Golders Green attacks, by civil society coming out and saying, "This is a problem. This type of racism is a problem." However, so often, I have to defend why I want to see action taken. Look at the cancellation of Wireless festival, where I had to keep going out and explaining why an artist using Nazi-grade antisemitism might be a problem. There are constant allegations of a smear. It is not just that we operate in a space in which this is racism and must be dealt with; it is that we are having to go further and explain why that racism must be dealt with.

Chair: Lewis Atkinson has some questions about the impact on your lives. In Parliament we repeatedly refer to living a full life. Everything you are saying is: this is a full life, at best, behind a high wall. That is not acceptable.



Q8 Lewis Atkinson: My question is about how the growth of antisemitism is affecting Jewish people in their daily lives. In answering that, could you give some examples of different elements of the Jewish community, such as different ages and life stages, and how that is affecting different groups?

Karen Newman: Exactly as you said, it affects all groups separately. I was reflecting only recently on the fact that, when I went to university, I do not even know whether my parents knew which university I was applying to. When I went to Sussex, I was able to do a thesis on Shakespeare at undergraduate level, and you could not do so otherwise. But now we have parents ringing people like us or Dave's organisation to ask, "Where will my child be able to be Jewish on campus safely?" That is worrying for us for two reasons, as it is not just worrying from the parental perspective. In answering that question, we also do not want to create no-go areas for Jews—we really do not, but that is the worry. It is about balancing safety against our core identity as British citizens.

Exactly as you said, it affects different people and different ages. Where it is particularly difficult is in the workplace. I am sure there will be separate questions on this issue, but we have found that Jewish workers being able to get together and create their own associations has been tremendously valuable—not just for them but for management, as they can see there is a group that they can consult.

It is the stuff that happens by the cooler that is so awful—when people have been seeing images about Gaza and they say something. You get this tsunami of junk in your head. Does this person know I am Jewish? Probably not. Is this the moment for me to say that I am Jewish? Or do they know I am Jewish, and they assume that I am completely backing the state of Israel? There are people who harbour a great love for Israel while, at the same time, recognising that they are critical of some actions of some Governments at some moments. You can hold those thoughts at the same time.

The difficulty is that the communication space that we occupy at the moment is much more comfortable with the yes/no, black/white, on/off. You need two or three sentences to say, "I feel passionately about this, and I agree that this is wrong." But we do not have time for that level of complexity, so it is much easier to pretend you are not Jewish, and that is what is new.

Q9 Lewis Atkinson: To follow up on that—you have touched on this a little—how far do you feel the levels of antisemitism that we see are affecting Jewish people's ability to be openly Jewish? Has trying to mask Jewishness now become normalised?

Russell Langer: I am amazed by just how much it has now come into my everyday conversations. In the past two weeks, when it comes to which school people's children go to, I have heard both, "I'm happy my children do not go to a Jewish school, because they're not going to be at a school



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that is a target,” and, “I’m happy my children go to a Jewish school, because they’re not going to be bullied there for being Jewish.”

Ultimately, that is a binary choice that some people feel they are having to make. Also, they are thinking about whether their children might be safer in that school because of the security in place, but they have to travel to that school. Not all Jews wear religious symbols, but you might wear a school uniform that clearly marks that you are attending a Jewish school. I am hearing from people that one of the biggest fears they have each day is their children getting safely to school and then home again, and that is a big part of their normal life.

With the incident in Golders Green, there is also the fact that it did not happen in a Jewish location; it happened on the street in a Jewish area, with people just wearing Jewish symbols. With all the conversation about higher walls, thicker doors and so on, it just trashes all of that. People are thinking about whether they have to change their route, what they look like or what they need to wear. We had the rally against antisemitism on Sunday, and there were still people wearing baseball caps over their skull caps. That is a normal thing you will see when people are walking to the synagogue, as it is a way of covering their Jewish symbols. But we were still seeing issues like that at the rally against antisemitism.

The last example I will give applies to those who do not necessarily present as Jewish. We talk about the workplace, and we had a conversation about the workplace yesterday with the Secretary of State for Business and Trade. There is always the question, “Well, if I don’t have to tell somebody I’m Jewish, why would I?” The stats all show that the vast majority of people in this country are not antisemitic. Statistically, if somebody knows I am Jewish—if I get into a cab and tell the driver that I am Jewish—the odds are that there is going to be absolutely no problem, but why would I want to find out? I suppose that is the creeping issue that is coming in.

Q10 Lewis Atkinson: Can I ask about how far people feel safe to seek support services? In one of my previous roles, I worked for the NHS in Gateshead, which as you know has a significant Jewish community. I am very aware of the mental health impact of the level of antisemitism that the community must be facing. How would you say people’s ability to seek and access support, whether through the NHS or other support services, is impacted by antisemitism?

Danny Stone: We have been supporting Lord Mann in his work looking at the NHS and antisemitism across the NHS. I do not want to pre-empt any of that, but it is safe to say that there are issues of support services, across multiple sectors, not having the requisite knowledge to support people—not having the understanding of what antisemitism is, and not knowing how to receive people or give them the support they need. There is definitely a level of concern and apprehension about seeking that support.



I know of a couple of cases in different industries where people have looked to managers for support and the managers have come back and, in some cases, even expressed antisemitic attitudes, so there is a concern there. Across EDI, in different organisations, there is a failure to see antisemitism as racism and build training in. That is something our organisation does training on. We have been trying to work with various organisations in different sectors to ensure that it is as high quality as possible, and that offer is there for us to go in and help anyone in any sector that needs that help.

Karen Newman: I mentioned the Jewish staff networks. As Lord Mann's review pointed out, there is a particular issue in the health sector, both for Jewish staff working within the health service who experience it, and for how Jewish patients feel at a moment of vulnerability, when they are just about to say something, and they see a Palestinian badge on the nurse's uniform. That is not a moment when you feel good asking for kosher meals. It is just much easier not to do it, but for some people, whether or not they can keep kosher is a core indicator of their Jewish identity. It is those sorts of things. When you ask about the everyday, that is what the everyday looks like for some of our people right now.

Q11 Lewis Atkinson: Given the environment you have described, how much of a risk do you think it is—or how much of a calculation do you feel members of the community are making about whether they believe it is safe and right to remain in the UK, rather than to seek to live elsewhere?

Dr Rich: One of the big changes is that that has become a much more live question for a lot of people. It is about what your tolerance is for the limitations and self-restrictions you have to make in order to live a life here as a Jewish person. I do not want to overstate it; Jewish life goes on all the time and Jewish events go on all the time, but there are a lot of things happening beneath the surface.

I will explain what I mean. Richard Ferrer, the editor of the Jewish News website, published an article this week about the regularity with which he gets emails from ordinary Jewish people who were mentioned or named years ago in an article on his website about something completely uncontentious, asking him to delete their name or delete the article because they do not want employers to know that they are Jewish when they apply for a new job.

If we are in a situation in this country where ordinary Jewish people are feeling and experiencing that being known to be Jewish is a professional and social impediment, that is not just about the status and the future of the Jewish community; that is about the health of our liberal democracy. It is a sign that our democracy is failing and our society is falling apart, because of these antisemitic trends and these pressures.

When it comes to the extent to which Jewish people are withdrawing inwards and making these calculations about whether it is physically or professionally safe to be identified as Jewish, Jewish people will come to



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their own conclusions, but we should not make the mistake of thinking that is only or even primarily a Jewish problem.

Karen Newman: I have hated all my life the expression, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger"—I have always really hated that—but I have really seen over the past couple of months that, while this is a really live issue—"Am I safe here?"—there is also a sense that these people are clearly trying to drive us out and clearly trying to make us feel unsafe. We are British. I would love to be able to tell you that my intellectual hinterland is in the five books of Moses and the Talmud, but my hinterland is Shakespeare and Oscar Wilde. Given the drive to drive us out, there is a very strong desire to feel safe enough to say, "No."

- Q12 **Chris Murray:** What you are saying is really powerful and I just want to check that I am understanding. Are you saying that the growth of antisemitism that you have come across in the last couple of years is a growth in both its spread and its intensity, or are you saying that it is the spread that is the key distinction with the situation previously?

Dr Rich: I think it is both. It is the spread, and the day-to-day incidents, comments, exclusions and shunning—that is what is having a really big impact on day-to-day Jewish life—but in the last seven months we have also seen something that we had largely escaped until then: the violent antisemitism spilling out. There were previous terrorist plots that were stopped by the police. There was a very serious plot to carry out a mass casualty attack with automatic rifles in Manchester that was planned to kill hundreds—it came to trial last year; it was Islamic State-inspired—so people were already trying, but in the last seven months it has started to really spill out on to our streets.

- Q13 **Chris Murray:** Thank you; I just wanted to clarify that. I should also have said thank you for coming in.

Obviously, antisemitism is vile and inexplicable, but I want to ask what you perceive the drivers of it to be. This question is particularly for Danny but open to the whole panel: what do you think are the drivers of antisemitism in the UK?

Danny Stone: Antisemitism comes from everywhere. Antisemites are responsible for it—I should say that first and foremost. At present, for me, the online environment is the largest threat. It is a huge problem, and the way in which we are responding to it is not sufficient. The focus has been on criminal material—illegal material. Okay, that is important and needs dealing with, but we need to move to a different approach to regulating social media—one like the approach for TV and radio, with different civil and self-regulation, so that it is Parliament that is holding tech companies to account and taking the lead, not foreign shareholders or Governments. It is a shame that in the King's Speech there was no regulation on online safety. There should be regular legislation on this.

To give you a sense of the drivers, we just published a report with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, and in it we looked at TikTok and Rumble. These platforms are algorithmically pushing minors—minors, let alone



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adults—from neutral interest topics to conspiratorial antisemitism and Holocaust denial in a very short period of time. Platform features such as audio snippets and stickers help to embed and spread that antisemitism. On the measures to try to capture it, we did another report looking at AI and the classifiers that AI uses, and they cannot find antisemitic deepfakes. That is before we get into regulation of chatbots.

Under successive Governments—this is not a specific criticism of this Government—there have been problems. Governments say to us, “Don’t push MPs to put individual amendments on to different Bills; there needs to be a more whole package.” I put in a paper to No. 10 after the Heaton Park terror attack with a very long list of suggestions of things that could happen, and to the best of my knowledge, none of those has happened. The Online Safety Act Network has a 10-point plan, including an overarching duty of care on tech platforms and action on app stores. I can send in the things that I have suggested.

Chair: Yes, please do.

Danny Stone: But these are things that need to happen now, because algorithmically these platforms are driving people. We had a meeting with the tech platforms and the tech Minister in the wake of the Golders Green attacks. We talked to X specifically about five accounts that we had picked out, which were routinely publishing material containing Holocaust denial and antisemitism, and we gave them 24 hours to take action on those accounts. Their response was to come back to say that they had taken action on some of the posts, but that freedom of expression was very important. These accounts are still up, and they are still routinely posting Holocaust denial and antisemitism. X could suspend the accounts under their terms of service, but they have not done so.

The tech platforms are laughing at us. In response to our last report, Reddit and TikTok essentially attacked our methodology. They do not understand antisemitism properly and they do not capture it as it should be captured. Rather than querying our methodologies, in both cases I would expect them to work harder to address this.

This Committee has looked at antisemitism online repeatedly. I think it is worth going back to some of your inquiries—as I say, I will send in these materials—and challenging Government Ministers and the regulator to go further, because this is where it is coming from, and it is cross-pollinating left to right online and spreading harm.

Chair: Just to be clear, we are looking for solutions here. We are looking for things that we can put to Government and to other organisations, so please let us have any thoughts that you have, if not in this meeting then later on.

Dr Rich: In terms of the ideas that are driving this antisemitism, it comes from all sides, as Danny says; you need to have 360° vision to see all the different types. The rise of conspiracy-theory thinking is really important, because antisemitism is at heart a conspiracy theory. But the emotional



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driver of the worst of the antisemitism right now is an utterly obsessive hatred of Israel that is not criticism of Government policy and not opposition to the actions of the Israeli military, but hatred of an entire nation—hatred of Israeli people, which then spills over into hatred of Jews. It is demonisation of the word Zionism and anyone who can be labelled as a Zionist.

In the antisemitic incidents that we log and record, the most common discourse that is used is language in relation to Israel and events in the middle east, alongside antisemitic language or anti-Jewish targeting. We are very clear that we only log an incident if there is anti-Jewish targeting or language or motivation.

Alongside that, we have a normalisation of violent language towards anyone who is put in this category of Israel/Zionism—anyone connected to it. That normalisation is happening on our streets, it is happening online and it is happening in the day-to-day. At the more violent end, you have the influence of Islamist extremism, which is playing an increasingly important part in all of this. But this hatred of Israel is where Islamist extremism, far-left extremism and far-right extremism all meet. We see people from all those different ideological backgrounds sharing each other's content, speaking with each other on their podcasts online, and so on. There is a coming together, and this is the thing that is driving the emotion, the fury and the anger that then spills out into all the antisemitism.

Danny Stone: That language is used in Parliament too. If anything, if you are able to highlight this use of language in and around Parliament, that would be very helpful. One MP referred to the "blood-soaked tentacles"—"tentacles" being the key word—"of the Israeli army". That was said in the House, and so far as I am aware there was no comeback on that. An MP on social media, in reference to Gaza, talked about: "Gas chambers next?" There was reference to the Zionists and the power of the Zionist lobby. These are parliamentarians. That is language that is not acceptable.

Parliament has privilege—ultimate privilege, total privilege—but that privilege must be used responsibly. I suppose that my plea—as ever with parliamentarians, and I have been writing about this issue for years now—is that the use of responsible language is at the forefront. We have done individual training for individual parties about this. I will speak to anyone about it. We have run training for Parliament on it. I am not asking people to be shy in their criticism of Israel; they can even be offensive, but there must be a red line, and at the moment that red line is not being applied.

Q14 Chris Murray: I want to pick up on a point that you made, Dave. When we speak to the police, what we hear a lot is that antisemitism is common across the far right, the far left, Islamists and non-ideological extremism. Do you have any reflections on that? Does it manifest differently among those groups?

Karen Newman: I was reminded of a lecture that the former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks gave, in which he talked about antisemitism as a virus



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that mutates. In the middle ages it was about the religious aspect, we know about the racial aspect in the 20th century, and now it is this demonisation and virulent hatred of the state of Israel, which Dave and others have described. Denying a country's right to exist means that you are very comfortable about driving the Jewish population of that country into the sea. That is what that means. It is very difficult not to experience that as a direct threat.

It is different precisely because of the issue that you have just raised. On the extreme right, there is a tendency to use anti-immigration drivers to say that there are good minorities and bad minorities. That is not helpful for us. As I say, this is about the kind of Britain we want to live in, not, "We're all right; you can demonise that lot." That is not what we want.

On the other side, of course, a badge of what a good socialist you are is your anti-Zionism, which creates hatred, so you have both extremes behaving in a way that makes it very difficult to build social cohesion. These things need to be recognised, because it is social cohesion that we really need right now. Exactly as Russell and others have said, most people in this country are not antisemitic. We know this.

Russell Langer: To answer your question, antisemitism is the common factor throughout all forms of extremism. I know that the Committee has looked at new forms of extremism and I hesitate to use the word "traditional", but the more commonly known existing forms of extremism, Islamism, far left, far right, newer incel-based and any conspiracy theory tend to have a tinge of antisemitism as the common factor.

Chair: In our evidence sessions, we were told categorically that antisemitism appears in every form of extremism.

Russell Langer: Yes. The counter-extremism strategy that we have as a country is important, but we have been behind on that as a country. It has taken a bit too long to go. The "Protecting What Matters" paper, which came out a month or so ago—perhaps two months ago—is a really good place to start on that. It has some really important measures on countering extremism across those ideologies. Importantly, it names those ideologies, which were also named yesterday in the paperwork on the King's Speech around the national security Bill. It is really important, because ultimately a lot of the time we are too afraid to name some of those ideologies as a country. The Prime Minister, the Home Secretary and the police have been very vocal in naming Islamism, and I believe this Committee has as well. But even within Government and junior ministerial ranks, we will have meetings where we speak about it and then the Minister will sum up and not mention the word Islamism. There is a sense of squeamishness. If that is where we still are, we are not going to be able to face it as a country.

There is a really helpful action plan at the end of the "Protecting What Matters" strategy, which sets out which Department is responsible for which of those measures. The bit that is missing is a timeline—there is no timeline for that and there are no deadlines. There is no real idea where



we can hold Government to account on how they are going to implement the strategy. I suggest to the Committee that that really needs to be implemented and monitored as we move forward.

Q15 Chris Murray: Thank you. We obviously have an incredibly polarised debate generally at the moment. How much do you think that that polarisation contributes to antisemitism? That is one question; the next is completely separate. The polarised debate around events in the middle east is also very febrile. How much would you say that polarisation in general is a problem in driving antisemitism, and how much is the polarisation of the debate around issues in Gaza a driver of it, if that makes sense?

Dr Rich: It does. I think it is an absolutely central part of it, because antisemitism is part of these bigger trends in society. Polarisation never happens only in one direction; as one part of the political spectrum spins off towards more extreme positions, you will get an opposite reaction on the other side. I think we are going to see a very physical manifestation of that on the streets of central London this Saturday, with the big Gaza demonstration and the big far-right demonstration. One way or another, they are all talking about issues where antisemitism, the Jewish community and diversity in general are really central and key.

Different extremists have one area of common ground, which is the antisemitism at the heart of it. The more that politics polarises and the more that debate becomes characterised not just by anger, by hatred and by lack of consensus but by conspiracy theorising and by scapegoating, the more that antisemitism will absolutely rise. When that is specifically on the issue of debates and differences over Israel, Palestine and the war in the middle east and so on, obviously that is the key focus, but what we see time and again is that debates and differences of opinion over what is happening in the middle east very quickly become transformed into suspicion, targeting and harassment of people here on these streets. We have found ourselves as a society to be quite bad at keeping that boundary between having our discussions about events in a conflict thousands of miles away and managing successfully the impact of how people feel about that conflict on communities here in this country. So far, we have failed to manage that impact.

Karen Newman: You touched on something really critical, because there is an issue around how important it is to develop the skill of critical thinking. That is a lot of "On the one hand and on the other", but I think a lot of this extremism is driving an identity politics way of thinking, whereby it is black/white, good/bad, yes/no, on/off. That is where things are particularly difficult. As I was saying before, a lot of Jewish people feel very strongly that the state of Israel must exist, but at the same time they recognise, of course, that criticism of any action of any particular Government is completely legitimate. That is a nuanced space of thinking that simply does not exist in this polarised world. Where we need to get to anything sustainable—whether it is social cohesion, peace on our streets or anything in the middle east—it is about finding the space to have a



discussion when thinking is tending towards polarisation, which is itself very dangerous.

Q16 Chris Murray: That is a really important point. There are a lot of people in the country who are not antisemitic but deplore what is happening and the actions of Israel. I share that view. I am not talking about myself here, but if someone did want to express that view by going on a march—this Saturday, for example—how could that person do it, given that the political space is so constrained and so polarised? Do you think they can?

Dr Rich: It is absolutely possible to protest in a legal and democratic way, and as you say, it is everybody's right to do that. Many people rightly and understandably have strongly held feelings about what is happening in the middle east.

There are a couple of things here. One is that there is a difference between criticism and hatred, and I think we all understand that. Recognising that difference is a really important starting point. The other is that we have a definition of antisemitism—the IHRA definition—which has been adopted by Government and is used very widely across society. It is not prescriptive, but it sets out useful guidelines about the kind of language and behaviour that might, in certain contexts, be antisemitic. That is a really useful set of guidelines and principles for people to follow. It can be very helpful in setting out where this debate might cross a line and where it won't. It insists on always looking at the context. I would recommend using it.

Danny Stone: I want to come back on your point about polarisation. First, Lord Mann established a really important principle when he was chair of the all-party parliamentary group against antisemitism, which is that MPs should take on the antisemitism within their own parties. It remains an important principle, and it built trust so that, across successive Governments, there was faith that this was not a politicised effort and that it was something that we expected parties to take on. As new parties emerge and there are more independent MPs, councillors and others, the systems in place need to be good enough to report antisemitism and take action on it. There is a role there for the Electoral Commission, for example.

To give you one case study of a poor experience I had recently, in June 2024, I put a complaint in to the Green party after I raised concerns about allegations of a smear and was sent a "Free Palestine" GIF in response. It took six months to get a reply, and I was told that because I was not a member of the party, the complaint could not be taken forward. I put in a subject access request and was told that there were as many as 5,000 documents with my name on. It then went completely silent. In May 2025, I complained to the Information Commissioner's Office. In December 2025—it took that long—I was told that the party had probably failed its obligations and had been instructed to respond. This week, I was told that I should receive something by the end of the week. It has taken two years and I have had nothing. That is not good enough.



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Political parties—I don't care which political party—need to be set up to register these complaints and deal with them for their own sake, as I say, so that this does not become a big political issue. Each political party needs to be set up to take on the problems within their own party.

Russell Langer: I want to pick up on your question about protests. The way you phrased it is really important. We have to be clear to people with all sorts of opinions on what is happening in the middle east that there is a difference between criticising the actions of a Government, and hatred. Unfortunately, when it comes to the protests—this is not reflective of everybody who goes on those protests—we have countless examples where that has not been the case. We can go back to the very first one that happened after 7 October. Police got the notification of that protest at 12.50 pm on 7 October 2023. I was able to go back to the timestamps of my family WhatsApp group to find out where we were at 12.50 pm, and my family was still waiting for rescue in the safe room of their house, which was on fire, on the Gaza border. Thankfully, they survived. That is just the context. Is that protesting against the actions of the Israeli Government, or is that hatred of a country?

If we move it forward, if you are on those protests and you find yourself next to people chanting and with placards calling for intifada—"Long live the intifada"; "Victory to the intifada"; "Globalise the intifada"; "Intifada revolution"; "Zionists off our streets"; "Death to the IDF"; "Death to Zionists"; "Khaybar, ya yahud", a phrase that refers to Muslim forces conquering the Jewish settlement in the 7th century—that is not a protest; that is antisemitism. There is a link between that and the violence we are talking about. In the attack in Washington DC in May last year, the suspect shouted, "There is only one solution! Intifada revolution!" During the attack in Manchester, Jihad al-Shamie shouted, "This is what they get for killing our children." One of the people convicted in the thwarted plot in Manchester told police, "They are killing our children in Gaza, so we'll kill them here."

People on those protests have a responsibility to call that out; the organisers of those protests have a responsibility to call it out. It has been two and a half years, and we have not seen that. Unfortunately, that lets people who do not hold those views down, because they are associated with these people.

Karen Newman: Just briefly, to follow on from what Russell said, the key distinction is between legitimate criticism of the actions of a particular Government, and denying a country's right to exist. We saw in the last century what happened when that country did not exist. My community lost two Holocaust survivors this year. Obviously, if all people know about Jews is the Holocaust, that is not the world we want to live in either, but hatred is clearly part of this picture.

For me, the main issue is that, in certain situations, an attack on Israel's right to exist is deeply antisemitic, and that needs to be called out. This is more about asking people whether they are comfortable marching alongside antisemites, because they will be in a lot of these incidents. It



comes back to the kind of Britain we want to live in. Last week during the local elections, I was quite confused about how importing the Gaza conflict on to the streets of Haringey would get you better libraries or social services, or deal with your housing. I think we need to be much stronger on what importing foreign conflict means for the streets in our country.

- Q17 Chris Murray:** Thank you for those answers. We talked about how politics and political debate affects and drives antisemitism, and I would like to look at other drivers. Obviously, antisemitism can be found in all types of communities. As we have just explored, it is universal across ideology and place on the political spectrum. How significant an issue do you think the level of antisemitism is in Muslim communities? What impact does that have overall in the UK?

Dr Rich: There is opinion polling on this. Several opinion polls in both this country and others in western Europe have consistently shown that hostility towards Jewish people and belief in antisemitic stereotypes is significantly higher within Muslim communities compared with the wider population—in this country, it is roughly two to four times as common. Obviously, that is not the whole Muslim community; in many cases, it is not the majority.

The other thing to remember is that, because of the relative sizes of the communities, most people with antisemitic views in this country are not Muslim, but antisemitism is definitely more prevalent, common and normalised within Muslim communities than in wider society. That is reflected in some of the antisemitic incident data and in the more violent end of the attacks that are recorded, which, broadly speaking, come mostly but not exclusively from Islamist extremists. For example, when we look within the protests—diverse movements with all sorts of different people going—the more extreme elements tend to be from an Islamist extremist ideological perspective in terms of the language, slogans and iconography used. That is a really important part of the picture of antisemitism today.

- Q18 Chris Murray:** Thank you. Before I open it up to the panel, are there any groups that are comparable, or are you able to disaggregate within the Muslim population? It could be anything—London versus Scotland, type of Islam, or level of generational integration. Are there any other indicators you would disaggregate? I will then open that up to the wider panel.

Dr Rich: Antisemitism is more common among younger Muslims, but it is also more common among younger people of any background. That is a deeper problem in this country: although younger people are less racist in almost every other way, they are more likely to believe antisemitic ideas about Jews. One of the biggest polls done on this was about eight or nine years ago, so it might be a bit out of date, but it found that antisemitic attitudes were as common among British Muslims as among people who self-described as politically very right wing. That is the comparable group, and it is quite a disturbing finding.

Chris Murray: Would anyone else like to comment?



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Karen Newman: Very briefly. I know from the work that we do in the board that there is huge diversity within our community, so I would say that while it is critically important to name Muslim extremism—if we do not name it, we cannot identify some of the ways to address it—that must be done in a context that does not demonise the community, because when you do that, you drive people within the community towards extremism.

Danny Stone: I referred to the context in terms of antisemitism, and there is a context for the Muslim community, too. The Muslim Brotherhood, which has been discussed in policy circles for some time now, seeks to influence that community. There are different ways in which it seeks to do that, either directly or through so-called Trojan horses. I will send the Committee our briefing on this, with recommendations on what we think could be done. Certainly, in other countries the organisation is proscribed, and it may be that elements of it could be proscribed, but there is definitely some thinking needed about the operations of that group and how it is influencing events in the UK.

Q19 Chris Murray: I want to turn to another driver of antisemitism. What is your view on the influence of foreign states fomenting antisemitism in the UK?

Dr Rich: It is definitely a presence, and, without discussing recent cases, it appears to be a factor. Even without that, the single most antisemitic media in this country is a show called “Palestine Declassified” on Press TV, which is an Iranian state broadcaster, fronted by Chris Williamson, a former MP, and David Miller, a former professor of sociology at Bristol University.

It is like watching an edition of “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion” every single week, but they name ordinary Jewish people, schools, charities and synagogues—hundreds, even thousands, of institutions over the last few years. It is viciously antisemitic, and it is hosted on an Iranian state broadcaster, which lost its Ofcom licence several years ago, but is still produced in the UK by British-registered companies. Those companies are still allowed to continue. I think this has just been allowed to grow. It has had a very detrimental and radicalising impact on the anti-Israel movement.

One of the key themes that of David Miller’s discourse in that show is that Zionism is Jewish supremacy, Jewish supremacy is trying to control Britain, and British politics is controlled by this Zionist conspiracy. The fact is that, if you look outside the Houses of Parliament on a Wednesday lunchtime during PMQs, you will see a demonstration of people saying, “UK Government under Zionist control”, holding up fake banknotes with Cabinet Ministers’ faces on them, saying they have been bought by Zionist money, and that it is all about Jewish supremacy. This is the discourse that has come out of Iranian state media in English, fronted by British people, for a British audience, and it has been doing this for about four years now, relatively untouched.



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Danny Stone: We put evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee about foreign state influence, which we can share with you. Certainly, Russia is spreading disinformation online through bots, which speaks again to what I was saying about our online environment, the information supply chain, and how that needs to be protected. It is also Iran—so yes, this is a serious concern.

Russell Langer: I would also raise the question of how effective the foreign influence registration scheme has been in some of those cases. My understanding, when it was introduced, was that it was meant to push a lot of these issues into the public realm, to give them the light of day so that we could see what was happening. However, the last time I checked, there was no mention of Iran in any of the public entries on that register. We need to look at whether the foreign influence registration scheme has been what it was intended to be, now that it has been in place for a little time.

Karen Newman: To underline what has been said, the evidence now shows beyond reasonable doubt that external interference is there, and we must name and recognise it to address it effectively.

One thing I wanted to say in response to something you said earlier, Chris, is that we believe the bar must be very high on free speech. We absolutely think free speech is critical. On the first day that I became vice president, the police banned the al-Quds march because they felt it was not conducive to the public good, and they turned it into a static protest.

What that means for our communities is that, when you have marchers walking past a synagogue, people decide not to go to synagogue in the first place because they do not want to have to run the gauntlet when they leave. Those public order things are important. But we come from a place of recognising that free speech is important, and that the bar should be very high. Unfortunately, in the atmosphere we are in, sometimes that bar is not reached, and then we want action to be taken.

Russell Langer: If you are happy for me to follow up on that public order point, we have already referenced the two marches happening on Saturday this weekend—the Nakba 78 march and the Tommy Robinson march that has been announced.

We wrote to the commissioner ahead of those marches, particularly on the Nakba 78 march, as it is using the same route that was previously used by the last national march for Palestine. We wrote with evidence of the impact that it had on a synagogue; the march did not go directly past the synagogue, but the form-up point is very close to it, and the route of the march essentially surrounds it. As a result, anybody leaving the synagogue—we have evidence of this from the previous march—will have to join the march for part of their route home.

The statement that the police put out yesterday on this issue recognised the impact that these marches have had on the Jewish community, and they said that 21 out of the 33 have had conditions imposed on them



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because of their proximity to synagogues. They also stated: "We have routinely seen arrests for racially and religiously aggravated public order offences, for stirring up racial hatred and for supporting terrorist organisations. It is not normal to see criminality of this nature or on this scale at what are billed as peaceful protests."

The issue is that the police have said a lot of good things, and they really seem to be starting to understand that problem in their public statements, but in a way we have gone backwards. It has now been two and half years of these protests, and we have had two Governments in that time, with legislation that has gone through as part of the Crime and Policing Act.

However, this Saturday we are now once again at a point where I have been told that there are people who will not be going to synagogue in this country because of one of these marches. It has actually got worse in that time because, in the past, we saw the police impose conditions under section 12 to move the route of the marches away, but that is not happening this weekend, despite the evidence of the impact on a central London synagogue. We are still here.

I know that the Home Affairs Committee has taken evidence on these issues with protests, and this has been an issue. The Home Secretary spoke about this cumulative impact after the Manchester attack, and the police have upped their language and been really strong on it. The Government might point to new legislation that will be coming into effect, but under existing legislation, we have seen them use these powers, and they are not using them on Saturday. I do not quite understand, given everything that we have heard over the past few weeks, how we have ended up in that position.

Danny Stone: To go back to my point about the narrative, there was an EDM in January 2025, which was one of the first times the police pushed back on the routing of a march past a synagogue. Some 50 MPs signed an EDM to say, "Well, we do not actually think there is anything in this. These concerns are not founded." I am paraphrasing, but they used the "some of my best friends are Jewish" line, and they said that there are Jews on these marches. Again, I did not see an EDM to say, "We are really concerned about the fact that Jews are having to avoid central London." That was the EDM that was tabled, and I just want to point that out.

Dr Rich: I last appeared before the Committee in December 2023 on exactly the issue of the policing of protests. In preparation for today, I looked back at the transcripts of those hearings, and a couple of things jumped out. One was that, even at that early stage, it was apparent that there was the same pattern, with the same types of hate crimes and criminal offences happening on those protests in a repeated way.

The other thing was that the sitting police commissioner, Matt Twist, who gave evidence at that time, said that the organisers of the protests had not referred or reported a single person from any protest to the police for committing a criminal offence, and they had not helped the police to

distribute or publicise their advice to protesters about where the law stands on these issues.

The two protest organisers who also gave evidence that day—Chris Nineham of the Stop the War Coalition and Ben Jamal of the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign—have since been convicted in a court, earlier this year, for breaching public order restrictions in relation to a march in January last year. The police moved that march away from one of the main synagogues in central London, and they were so angry that they broke the public order restrictions in place.

We have known for a long time that the organisers of these marches are completely irresponsible and reckless in their refusal to comply with a very basic and reasonable request to balance their absolute, real right to protest with the right of Jewish people and other people in London to go about their business, and with the importance of trying to take action to reduce the criminal offending and the hate crimes that take place within those broader protests.

We are still here two and a half years later with no greater will to co-operate and no greater reasonableness on the part of the march organisers. I am very surprised that both marches are going ahead this weekend. The scale of both routes means the whole of central London will be dominated by the marches and the policing activity around them. It will put a huge number of people off going into central London, whether they are Jewish, Muslim or of any other background. Frankly, I feel very sorry for any tourists who have booked a city break to London this weekend. This is a serious issue about the life of the city, and it is having a really damaging impact.

Chair: The Committee has some questions on policing, but Paul Kohler wants to come in on that point.

Q20 **Mr Kohler:** Chair, you have anticipated one of my later questions. I will go to that now. Are you arguing for a moratorium on pro-Palestine marches?

Russell Langer: Under existing law the police have the power to ban a march, but in all likelihood that would then go ahead as a static assembly which cannot be banned under the law. The problem with the marches is, first, the impact that they have. These marches always take place on a Saturday and at the time that Jews are leaving synagogues. We have evidence that that has led to people not attending synagogues. Although we have the right to protest in this country, that must be balanced with the right of people to practice their religion freely.

The police have shown through their actions on the al-Quds day rally and using section 12 powers in moving and placing conditions on marches that there are ways that you can use those powers. However, we are getting to a place where, in the current context—especially with the route announced for this weekend—the police should be using those powers to ban it as a march—although in the likelihood that it would then go ahead as a static



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assembly. That is because of the level of criminality we see on these marches and the high likelihood of serious disruption this weekend with the two marches—the national march for Palestine and the Tommy Robinson march—and how much easier it will be to police those levels of criminality at a static assembly as opposed to a march.

There is also, as I have stated, the impact and evidence we have regarding the synagogue. The last time the Palestine march took place on this route near the synagogue, the synagogue had to cancel part of its programming. We have had synagogue members saying that the police were directed to escort some of them back to the station afterwards when the police identified people leaving the synagogue in clothing that suggested they had attended. We have had people saying, “I still came, but I did not feel comfortable bringing my daughter with me.”

This is proportionate. We are not asking for the right to protest to be removed. However, ultimately, we are asking for the rights of Jewish people in London to practice our religion and faith in this country, as we also have the right to do. We are asking for measures to be put in place that will assist the policing of the level of criminality that we are seeing.

Q21 Mr Kohler: Why are you arguing for the moratorium—the banning of the march—rather than the rerouting of it?

Russell Langer: When it comes to rerouting versus moratorium, the question is whether the rerouting will have the desired impact. Particularly this week, with the two marches, it is going to be difficult to reroute it in a way that avoids any of the synagogues. There is the point that every single time these protests happen they happen on a Saturday and nearby synagogues. Those are choices.

Q22 Mr Kohler: If you rerouted them, they would not have to be by the synagogue.

Russell Langer: First, on the question about conditions, on a previous occasion where conditions were put in place, the organisers breached those conditions and were prosecuted.

Mr Kohler: They were prosecuted.

Russell Langer: Well, exactly. However, that is evidence that the conditions may not work or be sufficient to deal with the issue based on the actions of the organisers. Conditions could be used to move it and to change the timings and so on. However, the point is that no matter when you do this on a Saturday in central London, given the routes that they are choosing, they are going to impact on synagogues.

As I said, particularly this weekend with the two marches, finding a route that does not impact any synagogues will be increasingly difficult. The fact is that when it is a march and police resources are stretched out further, it will be much harder to deal with and show the criminality at the time, in terms of incitement to hatred and the language that we see on those



protests. For the police, that is much easier to police when it is a static assembly.

Q23 **Mr Kohler:** But the logic of that is to ban all pro-Palestine marches on Saturdays in London.

Russell Langer: First, I think there is a question as to why each time the march is always scheduled at 12 o'clock on a Saturday near synagogues—or not always, but in 21 of the 33 cases the police said that they imposed conditions around that. When it has been rerouted or when synagogues have been in touch with the police to attempt to get it rerouted, there has been incredible pushback from the organisers towards those synagogues. In one case a march that still went past the synagogue stopped outside it for eight minutes, chanting, with people still inside the synagogue. When the marches are moved away, there is pushback towards the police, those synagogues and those involved. I will turn the question back: why, for the organisers, has it turned into such an important point that these marches go past synagogues? Why do the organisers not work with the police to move it away? They have shown a complete disregard for this issue.

Q24 **Mr Kohler:** I see that completely, but I am not clear why you are arguing for a ban, rather than a rerouting that is properly policed. Surely it would be hugely counterproductive if the Jewish community is seen to say, "Ban these marches." That is what you seem to be saying and that worries me because that is surely counterproductive. Ms Newman, I note your line about free speech, how important it is and how we must maximise it. If you are seen to be arguing to completely ban marches on a Saturday in London, that surely goes too far and would be counterproductive.

Karen Newman: I am not sure that a ban is the same as a static protest.

Russell Langer: Exactly.

Karen Newman: A static protest is still a really significant opportunity for people to say what they want to say. It is a critical part of—

Q25 **Mr Kohler:** Your argument is still that there should be no marches on a Saturday in London that are pro-Palestine. Is that not overreach?

Russell Langer: There should be no marches on a Saturday in London that go either directly past synagogues or directly impact on the ability of Jews to attend synagogue. Yes, I am very comfortable in saying that.

Q26 **Mr Kohler:** Rerouting would achieve that.

Russell Langer: It is possible. Unfortunately this weekend the police have not done that. There have to be questions to the commissioner of the Metropolitan police and others as to why that has not happened this weekend. If it is not possible to find a route—I suggest that particularly this weekend that is going to be incredibly difficult—then I do not think it is a restriction on freedom of speech to ban it as a march and, using section 14 powers, condition it as a static assembly in a way where it will not have that impact. I think that is incredibly reasonable and protects the right to protest.



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Q27 **Mr Kohler:** Do you accept that rerouting is a possibility, if the police use their powers? Otherwise, it sounds like you are just saying, "You can't march."

Karen Newman: I think that there is a difference between accepting rerouting as a concept while recognising that it is difficult to work with the march organisers to do that because they want to go past synagogues.

Q28 **Mr Kohler:** Then there are criminal sanctions for that and they can be prosecuted. In your example, they were prosecuted.

Dr Rich: If I may, this is a bigger issue than just the immediate direct impact on this synagogue or that Jewish person who happens to cross the path. We are in a particular moment right now where anti-Jewish violence is at a level that it has not been for decades, where the terrorist threat has been elevated, where the amount of policing and protective security that the police and Home Office feel is required for Jewish communities has vastly increased.

Racist violence and political violence does not emerge from nowhere. It is generated by and an expression of a much bigger hinterland of attitudes and ideas in which particular groups become demonised and dehumanised, and violence against them becomes normalised to the point where it is considered possible and then becomes possible.

Of course, most of the people on these marches do not commit any crimes. Many of the people on them do not have any antisemitism or anything. But the marches as a whole have become a permissive environment in which antisemitism and extremist incitement are normalised. We have seen people chanting "Death to the IDF" from the stage at these marches. We have seen people calling for resistance by any means necessary in huge banners on these marches.

In the current situation, I think that it is reasonable that the balance between the rights of demonstrators to have their freedom of assembly and freedom of speech, and the rights of Jewish people to expect protection from the state, shifts a bit. That does not mean that it shifts permanently, but right now, in the moment we are in, it is not unreasonable for now as a way of trying to dial down the temperature so that these marches do not carry on as they were before.

Q29 **Mr Kohler:** Why do you think the co-ordinators will ignore rerouting but will not ignore banning the march? Why do you think the legal sanctions work with regard to making it static but not the rerouting?

Dr Rich: The danger of the incitement element applies wherever the march is. The organisers do not help with it, and the police do what they can. Once a march is taking place, it is very difficult for them to go in and arrest people who are committing offences in that march. If you have ever seen videos or footage of them trying to do it, it will take 20 to 25 officers to arrest one person. Why? Because it takes four or five of them to arrest the individual and the rest have to do crowd control, because as soon as they try to arrest someone for committing a racist offence, huge crowds



will gather round and try to save that person and stop the arrest, rather than fellow marchers telling the people committing the offence, "We don't want you here—go away," which never happens as far as we can tell.

That is always in play, and that will be in play whether it is a static assembly or a march, but the impact will be reduced. It sends a message that these are events where extremist incitement happens and is normalised, and the organisers are at best complacent and reckless over that, and at worst complicit, and it therefore requires treating in a different way from all the other marches that go around the city all the time. That is an important message.

Q30 Mr Kohler: Proposing the Humble Address yesterday, the Member for Bradford West gave a wonderful example of the Muslim and Jewish communities working together in Bradford, where the Muslim community paid for the reroofing of a synagogue, so we know that that work exists. Is enough being done for interfaith work? I understand that the funding for the Inter Faith Network, which was described in Parliament as "Britain's main forum for Jewish-Muslim dialogue", was withdrawn two years ago. Are we doing enough to promote interfaith work, particularly between Muslim and Jewish communities?

Karen Newman: I think that these initiatives are really important. The defunding was not helpful; we need to encourage these initiatives. At the local level, where relationships are built up—my synagogue has a relationship with the mosque down the road in St John's Wood—that works. It has been heartbreaking to see over the last few months that synagogues that have organised iftars—people have come into the synagogue for those occasions—cancelled them this year. It was just too difficult to do it. We have a history of inviting local Muslims into our seder services for Passover, and this year they did not feel that it was something they wanted to be seen to be doing in their own communities. The work is difficult now, but I would argue that its very difficulty speaks to its significance and importance. It needs greater funding and emphasis, partly because we do not want to see good minorities and bad minorities, and this is how we build the social cohesion we need.

Russell Langer: Interfaith is important, but only if it deals with the difficult issues as well as the commonalities—good interfaith does that. The second bit is that, picking up on Karen's point around those events being cancelled, we have too often seen good initiatives happening but no photographs being taken and no publicity, and that is because, if we go back to the earlier conversation we had about Islamism and extremism, Muslims are just as susceptible to that in terms of the violence and threats towards them for working with the Jewish community as the Jewish community is at threat from that, and that is a big problem. Unfortunately, that undermines the good work that happens in the interfaith space.

Chair: We are going to move on to policing. I should note that we have had a letter from the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, which we published before the start of this session.



Q31 Margaret Mullane: How confident are you in the Met's and other police forces' capacity to tackle antisemitism?

Dr Rich: In the last few weeks, since the series of attacks, there has been a huge increase in protective policing in Jewish community areas in London but also in other parts of the country—Manchester, Leeds and other regional forces. It has been very welcome. It is a huge amount of extra resource. I think Jewish communities have noticed a lot more visible policing on the streets, and we are seeing positive outcomes from it. We are seeing a lot more arrests in real time, when antisemitic hate crimes happen. These are the relatively lower-level offences—section 4 and section 5 Public Order Act offences—on the streets. We are seeing rapid, immediate arrests, and the CPS are processing these cases through the courts very quickly.

There was a case last week of someone abusing Jewish people on the street in Stamford Hill in north-east London. The offence took place at 9 pm on a Thursday, and by Saturday afternoon the offenders had been charged and convicted in court. It is fantastic; it is what we want to see. But you put your finger on the issue: how sustainable is this? Ideally, this would be sustainable in the long term. There is a fair argument to make that, had this been done two and a half years ago, when the initial surge in antisemitism happened, we could have ended up on a different path. Who knows? It is a hypothetical.

The Government need to look at the long-term resourcing for this kind of thing. Obviously, extra officers in one area means fewer officers in another. Ideally, if this extra resourcing could be committed long term, you could start to see a real roll-back of the amount of antisemitism; you would have much greater deterrents for offenders and you would start to rebuild the Jewish community's trust and confidence in the police and the CPS that the system works to protect them.

Karen Newman: I want to underline how much we value the CPS's accelerating the time between charge and prosecution. I also want to put on record the community's gratitude for the visible police support that we had in the immediate aftermath of some of the attacks over the past few months. It is wonderful that the police have had these resources made available to them, and they are doing a tremendous job. What I worry about is the 23-year-old police officer who has to make a split-second decision about "From the river to the sea". I wonder whether we are following through with the training that is necessary for that policing to be carried out effectively.

Q32 Margaret Mullane: On the training, have you raised that with the police? You make a good point. My local police team went and did some work when something terrible had happened as well. You wonder: are they trained and is it the right response? I mean that in a positive way.

Danny Stone: We talked to West Midlands police about doing some training—we did not end up doing it—but I do have some concerns. We have begun to feed into the College of Policing on their training, but I do



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not know whether that has been quality assessed or not. CST certainly do training for police, and I will let Dave follow up.

If I may make a general point, one of my concerns is about joined-upness in general—this counts as much for elections, special points of contact and what have you—and whether there is shared knowledge across police forces and CPS areas, because I know that has not been the case in the past.

Another of my concerns is for your Committee. There has been this recent change in respect of non-crime hate incidents. I am on the record as saying that I fundamentally disagree with the way in which those are going to change. I thought that they did need to change, and that they should be intelligence reports, but I am concerned about how they will change, and your Committee should scrutinise the impact of that change. I place on the record my thanks to Paul Giannasi, who did so much work in that area to make them work, but that is something that I think you will want to have an eye on, because they have a specific impact in respect of antisemitism, where it is and how police forces can get in and do preventive work and look to other organisations to do preventive work. I would keep an eye on that.

Russell Langer: The sustainability of the rise in policing is the big point here. Short-term surges happen after an attack, but how much does that continue? In the case of the Met, we know that 100 police officers have been assigned to this work. The commissioner originally asked for 300 and I know that there are ongoing conversations around that.

On the community impact side of it, there is a reassurance in seeing police, but it is also a reminder of the threat when you see the state providing these resources. I went to a friend's wedding a few weeks ago at a synagogue that had been named as one on the list of targets to do with the people arrested on allegations of spying on behalf of Iran. As I left that wedding, there were armed police outside. He is not a celebrity; it was just a Jewish normal, everyday lifecycle event. It is reassuring that the state sees that threat, but also terrifying.

On training and knowledge, there is reassurance in seeing a policeman in high-vis, but, as someone who volunteers and does security outside synagogues, I know that it is also really important that they know why they are there, and that they have not just been asked to stand outside this building without having an understanding of why they need to stand outside a place of worship. It is really important that they have an understanding of the reason why this resource is there.

Lastly, I will just repeat my point about the need to move from protection to other things. I think this is bad value for money for the state. We are spending a fortune on police and security—the protective security grant that CST administers. That is taxpayers' money—it is our money—that is going into protecting the Jewish community, and it is not fixing the problem; it is treating a symptom of the problem. We need to fix these problems in order to really get a handle on this issue.



Q33 Margaret Mullane: Dave Rich, have you been able to use the £10 million in additional funding effectively, and is it enough?

Dr Rich: It was very helpful and very much appreciated. It was in addition to the £18 million a year in the Jewish community protective security grant that was given after the Heaton Park synagogue attack, and that had to be spent or allocated before the end of the financial year, which it all was. It has been very helpful for immediate boosting of security guarding and for the need to improve security in other ways and through other measures. We are very pleased that that is going to be repeated in the next financial year, so the grant now stands at £28 million a year.

We do appreciate it. It is a lot of money. Is it enough? The honest answer is no. It provides for a contribution towards security costs at between 500 and 550 Jewish community sites and buildings around the country, but it is not enough to cover every guarding hour that is required at every synagogue.

We are very careful to ensure that the money is spent as efficiently as possible, that it is spent according to need and that the guarding is of sufficient quality. We have daily engagement with the Home Office, who are fantastic in the management of the grant and extremely helpful. I have to say that; it really makes a huge difference. But, ultimately, there are a lot of synagogues, schools and other Jewish buildings around the country where the members or the parents have to top up the security costs themselves, because the amount of money from the Government, as large as it is, cannot cover everything.

Q34 Margaret Mullane: I suppose that this is a difficult question, but what conditions do you see that would lead to the level of security being reduced?

Dr Rich: I assume that world peace is not in the gift of the Committee.

Chair: We have not got there yet.

Dr Rich: Look, there are two things here. I think we would need to see a sustained fall in the number of hate crimes, the number of incidents, the terrorist threat level and the amount of extremist incitement. That is going to require the kind of sustained policing, prosecution, counter-extremism and social cohesion work that we have been discussing.

I think there is another issue here, which is that the protective security is, in a way, the easy bit. That is the sticking plaster. We can spend more and more money as a country on it. More and more money comes to CST. It goes to the security guarding. The money does not pay for CST; we distribute it to the community, and it goes on the policing. There is a danger here. Ultimately, the protection of the Jewish community, as with the protection of the public, is the responsibility of the state, and we cannot sleepwalk into a situation where large parts of that are permanently subcontracted out to charities, community organisations and private security. The state, in its entirety, needs to find a way to reduce

this problem, and that then reduces the policing and security need over the long term.

Q35 Chris Murray: How effectively do you think the counter-extremism apparatus in the UK tackles antisemitism? In particular, what is your assessment of the effectiveness of Prevent?

Dr Rich: I think we are playing catch-up on extremism. We did not have a proper counter-extremism strategy for many years. We now have the "Protecting What Matters" action plan, which is a hybrid social cohesion and counter-extremism strategy. There are a lot of very good recommendations on the table, including the ones from your most recent report on new forms of extremism, as well as ones that have been around for years from the "Operating with Impunity" report by Dame Sara Khan and Sir Mark Rowley, and other recommendations that have been gathering dust and are not being implemented.

The counter-extremism work that is currently happening is quite piecemeal. Good things are being done, but it is not joined up, it is not coherent and it is not strategic. A number of foreign extremists, whether far right or so-called hate preachers, have been excluded from the country this year, which is a good step, but meanwhile there was a whole rash of very antisemitic and inflammatory sermons in certain mosques after 7 October that was never dealt with—no prosecutions, no real Charity Commission action and no regulation—so we are dealing with it in one place but not in another. We need an overarching strategy, with a central home in a central point in Government that has the resourcing, the staffing and the authority to bring all the levers of the state into play, whether that is Government Departments, policing, Prevent or other areas, such as funding from the Arts Council or the Charity Commission, where the state can play a role.

It is very hard to measure the impact of Prevent, because so many of the successful cases, by definition, are never publicised. Specifically in relation to antisemitism, we do have a concern that there is a lack of understanding of antisemitism among some intervention providers, and there has been a difficulty in rolling out that training, as I understand it, within Prevent, despite the fact that the Shawcross review found that antisemitism appeared in every type of Prevent case, basically. Within Prevent, there is definitely work to be done specifically on spreading that understanding of antisemitism.

Karen Newman: Obviously, Dave has the data, but I want to underline issues of consistency, including across Government Departments and in policing across Britain. We have had great things in London and Manchester, but for some Jewish people who live in more rural communities or communities outside those cities, we are not seeing consistency in the level of awareness that it is a problem. I also want to thank the Committee for what it did on west midlands policing. That was a really important report, and its findings were really significant.



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With regard to Prevent, it is a lot of what we said before. It is about having the courage to name extremism, where it has come from, and sermons that are out of order, while at the same time not demonising the Muslim community.

Russell Langer: We have been speaking about antisemitism for a while now. When I was at the Downing Street summit last week, it hit me: we are here speaking about everything from schoolyard bullying to hostile state actors. That is the scale of what we are talking about here. When you look through the action plan in the “Protecting What Matters” document, it makes it clear how much this is across Whitehall and across society.

The Home Office obviously has a large part in that, as well as DCMS. There is a cross-Government, cross-society part. It is no good paying for security guards and policing outside a synagogue if at the same time we are funding artists or festivals propagating antisemitic hate, or if charities that have had issues are not dealt with adequately because the Charity Commission either have not been able to or do not have enough powers to deal with it. That is what has been happening—those are the issues. There are lots of really good measures in the “Protecting What Matters” paper, but the Government now need to get on and do them, and I would really press for some deadlines and timelines to be set out.

Danny Stone: Going back to what I said about online safety and the need for a strategy, Parliament is going to need to work through the legal but harmful content online. It is all very well for illegal material to be taken down within 24 hours or whatever, but although that contributes, it is not the only thing that is radicalising people toward extremist positions; legal but harmful content is doing so, too.

That was taken out by the Conservative Administration for lots of different reasons—legitimate reasons that were presented during consideration in the Lords by legal professionals and others. The Labour Administration said that they would put it back in, but they have not. That is an issue that we are not going to get around. We have to accept that there are radicalising narratives online, including antisemitism, which is one of the key ones, if not the key one. How are we going to address that? Perhaps it is about it not being amplified or given the prominence that it has at the moment—that may be one solution—but Parliament is going to need to get to grips with it. Frankly, it keeps on dodging the question, but that is where the extremism is going to come from and it is what needs to be addressed.

Russell Langer: On the role of different arms of the state in this, one of the recommendations is to publish an annual state of extremism report, and a big part of that needs to be naming the extremist actors and organisations in this country. It is no good for just central Government to be doing that on a national level; it needs to be fed into individual police forces and who they are engaging with, into local authorities and who they are engaging with, and into quangos as well. Too often, you see, for example, that the Government do not work with a certain organisation



because of extremism concerns, but an NHS trust still does. That is a big issue as well.

- Q36 **Chair:** I want to bring the session to a close, as I realise that we have imposed on your time quite significantly, but it has been incredibly interesting. In terms of Government action, where are there legislative opportunities? As I recall, the harmful but not illegal stuff was very difficult to define: it was in the Bill but got removed in the Lords because it was very difficult to get the definition right. That is often one of the problems with trying to legislate for this. The Charity Commission has been mentioned. Do we need to beef up its powers? What can we recommend that the Government do to call out antisemitism when it is seen, across the public sector and leadership positions? What are your thoughts?

Russell Langer: The first thing is the state threats legislation announced in the King's Speech yesterday. It has now been a year since the then-Home Secretary accepted that recommendation from Jonathan Hall. I am glad that it was in the King's Speech, but now we need to see it being moved on. That gap in our legislation was identified but has not yet been plugged, so that is urgent.

The Macdonald review will be reporting soon, and it is very likely that there will be some legislative recommendations in that. I have spoken about the impact of public order and the need to move on that, so if there are legislative recommendations in that review, as I expect there to be, they really do need to be pushed through.

I did not see anything in the King's Speech on the charities aspect. I do not know whether that is because they believe they can do it through secondary legislation, but either way, the Charity Commission needs to be given powers that they do not currently have to be able to shut down charities with these issues and bar trustees where necessary. Those changes to the law need to happen, through either primary or secondary legislation, depending on what is needed.

Danny Stone: As I said, online legislation should have been in the King's Speech. We should have seen an AI Bill, and an overarching duty of care for tech companies to mitigate the risks that they uncover as part of their risk assessment processes. A package of measures and amendments to the Online Safety Act, which I will send to the Committee, have been proposed to Government through the Online Safety Act Network, and they should certainly be brought forward.

Dr Rich: I agree with all of those suggestions. I will add that there are an awful lot of laws that, if fully enforced, would make a big difference. One thing that is worth looking at—we will see what comes out of the Macdonald review—is the law against stirring up racial and religious hatred, and whether that needs to be simplified along the lines set out in the "Operating with Impunity" report.

Karen Newman: First, thank you for these hearings. It has been great to have this opportunity to speak with you. There is an independent inquiry



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into antisemitism in schools and colleges, and it would be really good to see legislation on anything that comes out of that. Other than that, we need to look at implementing in a far more robust and possibly well-funded fashion the findings of the Lord Mann review and of other reviews and recommendations that are already out there. A lot of non-legislative measures make a real difference to Jews, wherever they are—in the workplace, on the streets—and those are the things on which we really need to see redoubled action.

Q37 Chair: I attended a recent StandWithUs event with Jewish students and it was so powerful to hear their testimony.

Karen Newman: “Time for Change”.

Chair: Yes. It was absolutely incredible—and horrifying—to hear what they were saying.

We are going to go on to the independent adviser, Lord Mann. Is there any more that the Government should be doing in terms of his role that they are not doing at the moment? *[Interruption.]* I am putting him on the spot just as he sits down!

Danny Stone: We provide the secretariat to Lord Mann. It is an unpaid role. We get funding to staff that office. On value for money, John does an incredible amount—

Chair: You don’t have to say it just because he’s sitting behind you.

Danny Stone: No, it is genuine. But it has been very difficult for us that his role was not confirmed for an entire Parliament, or for a set number of years. To be frank, there has been messing around with his role, and it is not fair. It makes it difficult for us in employing people who need certainty for their roles. That is something that could certainly be better.

Karen Newman: Before the rally we had on Sunday, we had a letter about civil society support for stamping out antisemitism. There are certain things that we would say—as Mandy Rice-Davies might say, we would say that, wouldn’t we? For me, it is about what you can do to generate the whole-society response that the Prime Minister spoke about. That is tremendously valuable for us, because it is about the kind of Britain we want to live in, and that is the kind of thing that makes that clear.

Chair: I think it is worth pointing out that the Commissioner of the Met wrote in his final sentence: “The Met will act decisively, but unless antisemitism is confronted consistently across society, we will remain trapped reacting to harm rather than preventing it.” That is in the letter that we have published today, and I think it sums it up very well.

I thank the panel for your time. We will move now to the independent adviser, Lord Mann, but we will have a very short break as the panel changes.

Examination of witness

Witness: Lord Mann.

Q38 **Chair:** We recommence our session on antisemitism today with the independent adviser on antisemitism, Lord Mann. Would you like to say a few words?

Lord Mann: I should thank you for this opportunity. I should also declare that I am married to a member of your Committee. That might impinge on answers in this hearing—it depends what you are asking about—because, obviously, I live with her.

Chair: She has been very clear that that does not impact on her work. She has made that clear to all of us. We will start our questions with Paul Kohler.

Q39 **Mr Kohler:** Can I quiz you about something that came up earlier? Do you share my concerns that, if the Jewish community is seen to be arguing for the banning of marches, that will be counterproductive?

Lord Mann: Yes. You cannot stop protest, but you can organise protest. I was one of the organisers of the ANC-backed anti-apartheid demonstrations. Of the people who went, I was one of a tiny number of us who negotiated routes with the police. So I am aware of the options and the way that the police have dealt with protest historically.

I think if you ban a protest, the protest will find a way of going somewhere else. I am loath to give examples publicly of how that might work—although I have privately, including in discussions with the police and with Ministers—because that might give people ideas. But if the police had said to us, “You’re not having an anti-apartheid protest on behalf of Nelson Mandela,” it would have been very easy to come up with ways in which we could have circumvented that—very, very easy. I think you just shift the problem.

Q40 **Mr Kohler:** I was going to ask the first panel about the Government’s response, but we ran out of time. The Prime Minister talked about a whole-of-society response; it was very clear that we don’t have a whole-of-Government response. From the answers we heard, it was all about disparate and various initiatives. Is that something your role could develop into—actually giving that overview of Government, of what it should be doing, and bringing these things together?

Lord Mann: Well, only with the Government’s consent.

Mr Kohler: Oh, yes; you couldn’t do this without it.

Lord Mann: I give advice, and Ministers—therefore, Government—can choose to ignore that advice, or, in some instances, they probably never see that advice. I will give you a good example: you had a full inquiry on Maccabi Tel Aviv and Aston Villa; if my advice had been followed at the beginning, you would not have had an inquiry, because the issue was easily sortable and would have been solved. My advice was ignored. The



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interesting question for me is: how much was that ignored by Ministers and how much did Ministers get to see it? And why was it being blocked?

I have just sent out my July 2024 report for whichever Government came into power—I am independent of Government, obviously, as you know from my title, so this was for whoever was there. It was prepared and went straight out, with recommendations for nine Government Departments. I have recirculated that in the light of the stabbings. I have had a good response from the Prime Minister. I have had a response from the Attorney General. A number of Government Departments have not yet responded. I am interested to find out, over time, whether that is because the Minister has instructed them not to respond or, as I have sometimes found, the Minister has not been shown it. That is a problem inside Government. How an independent advisory role is seen by the people around Ministers is certainly an issue. That is not an issue for this Government; it is one across Government and Governments.

Q41 Mr Kohler: Do we need to go beyond advice, to actually giving someone like you a more overarching role that goes beyond proffering advice that might not be followed?

Lord Mann: There are different ways it could be done. The strength of being independent is that I do not speak for Government. It is therefore easier to criticise Government. Also, I am UK-wide—that is hugely important. I engage with the Scottish Government, the SNP leadership of the Scottish Government, with Sinn Féin and other leadership in Northern Ireland, and I will be engaging with Plaid Cymru if it is the leadership in Wales. That is an advantage. That does not fit into Government structures too well in this country, because it tends to be England, or England and Wales.

If your party asks for my advice and help—and it has done on quite a number of occasions over the years—I am not at all inhibited in giving private and confidential, perhaps helpful, advice on how to deal with the problem. I have done that with every single party represented in Parliament other than independents, in my capacity either in this role or previously, chairing the all-party group against antisemitism.

Q42 Mr Kohler: So what do we need here? What do Government need to do to bring those initiatives, and your advice and so on, into coherence?

Lord Mann: If you like, spiritually, Government should be more curious about what is going on. I will give an example: the security grant. There is a tendency in Government, and among Government Ministers, to say, “We’ve given x amount, and we’ve now given more money for Jewish security.” I initiated a meeting with Tony Blair in 2006, the very first time that happened, so I was at the genesis of that.

There needs to be more: “How’s this money being spent? What’s not being covered?” In the last two months, I have been going in, very confidentially of course, and saying, “Is this covered? Is this covered? Is this covered?” Because if someone is killed or seriously injured in something that is not covered by a Government grant, it is no good for you. It is no comfort.



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You will get the rap—so ask the questions. That is beginning to happen, but it had not happened, and that curiosity is very important.

Q43 Mr Kohler: What about structural changes?

Lord Mann: I am technically based in the Communities Department. It does not give me a desk or a phone—I have asked successive Governments and Ministers for one. That is a choice. I am not sure that is helpful.

My budget is £120,000 a year. Half of it goes on a staff member, but I can take someone on only a six or 12-month contract because I do not have a longer budget. I lost my last staff member for job security reasons last year, two days before the Manchester murders. I am not sure that is good for Government. Whether I am the right postholder is a different matter—obviously, I would like to keep doing it—but the concept of having the role has proven to be very good.

That leaves me £60,000 to spend. I will give an example of something I have been asked to do this week. Following discussions with the Muslim community in Glasgow and with some Westminster politicians, there is the possibility of funding a new initiative involving schoolchildren from the Muslim and Jewish communities—and, I would suggest, from the rest of the community as well. It would be a third, a third and a third getting together and seeing what happens and how people can learn together. I think that would be incredibly valuable, and the fact that the initiative has been suggested by the Muslim community in Glasgow is even more exciting, because we are not seeing much of communities saying, “We’ll work with others.” If I give money to that, that is basically my budget gone. I think there needs to be more flex on that, and I could give you countless examples of the things.

I will give you another good example. I have recommended that money be given to an initiative in Hampshire, where a majority of primary schools are Church of England. We discovered last year that every year for the last 100 years, every child in those schools—a majority of children in primary schools in Hampshire—are taught at Easter that the Jews killed Jesus. My instinct is that that is a problem, and if that can be resolved where there is a will, including with the Bishop of Winchester—I do not think that how that is done and how it is solved is just a Hampshire problem. It is big stuff, and I have been asking for a year for the money to fund that in DFE, and it has not happened. There is lot of talk about legislation, and I have suggested legislation, but the critical thing is that action is needed. That is an example of something that can be done tomorrow.

I can give another example of what I have recommended on education, which is that there should be a system put in place so that every teacher in secondary schools—this would be through DFE, so I would have to go to Scotland, etc, to get it through—should be taught the very basics of how to recognise antisemitism in the classroom and how to deal with it. Just that would have a huge impact. It would not cost a fortune, and it could be started with the new teachers starting their processes this September.



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I think that would make a big difference; I am awaiting anyone to decide that could happen. These are instant things. Often, politicians look too much for legislation, which is not instant. Other changes could be made, and you have heard some. There are instant things, and that is not just reassurance. It would be big league stuff, if every teacher could do that. I think that is huge.

I recommended—this is now going to happen, though it has taken some time—that every NHS trust should be taught the basics about antisemitism. I am insisting that leadership in every board understand it—just the basics—so it does not get palmed down. It should be the same for the police, who are not getting taught it. The question is—I meet regularly with the head of counter-terror—how does a police force somewhere in one of your constituencies know about the Jewish way of life? What happens if there is an incident—I was in Brighton on Monday, sorting this out with the Brighton Jewish community and the local authority—and who is the contact point on a Friday night if there is a major incident in Brighton when, under Jewish religious rules, you cannot use a mobile phone? Who is the point of contact who is authorised to use a mobile phone? Do you know who it is so that you can contact them? This is basic stuff: do the police on the beat know that in, say, Brighton and Hove, Jewish people walk to synagogue and do not go in cars or have their mobile phones? Those are basics, and I think that we are presuming too much. That is simple and could be done within six weeks. I am hoping that I can land that and that, regardless of anybody else, I can get that delivered and get some people in and pay them whatever is needed. I am confident that we can do that, because there seems to be sufficient will at the top of the police to do it. There are lots of examples like that.

Q44 Mr Kohler: I see the independence of your role and how important that is. Is there another role that we need in order to bring some coherence to Government and to deal with the concerns we heard earlier?

Chair: Is there any inter-ministerial work on this? Is there an inter-ministerial taskforce or anything like that?

Lord Mann: What has been resurrected, which is something that I got instigated under Blair in 2006, is a cross-Government working group.

Q45 Chair: Is that official-led?

Lord Mann: It is officials—Ministers could turn up. We have resurrected it; it is happening. It did very well in the Cameron coalition years, in the May years and in the Brown years. That is really good. What I am doing is going in and saying, “Hang on a minute, where’s this Department?” If someone does not come, it is very easy for me to let you and others know that, and they will turn up. That is really effective. That is nitty-gritty. How do we solve this particular problem so that the politicians do not have to debate it because the officials have sorted it out with the Jewish community? It is exactly these organisations that are the representation of the community. That is a very good model. It should never have disappeared. That is very effective, but it needs the buy-in from those



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committing resources. The things I am suggesting need some money. They will not happen without that. Some things do not need money—some of that co-operation has improved dramatically in the last six months as we have resurrected that group. That is good news, and good governance as well.

Q46 **Chair:** You talked about dealing with devolved Governments. Do you deal with local authorities?

Lord Mann: Yes.

Q47 **Chair:** Are there local authorities that will not deal with you?

Lord Mann: There are plenty that try.

Q48 **Chair:** Are you naming and shaming?

Lord Mann: I am very happy to name and shame, but I will name and platform those who are doing good things to embarrass others.

Chair: That is a start.

Lord Mann: If we take Brighton and Hove, which has a significant and historic Jewish population of 3,000 to 5,000, we got a huge way in two hours on Monday morning. That gives a good model for making sure the same thing is happening in West Yorkshire, Newcastle, Norwich and other smaller communities, such as Bournemouth. Perhaps more attention should have been given to that, including by me, because there is a lot of good will there. A lot of it is really practical stuff.

Q49 **Margaret Mullane:** You heard the previous panel. Why do you think antisemitism has risen to the levels it has?

Lord Mann: I think there are two reasons. I cited the Hampshire example very deliberately. If you have been taught at school or at home that Jews are bad people, that has an impact. Without question, that has emerged. We have all been to school and have our own experiences in one way or another. I do not think people recognise the impact that has on how they automatically respond in the back of their mind to the Jewish community or a Jewish person. In my upbringing—I did not know any Jewish people, but I was aware of them—you would hear antisemitism all the time, but you did not realise that it was antisemitism or that it was particularly bad. If it was bullying, you'd say, "That's not nice against that kid," but it was just a thing that was there. That persists. That is one reason.

The second reason is something that did not come out earlier. When we are talking about extremism, it is not just about terrorists. Two equality officers of premier league football clubs and one chief executive have been targeted in the last five years by extremists trying to get rid of them. That is three in the football world targeted—they are the ones I know about—not by people trying to kill or physically harm them, but by people piling on them to get rid of them because they were seen as a blockage to extremists and their agenda. There is a side of extremism that we are not as good at tackling in this country as we need to be: non-violent



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extremism. I could have far better discussions with counter-terror about what we are doing about terrorists and the Iran threat than I can with anybody about what we are doing about people doing other things that are not criminal to undermine Jewish people and how we deal with that.

There needs to be clearer attention in Government to extremists who are not breaking the law, and sometimes calculatingly and deliberately not breaking the law because we are giving them a free pass at the moment. I am not sure that should sit in the Home Office, because the Home Office should be about the criminal side. My advice is that it should sit somewhere else—either the Communities Department or the Cabinet Office. The football example was not illegal, and that is a big problem.

Q50 Margaret Mullane: I have one other question. The previous panel spoke about NHS trusts, and I just want to pick out the example of a Jewish person ending up in hospital and wanting to order a kosher meal, but someone having a Palestinian badge on. From my reading of the paperwork, the emphasis is that they should not really be wearing the badges, because that would make the person uncomfortable in that NHS trust. With the work that you have done, do you not feel that, if you go down that road and say, "You should not really be wearing those badges and doing that", it just goes inward and there is then a bigger education piece, and possibly the senior leadership are not necessarily the best people to do that?

Lord Mann: There is both. I do not think that the senior leadership should be doing the training; they should be trained themselves. In my view, it is essential to start at the top, so that you get buy-in at the top. My report is with the Secretary of State for Health and is ready to go, and that includes stuff on uniform policy.

My approach is very simple: if we take uniforms, I do not care whether it is a Palestinian badge or an "I love Israel" badge. If a dentist is drilling my teeth, I do not expect them to have that kind of badge. That might put me off, and I do not want to be put off when they are drilling my teeth. It might also stop me going in the first place. I do not think it is appropriate to allow that to creep in.

I would call it even-handed. This is not saying, "We are going to ban Palestinian badges." No, we are going to ban the political stuff that is talking about something else, when I am a patient and I just want to be seen. By the way, that is my approach throughout and everywhere. In my recommendations I am not trying to stop anyone speaking; I am trying to show civility and make sure that the Jewish community is not damaged in the way that it is done.

Q51 Chris Murray: Your answers have ranged quite far, so you have covered a lot of my original questions. I want to come back to the point about the protests, specifically the ones this weekend, and I want to make a more general point in the context of the previous panel's discussion.

As a constituency MP, the No. 1 issue that people have written to me about since I was elected is the war in Gaza and the actions of the Israeli



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Government. Some of the correspondence I have received has contained antisemitic tropes, but the vast majority has not. There is clearly a very strong and very widespread urge among people in the UK to express their outrage at what is happening because of the Israeli Government. They try to express that by writing to their MPs—quite properly—but they also want to publicly protest.

Obviously, as we have heard, some people involved in those marches either break the law or use language and signs that are not acceptable. You said that you were not in favour of a moratorium on marches, so how are we supposed to strike a balance between allowing this very strongly felt outrage to be expressed, and not allowing that to be either shut down or misinterpreted by the actions of some people on those protests?

Lord Mann: Some of that is easy and some is difficult. Lord Macdonald's review can make it slightly easier by flexing some of the legislation on what powers are there over time. If you say, "We are going to ban you from marching", as a decent law-abiding citizen who is not antisemitic, you are going to say, "Well, hang on a minute. I want to have my say. This is a democracy." You will find your way of having your say one way or another.

If you are going to march past the same synagogue every month, I want the police to say, "Well, hang on a minute. I think a different route would be appropriate this time." When we did the anti-apartheid demonstrations, they would sometimes say, "You have to go south of the river", and we would complain bitterly. There is no point going south of the river because no one is going to see you—that was the reason. It is not quite the same now, but that was the reason. We would say, "We are not doing that", and eventually we would compromise. Sometimes, for whatever reason, they would say, "You're not assembling in Westminster", and we would say, "Hang on a minute. We want to go to Westminster—Margaret Thatcher is there."

We were rational, and there was some give and take, but the police used their powers. There were times when we were not too happy. Their first question would be, "What do you expect in numbers?" and then, "Where is your assembly point? Can that fit the numbers?" I do not know if any of you ever went on those old CND marches, but it was the same assembly point because you could get enough people in there. The coaches from around the country could all arrive and park up. It was done by the police with co-operation.

One of the problems that the police have been dealing with is that this is not coaches coming from all around the country. These are London demonstrations. It is harder to work out how to do it. This weekend, you have a far-right march and a cup final. You have 100,000 people on their way to Wembley, all joyously one way, and half not joyously on the way back. You also have Robinson and his gang around. That is quite complex for the police. This will be particularly difficult for them to deal with.



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I have said repeatedly to them at the most senior level, "Come on, be flexible. Think through." If it targets and goes past a synagogue every time, or past a mosque every time, or past a church on a Sunday, to me that is an obvious problem. If the march organisers are breaking the law and are not prepared to represent their cause, but have other agendas, arrest them, convict them; arrest them, convict them; arrest them, convict them. If someone prints an illegal placard, arrest the person holding it, arrest the printers, and prosecute them. If somebody is going to call for support for a terror organisation or use the language deemed by the police as a call to attack Jewish people and buildings, arrest them.

The police have got much more sophisticated in how they arrest. One of the interesting things from recent times is, as you will have noted, how many people have been arrested. That is because there are security cameras there, and they are finding the people. They are not arresting them in live time, of course. That is good policing. Good policing works well. That is what I expect to see. Different routes should be obligatory, so it is not always the same route.

Q52 Chris Murray: Your point about arrest them, convict them, arrest them, convict them is a divergence from what we heard from the previous panel. They said that if there are protests where there are consistent arrests and convictions, that is a sign that the protest has not been undertaken in a way that they are comfortable with. That itself is a sign that it should not be going ahead, and there should be a moratorium. How are Government meant to square the difference between what representatives of the Jewish community have just told us and what you have just told us?

Lord Mann: The police will make those decisions. The Government will decide whether there are more powers. The flexing of the powers from Lord Macdonald will be helpful, but that is giving the police more options available to them. I am sure that will be the outcome of that. Lord Macdonald will specify what and how that should be. If he can land stuff that is doable, that will be really helpful. The principle is that if people are going to protest, they will find another way of protesting. You cannot stop people protesting. What you can do is help channel that protest and protect from it. It is about the protection. I think the police were slow off the mark with their early-on interventions on where the marches went and the interaction with synagogues.

I expect someone in this country like you to be able to have your say as you wish to do, but I also expect you not to constantly be going past and interfering with people trying to go to a synagogue, a mosque, a church or indeed a small business, at which every protest has begun and they have lost a load of money. I do not see why that flexibility is a problem for anybody, but it has to be flexible. That means asking, "Why are you doing it there? What is wrong with going south of the river sometimes?" If they are not prepared to, that is when the sanction of the state can come in.

I do not think that reasonable people who want to express their anger about the Israeli Government, as an obvious example, will feel, "It's really bad that we have to do that marching south of the river", as opposed to



down or around Oxford Street and that area, or wherever. We never saw that as a problem, when we organised those marches with the ANC. What we wanted was the maximum number of people, the maximum publicity and our equivalents in the past hearing our message.

- Q53 Chris Murray:** Thank you. I want to ask about your recommendations to Government. You have already drawn the distinction between things that could be done immediately and things that take legislation, and that was really helpful. I want to zoom out from the specific recommendations that you are making and—I hope I am okay to say that you have been around a long time and you have seen multiple Governments approach this from various angles, as you have referenced—to ask, why do successive Governments of every different type, internationally as well as in the UK, struggle to tackle antisemitism? Is there anything that you think needs to change in order for us to be able to do so?

Lord Mann: I will give you an example. We spend a lot of money on this, and in your schools, your children and your constituents' children are taught about the Holocaust. Nobody has evaluated what part of the teaching works and what does not. That should happen. We need to know that. We need to know what is working, how it is working and what is not working, and that has not happened. That needs somebody to say, "We are going to commission a proper and thorough review of that", when we talk about antisemitism training.

I have a unit that I helped to get funding for set up at JW3, which is a big Jewish cultural centre. That unit is looking at what is working in antisemitism training and what is not. I have said to them that I need to know, the Jewish community needs to know and Government need to know. It is not only, "Let's have more training"—that is needed urgently—but also, "Is it the best possible?", and even if it is at a good level, "Which bits are working?" If you had a business plan to improve your business and that was health and safety, that is what you would do. This is safeguarding the Jewish community, so everything should be evaluated independently and honestly.

If I do something, I want to know not only whether it is working but which bits. It is not going to be yes or no, but it is about which bits are working, how we can improve that and how transferable that is. Governments have been weak on that and, if I may say so, we the politicians have been weak on demanding that. It is now absolutely at the top. Perhaps I have been weak in demanding that, but now it is the top of my list. Let's evaluate what works. Holocaust education is a good example, because it is there. We do not know the answer and, therefore, you do not know the answer.

- Q54 Chair:** Thank you. You have answered, I think, pretty much every question that we had thought of beforehand. Is there anything else that has not been said that you feel we need to hear?

Lord Mann: Another interesting question is a rhetorical question, perhaps for you, Chair. If you were to invite in a Government Minister, an interesting question is, which would you invite in? I think the fact that that



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is a question and that you would have to discuss that shows why an independent advisory role could be useful—including for other problems. There used to be one for the Muslim community, Qari Asim, but he got sacked. At the time, I disagreed with his sacking.

Also, on some of your questions about how it all links together, what I said to the Chief Rabbi very recently was, “Don’t think it is the Jewish community, if you think it is not all working together.” This is a problem of Government in the country, and not specifically this Government. I think we could argue that there are some problems with this Government, but in my experience, this has been a problem across Governments; it is a governmental or governance problem. I just leave that there, because I think that that sums up part of the issue. It is everywhere; therefore, who is responsible and who takes the lead? Other than the Prime Minister of the day, obviously, which is relevant. Which Ministers, in delivery, take the lead? That is a very important question. Perhaps getting that teased out a little would be helpful.

Q55 Mr Kohler: The intergovernmental committee that you talked about—

Lord Mann: The Communities Department convenes it and is doing so very well. That is where it was before. That is perhaps where this should lie, but then other Government Departments need to accept that somebody should be leading on it more. Some civil servants have to give a bit of their power over to listening to somebody taking a lead and saying, “We should be doing this; we should be doing this.” Then it becomes more joined up. I have sent recommendations to nine Departments, and that does not include the devolved nations, regions and local authorities. I am unpaid—that is not a complaint—but £60,000 a year doesn’t go very far.

Q56 Chair: Being frank, as a Committee, we have talked about what we can do on antisemitism, but you are right: because of the way that the Committee structure works and because of how we scrutinise Government, which bit we can do as the Home Affairs Committee is really important.

Lord Mann: One last point, if I may. Good news. This is not a coincidence; it would have happened anyway. I have been trying for the last year to get Lancaster House to have a major event for the Jewish staff networks to bring them together and give them some direction. In my view, the biggest positive out there in the Jewish community is that these informal staff networks have been set up—obviously by employers, and some across sectors like the arts. Empowering them does a huge amount. I have Lancaster House in October convening that. In fact, I had a further email earlier this morning, so perhaps your Committee has already had some influence. Thank you for that. It is always useful to let people know that you are appearing before a Select Committee—a good part of British democracy.

Chair: A very important part. As a Committee, we will consider what steps to take next, but this has been incredibly helpful. We want to make sure we can give some practical recommendations to the Government, and you



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have given us a lot, as did the previous panel. Thank you again for your time. I am sure we will see you again.

Lord Mann: Thank you for your questions.