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## Government Responsibility

### Protecting Jewish communities against terrorism and attack<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This paper was drafted by a consultant researcher to the Commonwealth Jewish Council. All thanks is given to communities who were forthcoming with locally-specific information and expertise.



### Executive Summary

This paper assesses what governments and metropolitan-level authorities around the Commonwealth have done in the policing and security spheres to support and protect Jewish communities given the recent experience of the increased risk of terrorism specifically against Jewish buildings. It is not a revelation that many Islamist groups have a hostile attitude towards Israel and its citizens as well as Jews wherever they may live. Jews as a whole have been targeted in public messaging, and physical attacks. This paper seeks to objectively present evidence, as we have learned it from consultation and fact-finding with our member communities. This evidence is to be read, and to be acted upon.

### Prologue

*Clive Lawton OBE*

*CEO: Commonwealth Jewish Council*



“The re-awakening of anti-Semitism around the world is now well documented and attested. Many had hoped that the horrors of the Holocaust would have finally made it impossible for anyone to express the sorts of view that led to that pinnacle of 20th century depravity, either about the Jews or anyone else.

But it is now clear that that was naïve. As others have commented, anti-Semitism is a light sleeper. And it has been awakened. The excuse this time has frequently centred around the Middle East and the conflicts over the Land of Israel, but with the easy slip from understandable disputes around the

best way forward in that intractable challenge to blaming the Jews for the world’s ills - accusing the Jews of, variously, being in control of the media, the Americans, global capital, perpetrating uniquely ghastly atrocities, behaving like the Nazis and so on, we know we are back in familiar territory. The old Czarist forgery, ‘The Protocols of the Elders of Zion’ has not gone out of print and its lies have not lost currency. Old fashioned Right-wing (neo-Nazi/racial) anti-Semitism has come together with Left-wing anti-Semitism (frequently masquerading as a kind of anti-colonialism) and has met up with Arab, now transmuted into Islamist, anti-Semitism to create one of the most toxic mixes of the phenomenon ever seen.

All this would normally only be distressing and lead to a renewed collective sigh of recognition by the world’s Jews. We’ve been called names before, our cemeteries have been desecrated and our walls have been daubed. We’ve been accused of all kinds of disgusting behaviour and, if that were all, it would be bad enough. But any dispassionate observer knows that unfortunately such accusations do not remain

merely in the realm of words or even legal challenge for very long. Throughout the centuries, people have taken the law into their own hands, or invented their own 'laws', to justify physical attacks on Jews and their property. The killing, raping and smashing up in the pogroms of the 19th century only echoed the massacres of Jews in the Crusades, or the show trials of the Stalinist era or the final grotesquery of the Death Camps of Hitler's Europe.

And now we have terrorism. Without doubt an international problem, every responsible country and its government has had to think about how to guard against the apparently random acts of violence perpetrated against its citizens. Terrorism has been unleashed on every continent in the last decade or so, repeatedly, but it is not entirely random. One factor has been recurrent and global. Acts against Jews. Singularly, Jews can rightly claim to have been singled out in all sorts of attacks. Of course not all terrorist acts are perpetrated against Jews, but given that the Jews constitute a lot less than 0.5% of the world's population, it is remarkable how often and how direly terrorist acts have been targeted at Jews.

This has not gone unnoticed by those with eyes to see. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has expended considerable funds, and has committed to spending more, on scoping the full range of contemporary anti-Semitism in Europe. Its reports have resulted in the appointment of a Co-ordinator For Combatting anti-Semitism across Europe.

Furthermore, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has recently issued an extensive report covering similar ground to this paper, and it notes that now 22 governments in Europe have coherent plans for dealing with potential attacks on Jews and Jewish communities, up from only 9 five years ago.

This paper, drawn together by the researcher, James Ingram, masterfully focusses attention on the need for all governments to act in a similarly responsible way, because remarkably, there are still some governments in the Commonwealth who do not believe or accept that they must act to protect their Jewish citizens as a particular target of terrorist activity.

We at the Commonwealth Jewish Council recognise that different countries have different levels of resource to devote to policing and security. It would not be reasonable to expect of a country finding difficulty maintaining basic levels of law and order to match the gold standard levels of protection of the Jewish community manifested in, say, Australia, Canada or the UK.

What is gratifying is the generally positive approach of most governments to accepting that they do need to recognise that Jews and Jewish institutions are indeed a disproportionate target for terrorism, and have mostly responded within their means to do what they can to help. And, of course, Jewish communities themselves have also dug deep to find resources to protect and defend themselves too.

We recognise and salute such governments across the Commonwealth for acting in such a manner while at the same time insisting that such behaviour lies at the heart of what any government exists to do - protect its citizens.

In the light of so much positive activity, it is all the more shocking to discover the few countries which appear not to take such matters seriously. One can only hope that this report makes them pay attention and forces such countries to realise how out of step they are with the standards that are reasonably expected.

In 2016, there were nearly 300 violent attacks on Jews and Jewish institutions, across the Americas, from the northern to the southern most points in Africa, across Europe and in Australasia.

Surely those last few countries who have not woken up to reality are not simply waiting until something catastrophic happens before they bleat the 'how could we have known?' excuse."

## Introduction

The Commonwealth Jewish Council (CJC) was requested to prepare this paper by one of its members to investigate and assess the scope of national government actions to mitigate security threats of terrorist attacks against Jewish communal buildings.

This paper does not deal with the broader sphere of hate crime, anti-Semitism, or threats of bodily harm targeted at Jews. It is acknowledged that there is a constant risk of criminal activity to buildings such as robberies and criminal damage including vandalism and graffiti. This threat is not discussed in this paper, but nevertheless should be included in communities' thinking and action in how they protect their premises.

The primary research contained in this paper is based on invited contributions for comment from CJC members. Responses are summarised and in some cases anonymised. Two countries in the Commonwealth have suffered attacks against Jews, being directly targeted by terrorists in India and Kenya. Several other communities have requested or receive assistance from their national governments or other authorities based on a heightened, and in many cases well-evidenced, concern of future attack.

It is evident that in certain of the countries which have not been attacked, authorities have been forthcoming with capital resources. In others, security staff have been provided. Some respondents from smaller countries with well-integrated populations said that they feel that their protection is a priority of their government.

However, it is of grave concern that some communities feel that their pleas for financial assistance would be met with inaction or rebuff in spite of a local context in which Jews may live in fear. It is wholly unsatisfactory for authorities not to listen to concerned voices of citizens, and we remind authorities that the failure to protect citizens will be noted publicly if, or when, a Jewish community is directly attacked.

## Security and scope of threats defined

Security must be considered as a relative issue because in spite of (or perhaps because of) all policies, the fact is that we are never completely secure. It is acknowledged that a permanent search for security is under way in all the different spheres of societal life, which in the end can at best result in less insecurity. At best communities can act locally or nationally to defend, or create physical barriers to actual bodily harm. But this must be done with the cooperation of State security and intelligence services, including police if it is going to best mitigate risks or prevent attacks. Even then, there is no way to fully secure the safety of a community and its members. But more must be done to mitigate insecurity, predict, protect, and prevent.

There are 52 member countries of the Commonwealth. The membership of the CJC - countries with an active and outward-looking Jewish population totals 32. Zimbabwe, though no longer a member of the official Commonwealth since its unilateral withdrawal, remains a country and community with strong ties to the people's Commonwealth and is a member of the CJC. Input was requested by the CJC of a number of its member countries which have larger Jewish populations and have an objective, or self-identified concrete risk of terror.

### **Terrorist attacks on Jews in the Commonwealth**

To date, India and Kenya are the only CJC member countries where Jews have been directly targeted by a terrorist as opposed to a criminal anti-Semitic or vandalistic attack. It must, of course, be stated here that outside of the Commonwealth and Israel, there are other countries in which Jews have been successfully and directly targeted by Islamist terrorists. In 1992, and again in 1994, terrorism was inflicted directly on the Jewish population of Buenos Aires by Hezbollah. In the post 9/11 era of globalised Islamist terror, Jews have been murdered in countries including: Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, France, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan.<sup>2</sup>

Starting on 26th November 2008, there was a coordinated terrorist attack perpetrated in Mumbai. One of the key sites of these attacks was the Nariman House Jewish community centre. Six Jews were killed by terrorists at the Chabad house run by members of the Lubavitch community. The site was one of eight synagogues then operating in Mumbai. A number of individuals were taken hostage, and indication is that they were tortured before being killed. The Jews who were killed in the attack were citizens of Israel, the United States, and Mexico. They, and the Chabad House itself as a Jewish institution, were targeted intentionally by attackers. The Chabad House has since been rebuilt.

After the attack, the local Jewish community approached the Central and State Governments to request the installation of permanent security equipment at all Jewish institutions and synagogues. The community was successful in petitioning for assistance after meeting the relevant officials. Synagogues are now covered by 24 hour round-the-clock guards. Set within the context of the notably warm and supportive relationship between successive Indian governments and the Jewish population of the country, it is no surprise that this level of protection is being afforded to communal buildings.

In November 2002 in Mombasa, Kenya, al-Qaeda launched an attack on Israelis in the city. This concerted attack included the attempt to hit an Israeli passenger jet taking off from Mombasa airport, and a suicide bombing of the Paradise Lodge – an Israeli-owned hotel. Three Israelis were killed in the attack on the hotel. Claiming responsibility, al-Qaeda said that the attacks were in the "same place that the Crusader-Jewish alliance was hit four years ago," making reference to the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

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2 ADL [2008] List of attacks against Jews and/or Israeli targets outside Israel since 9/11  
<http://archive.adl.org/terrorism/listofattacks.html#.V5jk3fkrKM8>

Kenya later became a target for al-Shabaab, the Somali militant group, who in 2013 attacked the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi. Claiming responsibility, al-Shabaab stated that the attack was in retaliation to the Kenyan military's incursion into Somalia, though it cannot go without saying that the mall was owned by Jews, and that four of its restaurants were owned or operated by Israelis. It was rumoured, though denied by Israeli authorities, that they had previously supported the Kenyan government in its military and counter-terrorism efforts and that they advised on the counter-offensive against attackers at the site. The Kenyan Interior Minister maintained that the attack was not directly aimed at Israelis and Israeli-owned businesses, but rather terror was directed at Kenyan citizens.

Set within this fraught context, and with knowledge that the capital city was once nicknamed 'Nairobbery' by expatriates, it is notable that the community has "never asked for funds neither would [they] do so as [they] do not see that the Kenyan Government are any way duty bound to provide the same."<sup>3</sup> That said, the community has taken upon itself to pay from its own funds extra salaries for round-the-clock armed guards provided by authorities for the main synagogue. The community liaises directly with police, intelligence, and security forces, and on high holidays receives extra manpower from local police to guard the synagogue.

Jewish communal buildings are, it is felt, at the same risk as Christian churches from attack by Islamist terrorists. The Jewish community receives the same support and protection as afforded to Christians. The Kenyan national services are vigilant and review protection of the Jewish community's assets in a changeable environment. The community has said that it is happy with the support, protection, and guidance that it receives, though it remains unknown what level of additional support would be given if a more specific and wide-ranging request for assistance was made.

## Threats and fears of impending attacks

Evidence has been made available by some member communities that they do not feel that national or city-level authorities would make resources available. Thus, some communities have not made requests of authorities, and have instead taken matters concerning the security of their buildings and institutions into their own hands. This has involved community members paying themselves for security arrangements that they feel necessary given the threats in the context in which they live. Evidence and testimonies submitted by other CJC members with smaller populations have stated that they have requested, and have received support from authorities in the form of security guards for the chagim (festivals).

Many said that they have a cordial relationship with police and other authorities, and if, for example, offensive material was displayed during times of high tension (the 2014 Israel-Gaza war was referred to), then public posters were removed upon complaints made by the Jewish community. Several members said

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3 Private communication with the Jewish community in Nairobi [2016]



that they receive advice and information pertinent to their communal security, but the authorities were not forthcoming with financial assistance for, e.g. CCTV systems or other security apparatus.

As a counterpoint to the situations outlined above, certain communities said that they experience no anxiety as regards their safety and are content with the level of protection that they receive as private citizens who adhere and publicly go about adhering to their religion in congregation.

In many ways, governments exist primarily to keep their citizens safe. Threats and actions can, and have been, directed indiscriminately at the whole populace. Keeping all citizens safe must be a priority, and keeping minority communities and their institutions safe must be no less of a priority.

Politicians of all stripes should not seek to merely engage with their Jewish populations during convenient points in election cycles. Proactive government policy and engagement can serve to allay concerns, and send strong messages to both communities and would-be terrorists. Governments and opposition parties must consider the positive gains to be made from keeping their citizens, and potential voters, safe. They must work proactively to put measures in place to both prevent attacks and protect at all times.

### Good and better practice examples

Conversely, in larger and widely distributed Commonwealth Jewish communities such as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, governments have been forthcoming with resources to protect people and built institutions. Each of these countries has experienced several violent crimes against Jews and their institutions in the last year. In addition, they, like so many others, have also been victims of Islamist terrorist attacks in recent years, but with no evidence of these having directly targeted Jews or their communal sites.

In Australia in 2015, the Melbourne Jewish community's main building, the Beth Weizmann Community Centre, which houses 25 Jewish organisations and the Lamm Jewish Library of Australia, received A\$500,000 towards the overall costs towards making it bomb-proof. This follows increased anxiety and risks posed from actual and intercepted attacks on Australian citizens by Islamist terrorists.<sup>4</sup>

The Age newspaper reported that in March 2015, the Australian federal government

“announced funding over three years for 54 schools at risk of attack or violence stemming from racial or religious intolerance. Jewish schools were the biggest recipients, with 17 institutions sharing in \$7.5 million to help with the cost of security guards and CCTV. Fifteen Islamic schools received a total of \$4.4 million and 22 government and independent schools shared in \$4.6 million.”<sup>5</sup>

4 Donelly, B. [2015] 'Bomb proofing' Melbourne Jewish centre: Government funds \$500,000 security wall

5 Ibid

In Canada, the federal government has recognised risks posed to the Jewish community and understands that it is potentially a specific target of terrorists. Thus, the federal government has designated Jewish citizens and their communal built institutions as being "At Risk". In practice, this means that at the national, provincial, and municipal levels of government, Jews receive extra assistance because of clear and well-evidenced threats. There has been taken a three-pronged approach to mitigate the worst of the risks posed to the Jewish community of that country. The government has chosen to undertake and fund good practice policies and frameworks in the following areas:

1. The community-based policing model is in force, and is practiced across the country where "law enforcement and security agencies direct their operational practices to include an enhanced co-operation, programming, and interface with civilian community partners, as well as the co-located and decentralized placement of police infrastructure in identified communities and sectors designated 'at risk' "<sup>6</sup>
2. The Integrated National Security Enforcement Team (INSET) and National Security Enforcement Sections (NSES) are led by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (the federal police agency), under the auspices of the country's government. These initiatives, undertaken in co-operation with key provincial and territorial partners, have "established inter-agency, and multi-functional security task forces, that are primary designed to detect, deny, and disrupt criminal activities connected to terrorism."<sup>7</sup>
3. The Security Infrastructure Program was established, funded, and implemented by Public Safety Canada, and "is designed to provide designated "at risk" communities with access to supplementary project funding (based on a 50/50 financing model) in support of security infrastructure enhancements."<sup>8</sup>

In the United Kingdom, individual communities have both directly, and through the well-resourced, proactive, and well-respected Community Security Trust (CST), a good relationship with national government, and local authorities and police forces. During 2016/17, the government's pledged financial support to the buildings of the Jewish population amounted to £13.4 million. This amount has been increased concurrently with increased government spending on counter-extremism, intelligence, and policing efforts. Central funding for security measures includes security guards at Jewish independent and state schools, colleges and nurseries, synagogues as well as other community sites. The then Conservative Home Secretary, now Prime Minister, Theresa May spoke at the 2016 CST fundraising dinner, asserting that:

"No one wants the school where they send their child to need security guards. No one wants their place of worship to have to be fitted with security alarms and blast resistant glass. But until that changes, we are clear we will stand by you ... I am

6 Private communication with a responsible communal body in Canada [2016]

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

determined – and the Government is determined – to stand by our Jewish community.  
We are with you – now and for the years to come.”<sup>9</sup>

This support is offered proactively and without petition or entreaty by the governments of Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom to their Jewish populations. Thus, it sets the gold standard for the protection of Jews and their communal buildings. This is a positive situation which other governments should aspire to recreate.

Beyond the Commonwealth, we have seen wealthy and developing nations alike undertake both reactive and proactive work to consult, engage and protect Jewish citizens and their communal buildings. Unfortunately, in the case of France, or Argentina, and even now America, meaningful assistance has come too late to protect buildings, property and people from the worst effects of terrorism.

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9 CST [2016] CST Annual Dinner 2016 <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2016/03/03/cst-annual-dinner-2016>

## Conclusions

It is evident that, despite some shining examples, in general, policy makers are not thinking far enough ahead. Instead of anticipating problems and devising strategies to deal with them, they are reacting to events with uncoordinated, ad hoc responses. They often favour simple, single-factor options and hope for quick fixes when they should be developing multifaceted approaches that will be pursued diligently over the long haul. Owing to evidentiary budget constraints, not all governments can be expected to provide all requested assistance for all communities at risk. For many governments, their social welfare priorities and contracts with their citizens take precedence. However, we urge governments to take an expansive view of their welfare responsibilities, to see the protection of all religious minorities seriously.

From our research, it became apparent that some governments, including, for example that of New Zealand, have until recently, and in the face of international trends, determined that there is no risk to Jewish communal buildings necessitating swift and compelling mitigating action.

Good and better examples of what could be done have been set by Australia, Canada, India and the UK. We recommend that other governments look to emulate these better practices, seeing the benefits as being mutual to both the country and the Jewish communities living therein. Some governments have done much to support the needs and requests of their Jewish communities in recent times of higher alert and anxiety. For this we applaud them. But it is evident that for some, providing practical assistance and reassurances has not even made it onto their action list. Engagement and speeches may be enough for some, but for many communities, evidence indicates that practical support could, and should, be increased.

### Afterword

*Lord Jonathan Mendelsohn*

*President: Commonwealth Jewish Council*



I commend this report to all governments, both national and local, and Jewish communities both within and outside the Commonwealth.

Ensuring the safety and security of its residents is a principal duty of both governments and community leaderships. It is important for them to find common cause and for communities to act collaboratively with the police and legal authorities.

But many communities find it difficult to make much progress on this front as some national authorities do not seem to have the ready tools or intelligence to understand the particular vulnerabilities of Jewish communities. In contrast, in others we have found collaboration to be of vital importance to both and governments have been keen to provide resources for the protection of their Jewish communities to ensure that their duties are fulfilled.

The particular exposure Jews have had to various acts of antisemitism coupled with the history of being the targets of terrorist organisations has led Jewish communities to develop an expertise in dealing with these matters, and this should be harvested properly. Jewish communities should not be expected to wait to receive assistance reactively after an attack has happened but this is unfortunately how it has often been perceived.

We encourage all governments and metropolitan-level authorities around the Commonwealth to listen to their Jewish citizens, and respond proactively to anxieties and concerns. Where adequate responses have been hitherto lacking there must be timely practical solutions, including but not limited to, the provision of intelligence, training and deployment of police or private security guards, and allocation of capital resources to enable communities to install appropriate equipment to minimize anxiety and prevent the worst possible effects of a direct attack on Jewish communities' institutions and buildings.

We urge governments not just to read this report and file it. We demand of all relevant authorities even where their actions have been adequate to date, to reflect on the security of their Jewish citizens and act to better support their rights to safety within the buildings and institutions of their civic and religious lives.

Specifically, we recommend the following steps for all governments of Commonwealth countries where there is an identifiable Jewish presence and community, to ensure that, should there ever unfortunately be action against the Jewish community, ministers and officers can say with justification, 'we did all that was reasonable to protect our Jewish citizens'.

1. Be sure that you have listened carefully to the experiences and concerns of your Jewish community.
2. Monitor and analyse sources of anti-Jewish activity – racist groups, Islamist groups, disproportionately aggressive anti-Zionist groups – and assess the threat they might represent
3. Review events and approaches of similar countries to your own, both within and outwith the Commonwealth, not overlooking the experiences in the Americas, North and South, Africa, small island and city states and across Europe
4. Work with Jewish community leadership in your country to identify current good practice and gaps in provision
5. Review the security arrangements you have made to protect Jewish institutions and organisations
6. Devise and publish a timetable and budget for delivering on this plan
7. The great gift of the Commonwealth is our shared values which drive us all to work together for the benefit of our world and the future. May we learn to use them to ensure every section of our world, every minority community in our midst and every citizen in our countries is protected by the common endeavour of us all.

In the light of these values, it is now time to act.



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