



MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY

THE IMPACT OF BRITISH FOREIGN
POLICY ON ANTISEMITISM AT HOME



CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

PO Box 2647, London W1A 3RB
Registered charity 1163790

✉ info@antisemitism.uk
☎ +44 (0)330 822 0321
🌐 www.antisemitism.uk

CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) is a volunteer-led, apolitical charity dedicated to exposing and countering antisemitism through education and zero-tolerance enforcement of the law.

The House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee has launched an inquiry into the UK's policy towards the Middle East peace process.

CAA wishes to draw the Committee's attention to certain domestic ramifications of the UK's policy in the Middle East and we hope that this submission will provide a useful tool for all stakeholders in the fight against antisemitic hate crime and extremism in Britain.



PENALISING ANTISEMITIC INCITEMENT

The Committee has sought submissions including evidence on “The regional context, and the coordination of the UK’s policies with the international community.”

The UK enjoys strong relationships with various Middle Eastern states. Regrettably, many such nations are the world’s foremost exporters of antisemitic propaganda. The British government should demand that Middle Eastern governments end their incitement against Jews.

Western governments have been tolerating the intolerable for too long: the spreading of antisemitism in the Middle East. It is rarely discussed by the government, media and in public forums in Britain. There are estimated to be approximately 50,000 Jews living in Muslim-majority countries, down from approximately one million at the end of the Second World War. The vast majority of the Jewish exodus has occurred in Arab countries, where the Jewish population stands at less than 8,000, down from approximately 900,000 at the end of the Second World War. The principal reason for this mass-flight has been incitement and violence against Jews.

Even today, state-sponsored antisemitic propaganda continues to infect public discourse in the Middle East, and teaches new generations to hate Jews. This is particularly prevalent in Arabic-language media and teaching materials, in which Jews are routinely demonised and accused of conspiring to cause harm to

Muslims. Jews are even accused of fomenting violence in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, despite no Jews remaining there.

It is common to find Middle Eastern state media and official teaching materials referring to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a forgery devised to incite pogroms against Jews in Tsarist Russia, as a factual document. The document contains the fictional minutes of a supposed global Jewish conspiracy. Anti-Jewish conspiracy myths are commonly promoted as an explanation for the lack of progress suffered in many Middle Eastern countries.

Some antisemitic propaganda is even more basic, for example reviving the antisemitic blood libel that Jews abducted and murdered non-Jewish children to use their blood for ritual purposes. This lie is repeated often in cartoons and even serialised television programmes.

Antisemitic propaganda from the Middle East is responsible in great part for radicalising immigrant Middle Eastern communities in Britain (and elsewhere) to hate Jews. The British government should show leadership by making foreign aid payments to governments and agencies in the Middle East conditional on passing and enforcing legislation and policies that outlaws antisemitic propaganda in the media and in education. State sponsors of antisemitism should also be blocked from taking roles in international bodies, where possible, such as at the United Nations.

PROSCRIBING HIZBALLAH ENTIRELY

The Committee has sought submissions including evidence on “The regional context, and the coordination of the UK’s policies with the international community.”

Hizballah is an international genocidal antisemitic terrorist organisation, which calls for the murder of Jews worldwide. Unlike allies such as the United States and Canada, the British government currently does not proscribe Hizballah as a terrorist organisation in its entirety.

The failure to proscribe Hizballah in its entirety has profound implications for antisemitism and extremism in Britain. Supporters of Hizballah currently hold an annual march through central London flying the Hizballah flag. Hizballah admits that it raises money in Britain even whilst orchestrating terrorist attacks against Jews in countries around the world.

We have repeatedly been told that the reason that Britain does not proscribe Hizballah fully is that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has resisted full proscription on the grounds that this may hinder diplomacy in Hizballah-controlled parts of Lebanon.

Due to the stance of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Britain currently distinguishes between Hizballah’s “military wing” (which is proscribed) and its “political wing” (which is not). Even Hizballah admits that it operates as one organisation and both wings share the

same flag. Speaking in October 2012, Hizballah Deputy Secretary-General, Naim Qassem, could not have been any clearer: “We don’t have a military wing and a political one; we don’t have Hizballah on one hand and the resistance party on the other...Every element of Hizballah, from commanders to members as well as our various capabilities, are in the service of the resistance, and we have nothing but the resistance as a priority.”

CAA has ongoing problems preventing the flying of the Hizballah flag at antisemitic marches, rallies and protests in London because of this partial ban.

Section 13 of the Terrorism Act clearly states that “A person in a public place commits an offence if he (a) wears an item of clothing, or (b) wears, carries or displays an article, in such a way or in such circumstances as to arouse reasonable suspicion that he is a member or supporter of a proscribed organisation.” British authorities, however, with flagrant disregard for the broad scope of the offence, consider that flying a Hizballah flag is acceptable because only the military wing is proscribed at present.

The fact that brazen shows of support for and even fundraising for a genocidal antisemitic terrorist organisation are allowed in Britain is extremely alarming for British Jews, and it directly threatens and endangers them. Our attempts at engaging with the Metropolitan Police Service and

the Crown Prosecution Service to stop this have been unsuccessful.

In particular, the flying of Hizballah flags at events such as the annual Al Quds Day march in London. Al Quds Day was established in 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran, to call for the elimination of the State of Israel. The Hizballah flag was banned at Al Quds Day marches in other European countries last year. Britain, however, ignominiously stands out for its permissive stance towards Hizballah supporters.

Additionally, the partial proscription of Hizballah enables money to be raised for Hizballah's so-called political wing. It is extremely likely that such funds are used to fund terrorist activity, and could be used to target British Jews. CAA believes that if all of Hizballah is proscribed in the UK, its ability to organise, recruit and fundraise would be sharply curtailed. In fact, Hizballah's Secretary-General, Hassan Nasrallah, shares the same assessment on full proscription. He said that if Hizballah were to be proscribed in its entirety, the "sources of our funding will dry up and the sources of moral, political and material support will be destroyed."

The case for total proscription is clear. Hizballah has committed countless terrorist atrocities worldwide. It has carried out or attempted many terrorist attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad. Its most notorious atrocity was the bombing of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association Jewish centre in Buenos Aires Argentina in 1994, in which 85 people were killed.

Hizballah is also responsible for the Burgas bus bombing against Israeli citizens in Bulgaria in 2012, in which five Israeli citizens and the Bulgarian bus driver were killed. It fired hundreds of rockets at Israeli civilians during the 2006 Second Lebanon War and has an estimated 120,000 missiles aimed at Israeli cities now. Hizballah is also allegedly responsible a bombing in Beirut in 1983 that killed 241 US marines, 58 French paratroopers and six civilians. These are only a fraction of the terrorist attacks conducted worldwide by Hizballah.

Today, Hizballah terrorists are in Syria committing countless war crimes in support of despot Bashir al-Assad, in a civil war that has left approximately half a million people dead.

The notion that Hizballah has a wing that is not engaged in terrorism is nonsense. Hizballah denies the existence of separate political and military wings. Within Hizballah, their political and terrorist military activities are inseparable and all elements of Hizballah believe that Jews should be sought out wherever they are in the world and murdered. CAA therefore calls on the British Government to proscribe Hizballah in its entirety.

When it comes to Britain's security, and the safety and wellbeing of British Jews, half-measures simply do not stack up strategically. Due to Hizballah's clear overriding objective of conducting acts of terrorism against Jews worldwide, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office must drop its objections to the full proscription of Hizballah.

ENDING ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PSC

The Committee has sought submissions including evidence on “How UK policy is influenced by other states and interested parties.”

CAA has recently conducted research which has exposed the true face of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign UK (PSC). On 12th February 2017, we released the very disturbing results of our month-long investigation into the PSC which uncovered extensive antisemitic bigotry amongst its supporters. The full report is available on our website at antisemitism.uk/psc. We concluded that PSC’s Facebook presence is a cesspool of antisemitism which proliferates and normalises hatred of Jews.

For an entire month, our Online Monitoring Unit recorded antisemitic comments on PSC’s Facebook page and the response of PSC’s moderators. After reviewing and categorising nearly 3,000 comments by PSC supporters using the International Definition of Antisemitism, we found that:

- Over 7% of all comments and replies on PSC posts were antisemitic and included anti-Jewish conspiracy myths, Holocaust denial, Holocaust inversion and religious and general hate speech against Jews.
- There was very little counter-speech by PSC supporters. Hate speech against Jews was more likely to attract likes and supportive comment than condemnation from PSC supporters.
- PSC permits hate speech against Jews, but does not permit it against other

groups. We tested PSC’s moderation policy by posting hate speech against a non-existent people from a comic strip (the “Bangalla People”). The ‘hate speech’ we posted was almost identical to anti-Jewish sentiment which PSC allowed to be published. Within six hours, PSC removed the “Bangallaphobic” content and banned the account which posted it.

Some PSC Patrons were complicit in posting hate speech under the International Definition of Antisemitism.

Fifteen of PSC’s affiliated trade unions and all students’ unions have policies against ethnic and/or religious hate and discrimination. Affiliation to PSC is not compatible with these policies.

These findings were shocking given PSC’s public claim that it was established “in opposition to racism, including anti-Jewish prejudice.”

Our research showed that PSC had the means to block antisemitic hate speech on its Facebook page, if it wished to. It is profoundly disappointing that leading British trade unions and students’ unions, with strong anti-discrimination stances, allow themselves to be affiliated to an organisation that proliferates hate. Our report included sample disaffiliation motions for trade union and students’ union members to use.

In response to our report, the PSC issued an evasive statement. Whilst it described antisemitism as “abhorrent”, we found the statement weak and evasive because:

- It conflates antisemitism with Islamophobia. Our Online Monitoring Unit found no instances of Islamophobia on PSC’s Facebook page. We therefore question why PSC would link the two.
- It describes the perpetrators of the posts as “members of the public” rather than recognising that they are the PSC’s supporters, thus apparently externalising the problem.
- It makes the excuse that PSC’s Facebook page is too busy to moderate effectively, but our report demonstrated that PSC was highly effective at removing other forms of hate speech but chose to allow antisemitism.

The reaction of some PSC supporters to PSC’s statement was antisemitic to the extent that PSC deleted its original statement and then republished it in a new thread. Supporter comments on PSC’s first post (now deleted) alleged that false antisemitism charges were being used by “Israeli agents”, “hasbarists” and “Zionists” as a weapon against them. One commenter posted a virulently antisemitic video entitled “CNN, Goldman Sachs and the Zio Matrix.”

However, we did recognise the fact that PSC’s Facebook page had been much more effectively moderated by 19th February and the usual antisemitic slurs, conspiracy myths and Holocaust denial had been removed.

In response, we said that PSC should not settle for cleaning up its Facebook page but should now turn its attention to cleaning up its movement. For example, the Brighton and Hove branch of PSC and various branches of PSC in Scotland scheduled events to explain how “false antisemitism allegations silence the Palestinian voice”, with speakers including Jackie Walker and Tony Greenstein, both of whom were suspended by the Labour Party for antisemitism.

Simultaneously, a troubling new report emerged which provided direct evidence of active antisemitism within the PSC leadership itself. A painstaking and unequivocal report by researcher David Collier described members of PSC’s leadership posting Jewish power conspiracy theories. Collier also documented “Rabid conspiracy theory, global Zionist control, rabid antisemitism, numerous links to neo-Nazi sites, right-wing fascist think tanks and of course Holocaust denial” shared amongst PSC supporters.

PSC’s agenda is clear and was made clearer by our investigation.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s policymakers, diplomats and civil servants often strengthen and legitimise PSC by engaging with it on foreign policy matters. They should stop doing so until PSC agrees to adopt and enforce the International Definition of Antisemitism used by the British government, the College of Policing and many other organisations and states.