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PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

Confronting the
“Intifada” Chant in Public
Space — Using Existing
Law

WORDS HAVE CONSEQUENCES



**BRITAIN PROTECTS DEBATE,
NOT INTIFADA**

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FORUM FOR
FOREIGN
RELATIONS



LEEDS leads AGAINST ANTISEMITISM



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Foreword

Two years is a long time to pretend not to hear. In that time, Britain's streets have hosted a chant whose history is written in broken bodies and bereaved families. We have told ourselves that the word is "complex," that it is redeemed by context, that its menace can be managed by ambiguity. It cannot. Words kill—first by wounding, then by normalising, and finally by licensing the hand. Among all the ugliness we have witnessed, one word has towered above the rest: intifada.

This document is offered in a spirit that is both unapologetically liberal and unapologetically serious. The United Kingdom defends robust speech; it does not dignify eliminationist rhetoric or the glorification of terror. Free expression is a pillar of our settlement, not a suicide pact. When intifada is deployed in our public square—outside synagogues and schools, in marches routed for maximum intimidation, on platforms that launder the aesthetics of violence—it is not debate. It is a threat.

The good news is that Britain does not need new statutes. It needs clarity, confidence, and coordination in applying the law it already has. The Public Order Act allows pre-emptive conditions on marches and prosecutions for intentional harassment; the "stirring up hatred" offences address threatening words intended to inflame; the Terrorism Act deals with inviting or indicating support for proscribed groups; equality and Prevent duties require public bodies to act before harm becomes routine. The missing piece has been a single, operational definition that ends euphemism and aligns practice.

Accordingly, this briefing makes one central appeal: that the Government publish an official definition of "intifada" for use across policing, prosecution, education, broadcasting, charity regulation and local government—and that, in contemporary UK context, its deployment be classified and recorded as hate speech, actionable where statutory thresholds are met. The aim is not to widen the net indiscriminately, but to draw the line honestly and enforce it evenly.

Equal protection is our lodestar. The same clarity that shields synagogues on Saturday shields mosques on Friday. The measure of our seriousness will not be found in statements but in the dull, necessary facts of enforcement—routes altered, conditions imposed, cases charged, licences reviewed. We owe that seriousness to the living, to the memory of those who were not returned, and to the country we say we are: decent, lawful, and unafraid to act.

Catherine Perez-Shakdam - Executive Director We Believe In Israel

Purpose:

To provide a law-first pathway for Government, Parliament, police, prosecutors, regulators, universities, councils, and charities to address the chant “intifada” when used in UK public space. The central appeal: publish an official Government definition of “intifada” for operational use across agencies and treat its public deployment, in UK context, as hate speech that is actionable under existing offences (harassment, stirring up hatred, and terrorism-support provisions). No new primary legislation is required—only authoritative guidance and consistent enforcement.

Executive Summary:

- The Public Order Act 1986 (POA) criminalises intentional harassment, alarm or distress (s.4A), and empowers police to impose pre-emptive conditions on marches and assemblies (ss.12, 14). Where deployments of the chant outside synagogues, Jewish schools, or community sites are deliberate and foreseeable, evidentially grounded enforcement under s.4A and the use of ss.12/14 conditions are available now. Recent government statements confirm plans to explicitly allow cumulative-impact assessments when conditioning protests.
- Stirring up hatred offences in POA Part III (race) and Part IIIA (religion/sexual orientation) capture threatening words or behaviour intended to stir up hatred; they carry up to 7 years (triable either way). Use where contextual evidence supports intent.
- The Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT) proscribes groups and criminalises inviting support (s.12) and displaying articles arousing a reasonable suspicion of support (s.13). CPS confirms the definition of terrorism and charging pathways. These can apply where platforms, signage, or choreographed chants amount to support or glorification of a proscribed group.
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010, s.149) requires police, councils, universities and regulators to have due regard to eliminating harassment and fostering good relations—relevant when designing routes, conditions, and campus standards.
- Prevent duty (CTSA 2015) binds specified authorities (including universities) to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. The Office for Students monitors HE compliance. Use this to underpin campus actions against events/societies mainstreaming the chant.
- Ofcom Broadcasting Code Section 3 prohibits content likely to incite crime or disorder; broadcasters should not platform live content that normalises or encourages such chants.
- Charity Commission guidance mandates trustees prevent links to proscribed organisations; regulators can intervene where charities or their platforms enable terror-adjacent messaging.

The Problem in Law: When “Intifada” Crosses the Line

1. Targeted intimidation/harassment (POA s.4A).
2. Where the chant is directed at Jewish premises or individuals (e.g., outside synagogues or schools), and intent can be evidenced (route choice, repeated returns, timing), charge under s.4A (and consider racially/religiously aggravated forms under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 s.31). Use Sentencing Council guidance for aggravation and uplift.
3. Stirring up hatred (POA Part III/IIIA).
4. If the chant is part of threatening conduct intended to stir up racial or religious hatred, deploy ss.18–23 (race) and ss.29B–29G (religion). These are serious offences with higher maxima; CPS hate-crime policy provides charging criteria.
5. Support for proscribed organisations (TACT).
6. Where banners, speeches or platforms invite support for a proscribed group (TACT s.12) or display articles indicating support (TACT s.13), use terrorism charges. The proscription regime and CPS terrorism guidance provide the evidential framework.
7. Pre-emptive protest conditions (POA ss.12/14).
8. Senior officers may impose conditions to prevent serious disorder or serious disruption—including route changes, duration limits, and location restrictions. The College of Policing’s 2023 note and the Government’s Oct 2025 policy confirm emphasis on cumulative impact.
9. Equality and Prevent duties (framework obligations).
10. PSED (s.149) requires due regard to eliminating harassment and fostering good relations—relevant to route approvals, campus permissions, and council licensing. The Prevent duty (updated guidance) supports proportionate steps in HE and other specified authorities.

Executive Appeal (What we're asking for):

1. Issue an Official Government Definition (OGD) of “intifada” as used in contemporary UK protest/campus contexts, to be incorporated into Home Office circulars, CPS legal guidance, the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP), OfS/Prevent guidance, Ofcom notes to broadcasters, and the Charity Commission’s compliance alerts.
2. Classify “intifada” as hate speech in UK operational policy—i.e., treat it as threatening/abusive, reasonably perceived as endorsing or inviting violence against Jews/Israelis, and therefore capable of constituting:
 - Intentional harassment, alarm or distress (Public Order Act 1986, s.4A), including racially/religiously aggravated forms;
 - Stirring up racial/religious hatred (POA Parts III & IIIA) where intent and threat are evidenced;
 - Inviting or indicating support for a proscribed organisation (Terrorism Act 2000, ss.12–13) where context and articles/platforming warrant.
3. Direct all public bodies to apply existing powers pre-emptively and even-handedly—using protest conditions (POA ss.12/14), Prevent duties (CTSA 2015), the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010 s.149), broadcasting standards, and charity compliance—so that this rhetoric is neither normalised nor platformed.

Proposed Official Government Definition (OGD) — for insertion into guidance:

“Intifada” (UK operational definition): In contemporary UK public space, the chant or promotion of “intifada” ordinarily conveys endorsement of a violent uprising associated with attacks on civilians. When directed at, proximate to, or reasonably perceived by Jewish individuals, institutions (e.g., synagogues, schools, community centres), or events, it is threatening/abusive and reasonably understood as endorsing or inviting violence. Accordingly, its use in these contexts should be treated as hate speech for recording and enforcement purposes and may amount to criminal conduct under existing law (Public Order Act 1986; Crime and Disorder Act 1998 aggravation; Terrorism Act 2000) subject to evidential and public-interest tests.*

Notes for the OGD:

- This definition does not curtail robust political debate per se; it recognises the chant’s ordinary meaning and effect in the UK now, distinguishing debate from intimidation and terror-glorification.
- The definition triggers recording, risk assessment, and charging consideration, not automatic liability; the usual CPS tests and Article 10/11 balancing continue to apply.

6Implementation Package (what each body does, now):

Home Office / NPCC / CPS

- Publish the OGD and a Joint Operational Circular aligning:
 - Evidential factors (location nexus to Jewish sites; directionality/amplification; repetition/cumulative impact; accompanying banners/insignia; victim impact statements).
 - Charging pathways: POA s.4A (with CDA 1998 aggravation), POA Parts III/IIIA (intent to stir up), TACT s.12/s.13 (where platforms/articles show support).
 - Cumulative-impact protocol for protest conditions (ss.12/14) and fast CPS consults for same-day charging in aggravated cases.

Councils / Mayors (with PSED duties)

- Adopt No-Intimidation Route Standards: protect zones around places of worship and schools; publish reasons for route changes/conditions; log cumulative impact.
- Integrate the OGD into event licensing and protest liaison templates.

Universities / OfS / DfE

- Tie society recognition/funding to compliance with the OGD: no use/platforming of “intifada”; sanction ladder (suspension → derecognition → referral).
- Cite Prevent and POA/TACT in campus circulars; train staff on evidential capture and referrals.

Charity Commission / Trustees

- Issue an Operational Alert: use of “intifada” at charity-linked events/social channels may breach trustee duties; require serious incident reports and remedial action plans.

DCMS / Ofcom / Broadcasters & Platforms

- Update live-output risk protocols: dump/delay when chants meeting the OGD arise; preserve footage for evidential use; do not platform known repeat offenders.
- Platforms to log removals and cooperate with police on data retention.

Police (Gold/Silver/Bronze)

- Deploy forward evidence teams (A/V, geotagging) where OGD-criteria likely; apply conditions immediately once the threshold is met; prioritise charged test cases to set visible precedent.

Safeguards (to protect free expression and equal treatment)

- Article 10/11 compatibility: The OGD targets threatening/abusive use with foreseeable impact, not general discussion.
- Equal protection: The same standard protects mosques and Muslim schools from hostile slogans; guidance emphasises neutrality and even-handedness.
- Independent review: Appoint a small civil-liberties advisory panel (incl. a senior QC) to review quarterly data for proportionality.

For further information, or to receive the full report, please contact:

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