

# HODGE JONES & ALLEN

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6 April 2026

Dear MOPAC,

**Our client: The Palestine Coalition**  
**Incident date: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026**

1. On behalf of the Palestine Coalition<sup>1</sup> ("our Client"), please treat this letter as a formal complaint against the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Mark Rowley, in relation to two media interviews that he gave on Friday 1 May 2026, concerning marches organised by our Client.
2. The first was a written interview, published online in the Times ("The Times Article"), and the second a live interview on ITV on 1 May 2026 on Good Morning Britain ("ITV Interview"). The similarity between the interviews demonstrates that the comments made by the Commissioner about the marches in question were not inadvertent, but were intentional, and made to undermine and stigmatise the marches that our Client has been involved in organising for many years, including since the launch of Israel's latest large-scale military assault on the Gaza Strip in October 2023.
3. The aim of these marches, as widely advertised and publicised and as notified in numerous communications and meetings between our Client and the Metropolitan Police since October

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<sup>1</sup> The Palestine Coalition is comprised of Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Palestinian Forum in Britain, Stop the War Coalition, Friends of Al-Aqsa, Muslim Association of Britain and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

2023, is to protest against Israel's violations of international law against the Palestinian people and the British government's complicity in those violations, including through the continuing supply of weaponry and intelligence to Israel. Israel has been found by the International Court of Justice to be committing serious violations of international law, including violating the prohibition on racial segregation and apartheid, and its Prime Minister is wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza, including persecution and starvation. It has been determined by a UN Commission of Inquiry, and numerous human rights organisations, to be committing genocide.

4. Our Client has repeatedly reiterated publicly their full opposition to all forms of racism, including antisemitism, anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia, and other forms of discrimination, most recently in a statement published on 1 May 2026 itself.<sup>2</sup> The marches organised by our Client are attended by hundreds of thousands of people, including Jewish people who are counted amongst the organisers and platform speakers, and many more marching as part of the Jewish Bloc.

#### **The comments made by the Commissioner**

5. The Commissioner raised the issue of the marches organised by our Client in the context of the three stabbing attacks perpetrated by suspect Essa Sulieman, on 29 April 2026, including against two Jewish individuals in Golders Green, London.

#### **The Times Article**

6. In the Times Article, published online on 1 May 2026 at 10:23 PM, the Commissioner referred to the marches organised by our Client, including an upcoming march on 16 May 2026 which is an annual march to commemorate 'Nakba Day', the violent displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian people in 1948. As the Commissioner will be well aware, severe restrictions have already been placed on the route of this annual march to permit a far right protest organised by Tommy Robinson to proceed.
7. In the Times Article, the Commissioner stated in relation to marches organised by our Client: "Their initial suggestion for their route, their march, has involved walking by a synagogue.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://palestinecampaign.org/the-right-to-protest-is-a-fundamental-freedom/>.  
<https://palestinecampaign.org/attacks-on-democratic-rights-will-not-excuse-israels-war-crimes/>  
<https://palestinecampaign.org/defeating-the-far-right-demands-consistent-anti-racism/>  
<https://palestinecampaign.org/palestine-coalition-statement-in-response-to-new-attacks-on-protest-rights/>

Each time we've prevented that, we've put conditions on. *The fact that features as the organisers' intent, I think that sends a message ... that feels like antisemitism.* That may be a fair or unfair inference, but that's the message it sends." <sup>3</sup>

8. This constitutes an assertion by the Commissioner as an **unequivocal matter of fact** that it is our Client's intent to walk past a synagogue and that they would have done so were it not for conditions imposed by the police.
9. The Commissioner then asserts his belief that this asserted intent feels like antisemitism, and that that is the message that it sends, as a **matter of fact**, regardless of whether that is a fair inference to be drawn from the assertion of intent.

### The ITV Interview

10. The Commissioner reiterated similar views in the ITV Interview aired on the same date at approximately 07:35 AM<sup>4</sup>. The transcript of the interview records as follows.
11. The interviewer, Ranvir Singh, referred to pro-Palestine protests and the fact that one is planned in London on 16 May 2026, as is planned every year to commemorate Nakba Day. The interviewer asserted that Jewish people on their program had said that "They feel like that they were told by the police to stay away, that this space was not for you, and that Jewish people living in London say that every street should be available to me. If there is a protest on, and you are saying that it is not safe for me to be there, that means that either the police are not doing their job very well or that horrible phrase of two tier policing in those protests that we have seen, many people with legitimate views that ought to in a democratic society be expressed, there has also been a sentiment and words used and slogans used that are clearly antisemitic. But for Jewish people that have been trying to understand why those protest have been allowed to proliferate and they want to hear from you as to whether you think you have the right kind of laws in place to make those protests safe and if not, should they be banned in this present climate".
12. The Commissioner's response was as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thetimes.com/uk/crime/article/sir-mark-rowley-metropolitan-police-british-jews-threat-tc2gcx7w0>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KlyT\\_pB44rY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KlyT_pB44rY)

“Every Protest, we are looking to use the legal powers that we are given to the full, for the extent that is appropriate in that circumstance. Just to clarify a couple bits of legislation. Firstly, because we can only work within the laws as they are. Moving protests can in extreme circumstances be banned but that is a very high threshold. You can never ban a protest completely outright; there is always a right to have a static event. That is what Parliament has decided. The Home Secretary has recognised that existing laws might not be adequate and has asked Lord Ken Macdonald, the former Director of Public prosecutions to look at that and he is due to publish in due course. I am really troubled by what we have seen is many of these marches, **they set out with an intent to march near synagogues etc and every single time that we put conditions on to prevent that. Even that intent cause me concern that they would repeatedly ask to do such things**”.<sup>5</sup>[emphasis added]

13. Here again, the Commissioner asserts as a matter of fact that our Client sets out with an intent to march near a synagogue whenever they march. He again infers that this asserted intent is troubling.

#### **Framework on Standards for Commissioner**

14. The expectations about the conduct of the Commissioner are set out in The Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020.
15. These expectations include requirements to:
- a. Act with Honesty and Integrity
  - b. Treat members of the public and their colleagues with Respect and Courtesy
  - c. Not abuse powers and authority
  - d. Act with fairness and impartiality
  - e. Act in a manner that does not discredit or undermine public confidence in the police service
16. The Commissioner’s comments were in breach of those standards.

#### **Representations/Detail of Complaints**

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KlyT\\_pB44rY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KlyT_pB44rY)

## Complaint 1 – Intent to go past synagogues

17. In the ITV Interview, the Commissioner indicated that “they [the organisers] set out with an intent to march near synagogues”. In the Times Article, the Commissioner states that: “[t]heir initial suggestion for their route, their march, has involved walking by a synagogue. The fact that features as the organisers’ intent, I think that sends a message...” Taken individually (including the statements as a whole) or together, the Commissioner is clearly asserting that, as a matter of fact, the intent of the organisers is to march past a synagogue.
  
18. This is factually inaccurate. Our client has never set out with an intent to march near a synagogue as an objective. Nor indeed has any of the more than 35 national marches for Palestine organised since Autumn 2023 by our client intended to march past a synagogue. At no point have organisers ever shown an intent to go past a synagogue, as an objective in itself. This statement is false and must be immediately retracted. March routes through central London, from and to landmarks such as Parliament, the BBC, and the American and Israeli embassies have on occasion happened to pass in the broad vicinity of synagogues and other places of worship, but they have never deliberately been routed past or near such synagogues, as suggested. Further, all routes have been agreed with the Metropolitan Police in advance in every case.
  
19. On a number of occasions, the police have imposed conditions under section 12 and/or 14 of the Public Order Act 1986 on marches organised by our Client. These conditions were imposed on the asserted basis of “prevent[ing] serious disruption to the life of the community”. We understand that one of the reasons for using this legislation was an asserted concern expressed by the Metropolitan Police about the effect of the marches on synagogues in the vicinity of the proposed routes for the marches. Our Client repeatedly made clear that it was not their intention to march past any synagogue, and strongly objected to the rerouting of the marches away from the objects of the protests including the BBC headquarters. While in no sense accepting the assertion that their marches pose a threat to synagogues, they have on multiple occasions agreed to amendments to routes proposed by the police understood to be designed to move the march further away from a synagogue or tube stations that might be used by worshippers attending a synagogue. Our client accepted these amendments to their route because it has never been their intention to march close to a synagogue as an objective. At no point during any negotiations has it been suggested that Metropolitan police officers **believed that the objective of the march itself was to ensure that they went past a synagogue**. Any such suggestion is and would have been strongly denied.

20. The impression that the Commissioner has sought to portray – that marches organised by our Client are deliberately seeking to pass by synagogues on their routes – is not supported by evidence and is wrong and misleading.

21. By making such comments, the Commissioner has contravened the standards of professional behaviour by not acting with honesty or integrity. He has abused his powers and acted in a manner which undermines public confidence in the police. He has also acted in a racially discriminatory way in inferring that protests against fundamental violations of international law by Israel and by Britain are antisemitic.

#### Complaint 2 – Comments on Protest on 16 May 2026

22. In terms of the upcoming march on 16 May 2026 which is specifically referred to by the questioner in the ITV interview and in the Times Article, the route of the march has been contentious as the Metropolitan Police has given space in central London to Tommy Robinson and his movement on that day, and restricted the route options to our Client on that basis, despite our Client having contacted the police about an intention to march many months in advance and with a suggested route that did not pass by a synagogue. The failure to mention this factor adds to the misleading and inaccurate portrayal of the march, undermining the Commissioner's honesty and integrity.

23. By failing to present an accurate picture, the Commissioner has abused his power and authority. He has failed to act with fairness and impartiality and such behaviour discredits and undermines public confidence in the police service.

#### Complaint 3 – Suggestion that march organisers were antisemitic

24. In the ITV interview, the Commissioner suggests that the organisers of the march had antisemitic motivations. ["Even that intent causes me concern that they would repeatedly ask to do such things"].

25. In the Times article, the Commissioner was even more explicit, asserting his own view that the organisers of the march are sending a message that feels antisemitic to him: "*The fact that features as the organisers' intent, I think that sends a message ... that feels like antisemitism.* That may be a fair or unfair inference, but that's the message it sends."

26. The Commissioner is clearly himself opining that the asserted intent of the marches and the message they send are antisemitic.

27. Such assertions are wrong and defamatory and libellous. They are also racist and discriminatory against Palestinians and those seeking to prevent the most egregious violations of international law including atrocity crimes by the British and Israeli governments against Palestinians. The conflation of the demands for Palestinians not to be subjected to egregious violations of international law by the British and Israeli governments with antisemitism is without foundation and utterly rejected. Such an association seeks to undermine the campaign that our client is engaged in. By deliberately engaging in a false narrative, that seeks to further restrict protests, the Commissioner risks breaching our Client's rights under Article 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

28. By making such assertions, contrary to the evidence available, the Commissioner has failed to act with honesty and integrity. He has failed treat our client with respect or courtesy. He has not acted with fairness and impartiality. Finally, by making such overtly political and discriminatory remarks, he has discredited and undermined public confidence in the police service.

### **Conclusion**

29. In view of the Commissioner's conduct, we would ask that the comments are immediately retracted and a full apology is made to our client.

We look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hodge Jones & Allen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Hodge Jones & Allen Solicitors LLP**