



COMBATING ANTISEMITISM ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE

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The widespread use of social media is having a significant impact on antisemitism today. It is an increasingly common means of directing hatred at Jews, or spreading hatred about Jews and Jewish-related issues, such as Israel. Because the offending post or tweet is often shared or sent on, either by the victim or perpetrator, the impact of such hatred is increased.

If the hatred includes threats or racist incitement, then it will probably be illegal and should certainly be reported to Police, to CST and to the relevant hosting company. This publication gives guidance on how to report the hatred.

1. Report all hate crime to the Police

If you believe that a website or social media post breaches the law, eg that it incites hatred against Jews as an ethnic or religious group, you can report direct to the national police online website, True Vision.

This site is hosted by the Ministry of Justice, and provides advice on what is a hate crime, how to report hate crime, and much else besides. It also provides direct links to a range of expert organisations, including CST.

You can report online via their website:

www.report-it.org.uk

Alternatively, if a non emergency, you can call the police on 101 to report hate crime.

If you feel under any immediate threat or danger, or in an emergency, always dial 999.

2. Report all antisemitic hate crime to CST

Incidents can be reported to the CST via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), the [CST website](#), or by calling 0208 457 9999 (London) or 0161 792 6666 (Manchester).

3. Collect evidence

It is important to collect evidence of abusive, offensive or threatening social media comments and posts as they are often deleted by offenders as soon as people object to them. You can do this in several ways:

- Take a screenshot of the offensive post, tweet, comments etc and of the offender's profile.
- Copy and paste into a PDF document the offending material, and the whole conversation (for context) if relevant, including the time and date of each post or comment.
- Take a copy of the URL of the offensive post, tweet, comments etc and the URL of the offender's profile if possible.

This should all be made available to CST and to the Police when you report the incident to them.

4. Report directly to the social media site itself

The social media giants have been slow to recognise their responsibility in combating the hate crime that their tools can facilitate. Many of the largest companies are headquartered in the US and cite freedom of speech as a reason for inaction.

They are, however, increasingly aware of their duty of care, and also of the reputational damage caused by their hosting of hatred. Complaining about online antisemitism is being made easier via the social networks' complaints sites.

You may, for example, complain via CST's American colleagues at the Anti Defamation League, which connects directly to the companies' US-based corporate headquarters:

<http://www.adl.org/combating-hate/cyber-safety/c/cyber-safety-action-guide.html>

A second way to complain is to connect with an established, campaigning group, focussed on antisemitic content on Facebook, which has achieved considerable success.

'Say No to Hatebook' can be contacted at:

<https://www.facebook.com/saynohatebook>

Yet another group, based in Australia, provides direct access to Facebook's complaint page:

<http://ohpi.org.au/a-brief-guide-to-reporting-antisemitism-on-facebook/>

Public Order Act 1986, Part 111, s. 17 – 23

'It is an offence to incite hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins.'

'A person who uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour or displays any written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting, is guilty of an offence...'

'A person who publishes or distributes written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting is guilty of an offence...'

'A person who distributes, or shows or plays, a recording of visual images or sounds which are threatening, abusive or insulting is guilty of an offence...'

'If a programme involving threatening, abusive or insulting visual images or sounds is included in a programme service, each of the persons mentioned in subsection (2) is guilty of an offence...'

'A person who has in his possession written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting, or a recording of visual images or sounds which are threatening, abusive or insulting.....is guilty of an offence if he intends racial hatred to be stirred up, or having regard to all the circumstances, racial hatred is likely to be stirred up....'

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/64/part/111/data.pdf>

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 Part 3A, s. 29

Amended the Public Order Act 1986 by making provision for hatred against 'persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief'.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/1/schedule?view=plain>

Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008, Part 5, Hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation

Amended the Public Order Act 1986 by making provision for hatred against a group of persons 'defined by reference to sexual orientation'.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/4/section/74/data.pdf>

Communications Act 2003, s. 127

'A person is guilty of an offence if he (a) sends by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character...'

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21/section/127?view=plain,downloaded>

Malicious Communications Act 1988 (amended 2001)

Internet trolls who post offensive messages on Twitter can be arrested and charged under the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

There is no requirement for the message to necessarily reach the recipient – it must merely have been sent, delivered or transmitted.

Those found guilty of sending malicious communications face a maximum of six months imprisonment or a £5000 fine.

Offence of sending letters etc. with intent to cause distress or anxiety.

- (1) Any person who sends to another person –
- (a) a letter, electronic communication or article of any description which conveys –
 - (i) a message which is indecent or grossly offensive
 - (ii) a threat; or
 - (iii) information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender; or
 - (b) any article or electronic communication which

is, in whole or part, of an indecent or grossly offensive nature

Is guilty of an offence if his purpose, or one of his purposes, in sending it is that it should, so far as falling within paragraph (a) or (b) above, cause distress or anxiety to the recipient or to any other person to whom he intends that it or its contents or nature should be communicated.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/27>

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Addresses behaviour, including online, which is repeated and unwanted and which causes the victim alarm or distress.

1 Prohibition of harassment.

(1) A person must not pursue a course of conduct –

- (a) which amounts to harassment of another, and
- (b) which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other.

(2) For the purposes of this section, the person whose course of conduct is in question ought to know that it amounts to harassment of another if a reasonable person in possession of the same information would think the course of conduct amounted to harassment of the other.

4 Putting people in fear of violence

(1) A person whose course of conduct causes another to fear, on at least two occasions, that violence will be used against him is guilty of an offence if he knows or ought to know that his course of conduct will cause the other so to fear on each of those occasions.

(2) For the purposes of this section, the person whose course of conduct is in question ought to know that it will cause another to fear that

violence will be used against him on any occasion if a reasonable person in possession of the same information would think the course of conduct would cause the other so to fear on that occasion.

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (Part 11 of Schedule 9) amended the Act to include stalking which can be linked with racial or religious hatred. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Section 32) also provides for two racially or religiously aggravated offences.

Guidelines on prosecuting cases involving communications sent via social media.

Revised guidelines published June 2013 following extensive consultation with police and civil society.

Prosecutions will take place where there is sufficient evidence and following consideration of the public interest. They must either: constitute credible threats; specifically target an individual or individuals, breach a court order, or be grossly offensive, indecent or false.

The first three of the above should be prosecuted robustly, but a high threshold will apply to the last group.

http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a_to_c/communications_sent_via_social_media

Public statement on use of the Internet to incite hatred.

‘Resolve to use Facebook responsibly this year – or risk jail’ says Chief Crown Prosecutor’, 1/04/2012

<http://blog.cps.gov.uk/2012/01/resolve-to-use-facebook-responsibly-this-year-or-risk-jail>



Website www.thecst.org.uk » **Blog** www.thecst.org.uk/blog



Twitter www.twitter.com/CST_UK



Facebook *Community Security Trust*



London (Head Office) 020 8457 9999
Emergency 24-hour number 07659 101 668

Manchester (Northern Regional Office) 0161 792 6666
Emergency 24-hour number 0800 980 0668