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Sir Robert Neill KC MP
Chair
Justice Select Committee

By email

7 May 2024

Dear Sir Bob,

The conflict in the Middle East and protests that followed have undoubtedly resulted in surges in antisemitic and anti-Muslim hate crime, alongside disturbing scenes of support for proscribed terror groups. This has understandably caused those communities to feel deep concern and fears for their safety. I am writing to set out the action that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has taken in response to the increase in these despicable crimes.

The right to public expression and the right to protest must be upheld, but when actions verge into criminality, we will use every offence and legal route in the pursuit of justice. The law gives the police and prosecutors many offences to consider in respect of hate crimes including public order offences, racially or religiously aggravated offences, and terror offences.

The CPS published our quarter three data last month which covered the three-month period from October to December 2023. Figures from this period – which directly correlate with the conflict in the Middle East – showed that the CPS authorised 9.5 per cent more charges for hate crime compared to the three months before. In total, 2,673 people were charged in the period October to December, an increase of 294 police referrals, of which 240 were racial or religiously flagged hate crimes. The total number of prosecutions for the year was 12,737, which resulted in 10,828 convictions. The CPS authorised prosecution in 88% of all cases referred to it by the police, against an average for all crime of 80%.

Recent examples of successful prosecutions for serious offences motivated by hatred include:

- A Brighton teenager who shared extreme right-wing videos, possessed bomb instruction manuals and plans for an attack on a synagogue [was found guilty of terrorism offences](#).

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- A teenage right-wing supremacist was [sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment](#) after he was convicted of planning to disguise himself as an armed police officer and kill Muslims worshipping at nearby mosques.

The CPS has been working closely with the police in relation to protest activity: our specialist prosecutors have been in police control rooms, giving front-line officers the expert, real-time legal advice they need to act quickly and confidently.

We are listening to the communities we serve and are continually engaged with respected partners such as the Jewish Community Security Trust and Tell MAMA.

Our commitment to tackling hate crime and criminality that occurs during protests is unwavering and we stand ready to apply the law without fear or favour. We are planning additional engagement with Parliamentarians over the coming months to discuss this work and will be in touch about future events in due course.

If you would like further information, please contact CPS.parliament@cps.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



STEPHEN PARKINSON
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

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