



Craig Whittaker MP

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Response to Israel Apartheid Week – March 2017

Thank you for contacting me about Israel Apartheid Week campaigns.

I would like to make it clear that I condemn all acts of anti-Semitism in the strongest possible terms. Any discrimination or hostility based on religion or race is deplorable and there is no place for it in our society. Acts of hatred in any form will not be tolerated, and I am assured that the Government is committed to addressing anti-Semitism wherever it occurs.

All institutions, including universities, have a responsibility to provide a safe and inclusive environment. All higher education institutions have a legal obligation for ensuring that students do not face discrimination, harassment, abuse or violence. Universities are expected to have robust policies and procedures in place to comply with the law, and to investigate and swiftly address any hate crime and anti-Semitic incidents that are reported.

In 2015 the Government asked Universities UK (UUK) to set up a Harassment Taskforce to consider what more can be done to address harassment on campus, including on the basis of religion and belief. UUK plans to establish more baseline evidence, and to assess institutions' progress in implementing the recommendations, so that the work of the taskforce makes a real difference. I also welcomed that the Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Jo Johnson, recently wrote to UUK to confirm the Government's adopted definition of anti-Semitism to help clarify how anti-Semitism can manifest itself in the 21st Century.

Our universities have a proud history of encouraging freedom of speech and freedom of religion. However, I share the view that there is no place in any education institution for hatred and no student should face discrimination, harassment or racism - including anti-Semitism.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker'.

Craig Whittaker MP