

13<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Dear Vice Chancellor,

**Subject: Concerns Regarding the Situation for Jewish Students on Campus**

We hope this letter finds you well and in good health.

We write to you today as representatives of the UK's student Jewish community to express our collective concerns and request your assistance in ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and inclusivity of Jewish students at your institution. The Jewish community in the UK is in a deep state of shock and mourning following Hamas' infiltration of Israeli territory, murdering, kidnapping, and injuring thousands of innocent civilians including babies, children and the elderly. For many of us these are our friends, family, and contemporaries. In light of these events that have deeply affected our community, we would like to share our deep concerns about the situation for Jewish students on your campus.

The recent terrible massacre and kidnapping of thousands of Jews in Israel have sent shockwaves through our community. These horrifying acts of violence have left us in mourning and feeling vulnerable. In times like these, it becomes even more vital to support and protect Jewish students who may be experiencing heightened anxiety and fear, mourning the loss of relatives and friends, and experiencing deep distress about the threat to both citizens of Israel and sadly the UK.

The CST have released a Situation Assessment which shows that in just four days, between 7-10 October 2023, at least 89 antisemitic incidents across the UK have been reported to the CST. This provisional total is almost certain to increase further. For comparison, CST recorded 21 antisemitic incidents over the same four days in 2022. This means that we have seen an increase of 324% this year compared to the same period last year.

Your institution needs to stand by its Jewish students by unequivocally condemning the glorification and celebration of terrorism and antisemitism which is being seen on campuses across the UK. We'd like to remind you that Hamas is a proscribed terrorist organisation, with the Home Secretary recently reaffirming the fact that it is a criminal offence to belong to Hamas as well as invite support for Hamas, with the full details found [here](#).

Your staff need to be well briefed and understand the responsibilities and duty of care they have to their students regardless of their own politics. Indeed, sadly we have already seen a steady stream of unacceptable and antisemitic behaviour from university lecturers reported to us.

As such we urgently request your attention to the following issues:

- 1. Zero Tolerance for Support of Proscribed Organisations:** In line with the Terrorism Act 2000, a zero-tolerance policy must be adopted regarding displays and signs of support for proscribed terrorist organisations, including Hamas. Such activities cannot be allowed on campus, and immediate and appropriate actions should be taken to address any instances. Indeed, several campuses across the UK have already been plastered with poisonous and antisemitic posters. The newly released [guidance to Chief Constables](#) by the Home Secretary is very clear on this matter and we encourage you to review the advice accordingly.

2. **Campus Safety:** We ask that you reinforce security measures on campus to ensure the safety of Jewish students. These measures should be part of a broader strategy to counter antisemitic incidents and protect all minority communities. Jewish students have been threatened with physical assault, while student societies have already expressed support for Hamas. We encourage all Vice Chancellors to consider how to make campuses safer for their Jewish students and staff.

3. **Support Services:** Ensure that appropriate support services are available for Jewish students who may be struggling with their mental health due to the events in Israel. It is essential that students have access to counselling and mental health resources. They should also be directed to their Jewish Societies, the Jewish Chaplain, and CST. Students may need additional support, including time off due to stress and anxiety, and for deadlines to be extended. Indeed, we are aware of at least one student who made a request for a deadline extension due to their upset and stress, and they were turned down. Their admission of stress and upset was ignored, and they were offered no further support. We are asking for the same decency and care that would be extended to anyone who expresses concern and distress to be extended to Jewish students.

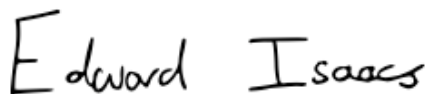
4. **Responsibility of University Staff:** It is of paramount importance to brief university staff and lecturers about their responsibility to create safe spaces for students and leave their personal politics at the door. Lecturers and university staff should be sensitive to the emotional distress many of their Jewish and Israeli students are currently facing. These students should not be made to answer for or defend Israel in class or anywhere else. Students have already reported unpleasant and confrontational classroom environments which have in some cases been supported by lecturers. We have also seen troubling and antisemitic posts from lecturers on social media.

5. **Inclusivity and Respect:** Promote an environment of inclusivity and respect on campus, where hate speech, discrimination, and antisemitism are not tolerated. Those seeking to sow division and create environments where Jewish students do not feel included should be dealt with accordingly. Senior University management should be reaching out to their Jewish societies directly and not expect that Student Unions should carry this responsibility alone. Jewish staff must also be reached out to at this time.

Together, we can work towards creating a campus environment where Jewish students feel safe, supported, and included.

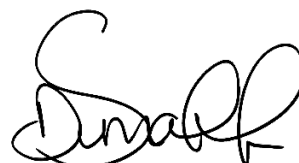
Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response and cooperation in addressing these concerns promptly.

Sincerely,



Edward Isaacs

President  
Union of Jewish Students, UK and Ireland



Sophie Dunoff

Chief Executive Officer  
University Jewish Chaplaincy

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