

January 26, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

As discovered in your lengthy report, there has been a systemic history of antisemitism within the National Union of Students (NUS) for several decades.

We, the undersigned, appreciate your endeavors to protect Jewish students and resolve this flagrant history of discrimination against one of the UK's minority populations.

Below, we have provided recommendations for the suggested NUS UK Antisemitism Action Plan.

Please note that the absence of any comment on any other part of the Action Plan does not necessarily indicate support for, or opposition to, those parts.

1. A proud and unwavering commitment to understanding and tackling antisemitism in all its forms

b) Advisory Panel to be set up that includes UJS representation to oversee the implementation of this plan that will meet for a minimum of five years.

- The Advisory Panel and NUS leaders should regularly meet with Community Security Trust (CST) bi-annually to discuss trends and specific incidents of antisemitism against students, as well as options for adequately and justly resolving antisemitic incidents and combating negative trends.
- The Action Plan, and its implementation, must draw upon wider quantitative analysis from the likes of respected organisations such as CST and Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA).
- CST recorded a total of 150 university related antisemitic incidents in the last two academic years: 95 incidents in 2020/2021 and 55 incidents in 2021/2022. The total number of incidents marks a 22 percent increase from the total of 123 university incidents recorded in 2018-2020. [Source](#)
- In 2020/2021, the 95 university-related antisemitic incidents recorded by CST marked the highest total recorded for a single academic year. This can largely be attributed to the period from early May to early June 2021, during which the conflict between Israel and Gaza caused a sharp rise in antisemitic incidents nationwide. [Source](#)
- CST recorded 55 university incidents in May 2021, which accounted for almost a years' worth of incidents in a single month. This number includes 3 death threats. [Source](#)
 - 93% of university-related incidents were categorised as abusive behavior (telephone calls, text messages, graffiti, antisemitic emails, text messages, tweets and social media comments, as well as targeted antisemitic letters). [Source](#)
 - The Action Plan, and its implementation, must be guided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, including its examples.

e) A new section on NUS' website with clear information on how to report incidents that occur either within NUS, a students' union, or on a campus. Support students who report with action either through NUS, through their own SU or institution.

- Reported incidents should be dealt within a timely manner. Reporting students should be regularly updated about the progress and outcome of their reports.
- NUS should make data on reported incidents and outcomes publicly available at least on a yearly basis.
- In addition to its own data, NUS should base their policies, and the implementation of this Action Plan, on data from other reputable sources like CST and CAA.
- Those involved in addressing antisemitic incidents should be persons of independence, impartiality, and objectivity, and be adequately trained and informed on the topic of antisemitism and have had adequate training in relation to the IHRA definition.

2. Jewish representation and voice in NUS within a wider strategy for inclusion and liberation

A. Jewish representation and voice in NUS within a wider strategy for inclusion and liberation: Anti-Racism Anti-Fascism (ARAF) Committee: to be reinstated within NUS with a dedicated place for Jewish representation, recognising UJS as our primary partner in representing Jewish students and tackling antisemitism in all its forms.

- We caution against reinstating this committee as it will open the door for the politicization of and distraction from efforts to combat antisemitism and other forms of racism. This would contravene NUS and its desire to minimize harm as noted in 3. b.
- If it is decided to keep this committee it should be renamed and given a carefully crafted mandate to ensure racism in all its forms and manifestations, and from all sources, is addressed in a professional, non-partisan manner.
- Jewish students, rather than the NEC, should be able to elect a representative for the ARAF.

3. Changing culture through education, practice and dialogue

b) Practical guidance on how to minimise harm in activity relating to Israel and Palestine. Such guidance should be practical, accessible, and linked to NUS' policies and values.

- NUS should reaffirm its adoption and commitment of the IHRA definition, which was originally adopted in 2017 via a motion.
- NUS should provide NUS and SU staff receive adequate and sufficient training on antisemitism, with a basis on the IHRA definition and examples, and guided and/or provided by respected Jewish organisations.
- Such staff training should occur biennial on the IHRA definition.
- The Action Plan and its implementation should address, in relation to educating relevant NUS & SU leaders, the antisemitic history and manifestations of the Boycott, Sanctions and Divestment Campaign (BDS).
 - "The best statistical predictor of anti-Jewish hostility, as measured by actions that directly target Jewish students for harm, is the amount of BDS activity". [Source](#)

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- Pro-BDS author Ahmed Moor stated (2010): “BDS does mean the end of the Jewish state...Ending the occupation doesn’t mean anything if it doesn’t mean upending the Jewish state itself.” [Source](#)
 - Co-founder of Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) Omar Barghouti said, “The current phase has all the emblematic properties of what may be considered the final chapter of the Zionist project. We are witnessing the rapid demise of Zionism, and nothing can be done to save it, for Zionism is intent on killing itself. I, for one, support euthanasia.” [Source](#)
 - Lord Pickles: “As part of trying to understand what’s necessary for this, the Imperial War Museum invited me to look around their exhibition, which they are about to revamp. I was looking around, and there are various objects there relating to the build up to the Shoah, and I came across something, about the size of a drinks coaster. It would be handed to somebody, and it said this: ‘You have been seen going in to a Jewish shop. No true German would support a Jewish shop’. In other words, a boycott on Jewish goods. So what’s the difference between that, and the BDS campaign? The answer is very straight forward – time. There’s nothing complicated to it, it’s the same thing happening 70 years later. It’s the same ideology, it’s the same language, it’s the same threats. After all the BDS picket and threaten people who are trading with Israel – it’s the same thing.” [Source](#)
 - Baroness Deech: “The BDS movement is intended to delegitimise Israel, and ultimately destroy the state. Singling out Israel for boycott is out of all proportion to other states in this troubled world, and it is anti-Semitic. That is because it applies double standards and denies the Jewish people own right to self-determination, as defined in the IHRA definition...” [Source](#)
 - Lord McDonald of Rivern Glen: “My Lords, I entirely agree with the noble Baronesses, Lady Deech and Lady Altmann, that BDS is a discriminatory and racist movement whose object is the destruction of the state of Israel, and unmistakably so...” [Source](#)
 - Rt Hon Robert Jenrick: “You don’t have to look very hard to find a pattern of antisemitic behaviour in connection with campaigns promoting a boycott of Israel. Successive studies have shown the single best statistical predictor of anti-Jewish hostility is the amount of BDS activity...” [Source](#)
 - Rabbi Lord Sacks: “Denying Israel’s right to exist is the new antisemitism... Whenever you hear human rights invoked to deny Israel’s right to exist, you are hearing the new antisemitism...” [Source](#); the BDS movement utilises this idea of Palestinian human rights being denied by Israel and therefore justifies the need to undertake BDS measures.
 - The UK government has considered adopting anti-BDS legislation on the grounds that it legitimise antisemitism. (Sources: [The Jewish Chronicle](#); [The Independent](#), [Campaign Against Antisemitism](#))
- Antisemitism education and training for NUS and SU staff and leadership should include explaining the concept and meaning of Zionism, what it is and what it isn’t, as understood by the mainstream Jewish community.
 - Educate relevant NUS and SU leadership that periods of armed conflict involving Israel (e.g., May 2021) often involve a surge in antisemitic rhetoric and attacks on Jewish

students by those who seek to exploit the conflict for bigoted purposes, necessitating heightened awareness of and resources for combating antisemitism.

c) Expert facilitators: A bank of individuals - either NUS/SU staff or external - should be identified who can facilitate and support debates and campaigns regarding Israel and Palestine within NUS or SUs.

- We caution against creating a 'bank' of approved 'expert facilitators,' given the potential it has for signaling an enforced orthodoxy of belief or providing an appearance of legitimacy and approval for controversial individuals and/or beliefs.
- If NUS decide to undertake a bank of expert facilitators, NUS should ensure that their bank of experts have a true desire for a peaceful solution NUS must ensure that their bank of experts do not support BDS or undertake a one-sided when discussing the conflict
- Due diligence needs to be undertaken to ensure that this bank of individuals are not associated with organisations that actively fund harmful activities against Israeli citizens

4. An enhanced Candidate Preparation Process for NUS elections

c) Candidate declaration: The existing Candidate Declaration should include a new requirement for candidates to declare anything current or historic that could put their or NUS' reputation at risk and/or that could be in breach of NUS' policies

- NUS must clearly articulate and consistently enforce consequences for any failure to disclose or any other falsification on a candidate declaration.
- NUS must not abdicate its responsibility to undertake due diligence. NUS should undertake a background search of the candidate, including a review of the candidate's online behavior.

5. Strengthen NUS UK's governance

b) Introduce an External Speakers Policy for NUS UK events

- See 4c comments for recommendations in regard to what considerations should be exercised in relation to an external speaker's policy for NUS events.

Other items NUS may wish to address not highlighted in the Action Plan

- NUS should ensure a wider oversight of student-associated bodies and groups and take immediate action when such groups are found to have engaged in or promoted antisemitic acts, speakers, or other behavior.
- The Action Plan should address the right to academic freedom and free speech of Jewish and Zionist students. No student should be penalised for their deeply held beliefs. (See, e.g.: [The Jewish Chronicle](#), [UK Lawyers for Israel](#), [Community Security Trust](#))

Signatories to this letter:

Organisations

CAMERA UK

CAMERA on **CAMPUS UK**

CAMERA on Campus UK
UKLFI Charitable Trust
National Jewish Assembly
B'nai B'rith UK
Harif
North London Friends of Israel
West Midlands Friends of Israel

Individuals

Baroness Deech
Judy Weleminsky
Harry Goldstein
Laurence Julius
Chair, Jewish Representative Council for Birmingham and West Midlands
Andrew Jones
Naomi Clucas
Margaret Gillan
Daniel O'Dowd, Maynooth University, 2019
Sara Epstein, Maynooth University, 2017
Gavriel Solomons, University of Hertfordshire, 2023
Hazel Bell
Stuart McIvor