



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY
REPORT INTO ANTISEMITISM
FEEDBACK AND RESPONSES

MAY 2015

ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues.

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Overview

Following a significant increase in antisemitic incidents during the Israel-Gaza war of July and August 2014, a group of cross-party MPs decided to examine evidence on the nature of antisemitism in the UK, with specific reference to the Middle East conflict and to consider measures to confront it. They did so, in light of the previous all-party inquiry into antisemitism of 2006 which over the previous decade had set a course for action that had led to the development and implementation of successful national frameworks and local strategies to address anti-Jewish hatred. The report contained 34 recommendations which were broadly grouped into five themes, namely: supporting fellow citizens in words and deeds, holding a responsible public debate, intensifying interfaith co-operation, modernising the fight against antisemitism and celebrating and communicating successes. Fundamentally, the inquiry provided the new parliament and government with a plan for action.

Early Implementation of the Recommendations

Within weeks of its publication, actions were agreed to implement some seven of the recommendations of the all-party report:

1) A National Data Sharing agreement:

“In order to be totally effective and to ensure the UK is a world leader in monitoring and recording data on antisemitism, the police should enter into a national data sharing agreement with the CST and look at similar arrangements with groups like Tell Mama”.

In late March, the National Police Chief’s Council announced that police had reached an agreement to share hate crime data with the Jewish and Muslim communal bodies Community Security Trust (CST) and TELL MAMA. The agreement enables the routine sharing of anonymous data to increase the shared understanding of the nature and extent of hostility experienced by Muslim and Jewish communities. The data sharing agreements are available on ‘True Vision’, the Police Hate Crime reporting website:

www.report-it.org.uk/information_sharing_agreement

2) Increased Security Funding

“We were pleased to learn that the essential funding for security of Jewish schools in the state sector had been considered effective. Given the continuing threat of terrorism against the Jewish community, we recommend that a governmental fund be established to cover both capital and revenue costs for the security of British synagogues”.

In response to the All-Party Inquiry into Antisemitism, the CST and a campaign by the Jewish Chronicle newspaper, all of which had sought to highlight the risk to synagogues, schools and other potentially vulnerable Jewish community buildings, Prime Minister David Cameron announced a combined total of £11.9 million funding for Jewish communal security.

The Prime Minister said; “... the Jewish community is being specifically targeted...CST, the Jewish Chronicle and the All-Party Parliamentary Group against anti-Semitism have all highlighted the risk to synagogues and other potentially vulnerable Jewish community buildings....So we’re going to help with this too....I can announce a further £3 million....That’s over £10 million of new money for security – this year – and every year – for as long as necessary.”

3) Better Guidance for prosecutors and other improvements to Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) procedures

“We recommend that government together with the CPS, police and other relevant bodies work with the Jewish community to devise a communications strategy which effectively conveys the work that has been undertaken to combat antisemitism”.

The CPS developed an action plan to address religious hate crime and specifically antisemitism, which addressed a number of the relevant recommendations of the all-party inquiry report. A subsequent meeting with key stakeholders helped to progress the action plan and the first results are expected to be delivered by September 2015.

There are now plans in place for the CPS to work together with the police in order to raise awareness and increase reporting amongst targeted communities. Specifically, CPS action to improve the prosecution of antisemitism, will be shared with a wider community audience through collaborative efforts with key stakeholders.

“The CPS should instigate, at speed, a better management or sampling system which allows for a simple search and analysis function for the data that it holds”.

The CPS has a number of new assurance checks being rolled out, some of which will become routine

processes and will help with data collection and analysis. This includes a check for evidence of antisemitism in all religiously aggravated hate crime cases. The CPS will also undertake a tracking exercise with relevant police forces to improve CPS understanding of the handling and outcomes of antisemitic and religiously aggravated crime. Local Scrutiny and Involvement Panels will make assessments of the way in which relevant (finalised) cases have been handled and report back on good practice and lessons learned.

“We recommend that as part of the ongoing review of hate crime procedures by the CPS, consideration is given as a priority, to the decision making arrangements for referral to the Special Crime and Counter-Terrorism Division”.

A detailed explanation of how the CPS organises referral of its cases has been provided to the All-Party Inquiry team. However, the CPS has said specifically that it will further strengthen the expertise available locally to prosecutors, in support of effective decision-making, by holding a joint event for force and CPS Area specialists in conjunction with the College of Policing, Ministry of Justice and ACPO. It is also developing detailed support materials for prosecutors that will target decision-making and case handling in relation to hate crime

“We recommend that as part of the ongoing review of hate crime procedures by the CPS, consideration is given as a priority, to the suitability of existing guidance on communications sent via social media as regards racist/religious hatred. We further recommend that hate crime guidance material on grossly offensive speech be reviewed to clarify what amounts to “criminal acts” that “will be prosecuted”.

The CPS has pledged to review its guidance relating to communications sent via social media and review the handling of such cases within CPS Areas. It is also developing material aimed at enhancing community understanding and awareness of hate crime legislation and guidance.

“We recommend that the Crown Prosecution Service undertakes a review to examine the applicability of prevention orders to hate crime offences and if appropriate, take steps to implement them”.

The CPS has said it will assess the value and feasibility of deploying prevention orders in respect of antisemitism and other hate crime, including consideration of the availability and use of relevant ancillary orders such as Criminal Behaviour Orders. Given the link with prosecution of communications sent by social media, this assessment will be undertaken in conjunction with a review of the handling of prosecutions of communications sent via social media and related guidance.

Support for the Inquiry Report

A number of senior political and other leaders welcomed the report and its recommendations. A select number of extracts from statements released in support of the report follows.

Prime Minister Rt Hon David Cameron MP

“This is a hugely important cross-party report. Tackling antisemitism goes right to the heart of what we stand for as a country. Whatever our politics, and whatever our faith, we must work together to do everything we can to defeat it.” “Britain is proud to be a multi-ethnic, multi-faith democracy. It is something we have built over generations and which generations have given their lives to defend. We will not weaken our resolve now but instead redouble our efforts to stand up and defend the values we believe in. This report has a vital role to play. There can be no excuses. No disagreements over foreign policy or politics can ever be allowed to justify antisemitism or any other form of racism, prejudice or extremism.” ““While I am Prime Minister I promise we will fight antisemitism with everything we have got. Together we will make sure Britain remains a country that Jewish people are proud to call home – today, tomorrow and for every generation to come.”

Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP

“The appalling terrorist attacks in Paris earlier this month are a stark reminder of the evil that anti-Semitism can create. They were a direct attack on the democratic values that we hold dear, but they were also an attack on the Jewish community in France. At a time of rising anti-Semitism in the UK, the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry Against Anti-Semitism report is timely and raises important areas for action to eradicate this awful form of hatred. We must redouble our commitment to preserve the values we hold dearest, and resolve to work together to tackle anti-Semitism in all its forms.”

Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP

“This is an important and timely report which, crucially, has support from across the political spectrum.” “I’m shocked and saddened by reports that Jews are facing a worrying rise in antisemitism. Everybody should be able to maintain their traditions in a way that allows people to co-exist peacefully”. “I utterly condemn all forms of antisemitism. As a government, we should and we will do everything possible to bring perpetrators to justice.” “We will continue to work with the Jewish community, with families, with the Community Security Trust, with synagogues and with schools to make sure that Jews do not feel threatened in Britain.”

Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, Sir Bernard Hogan Howe

“It is our responsibility, and that of society as a whole, to ensure that we don’t allow the hatred of the few to damage our shared history of valued friendship. The best way of helping police is to report all hate crime, either directly or through third-parties like the CST and Shomrim, then we can bring the law to bear on the criminals. However, as this report indicates, we need a wider response than the police and criminal justice system can deliver alone, we need society to become as vocally intolerant of faith-hatred as it is of other forms of discrimination and a clearer understanding of where freedom of speech oversteps the mark.”

Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Rvd and Rt Hon Justin Welby

“The All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism..... is an extraordinary report. It is wide-ranging without being vague, and it is specific without being narrow. That is a huge achievement in a subject as complex and difficult and, let us be honest, as deeply embedded in our history and culture in Western Europe as antisemitism.

“With great clarity the Committee have communicated both the stark reality of rising antisemitism in this country, and the key responses necessary to counter it. Responses of raising public awareness and accountability – and, I hope, shock; because I think many people feel that this is something that is part of history, not part of contemporary life. And other responses, including directly confronting antisemitic discourse, and shaping a new and resilient religious literacy in our civic life. Huge amounts of the report struck me forcefully when I was reading it yesterday....

“So it is our responsibility, now, to respond to this report by acting on its recommendations. And I want to say that despite our failings, of which I am more than aware and often deeply embarrassed by, as the Church of England we commit ourselves to be both accountable and to hold others to account, and to pay attention to this report.

“This is a vital report that calls us not only to be aware of the profound dangers of antisemitism being anything but confronted, but also calls for active ways of combating it.”

Chief Rabbi Mirvis

“I welcome this report which is important both for its recommendations and its symbolism. As this report demonstrates, we are fortunate in the UK to have parliamentarians who are taking an active lead in the fight against antisemitism. The threat against the Jewish community is real and anxiety remains high following recent events in France and elsewhere. Today’s report could not come at a more opportune time and I welcome its practical plan of action.”

Former Communities Minister, Stephen Williams

“The cross-Government working group on anti-Semitism will take all of these recommendations forward... I wholeheartedly support the panel’s recommendation that the CPS should review the applicability of prevention orders to hate crime offences, which would bar determined offenders from spreading their hate online.”

Chairman of the Jewish Agency, Natan Sharansky

“I welcome the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism’s publication of its new report on anti-Jewish hatred, as well as the report’s important conclusions.

This recognition is an important step in the struggle against all manifestations of anti-Semitism – in the streets, on the internet, in the media, on university campuses, and in schools. But it is not enough to deploy armed policemen and soldiers around synagogues and Jewish schools. The problem must be addressed at its very roots, through education, legal steps, and social action.”

Feedback from the British Embassy in Germany

“The Inter-Faith Coordinator at the Foreign Ministry called the report “mightily impressive” and asked us once again to thank the APPG for the “interesting and informative discussions” during the visit to Berlin.”

Feedback from the German Embassy, London

“Thank you very much for letting us have the inquiry. It was extremely helpful for my work and I have it on my desk for frequent consultation. In particular the examples of best practices are of great interest to us.” “Thank you again for sending us this important documentation. I forwarded it to the German federal ministry for foreign affairs.”

Other international Feedback

The embassies of Holland, Sweden and Cameroon have also sent word that the report has been forwarded to relevant Ministers for review.

There are still some 27 recommendations of the All-Party Inquiry into Antisemitism that require action and parliamentarians are encouraged to lend their support in order that all of them are implemented before the end of the current parliament.



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The All-Party Parliamentary
Group Against Antisemitism