Written evidence submitted by Community Security Trust

Summary

- Since 2000, CST has recorded a long term gradual rise of antisemitic incidents in the UK, characterised by sharp spikes that are usually triggered as a result of conflict in the Middle East. Incidents are predominantly non-violent, though a consistent proportion recorded involve an element of violence, extreme or otherwise.

- As with other forms of hate crime, it is likely that the majority of antisemitic incidents go unreported. CST works with Government, Police and community partners to encourage reporting.

- Jewish communities throughout Europe have been targeted with deadly attack by European Jihadists on several occasions in recent years. Within the context of a general increased threat to wider British society, Government and Police recognise a similarly heightened violent threat to Jewish communities, and extend precautionary measures accordingly.

- The amount of antisemitic incidents occurring on Social Media are increasing in proportion year on year. Some perpetrators are harnessing Social Media platforms as mechanisms to target Jewish users with mass antisemitic hate campaigns. In known cases, virtual threats have escalated to threats of physical violence.

- CST believes that currently, the UK has an adequate body of law dealing with Hate Crime and its violent consequences.

Introduction

1. This submission is from the Community Security Trust (CST), a Jewish charity that advises and supports the UK Jewish community in matters of antisemitism, extremism and terrorism, and is recognised by Government and Police as a best practice model of a minority-community security organisation. Since 1984, CST has been recording and publishing antisemitic incident figures in the UK.

2. CST publishes 6 monthly and annual Antisemitic Incident reports, and annual Antisemitic Discourse reports. The Discourse Reports analyse written and verbal communication, discussion and rhetoric about antisemitism in Britain. Additionally, CST periodically updates and publishes a report listing Terrorist Incidents against Jewish Communities and Israeli Citizens Abroad from 1968 onwards, and a report listing convictions in the UK for crimes motivated by antisemitism.

3. The CST Antisemitic Incidents reports include hate crimes and hate incidents that have been reported to CST by victims, witnesses, or someone acting on their behalf. CST has held ‘Third Party Reporting’ status since 2001, and since 2012 has entered into anonymised data sharing agreements with various police forces. In 2015, CST signed a national information sharing agreement with the National Police Chief’s Council.

4. All CST publications can be downloaded in PDF format from the CST website here.

5. CST works in close collaboration with Police, Government and other Hate Crime bodies. This includes, but is not limited to: membership of the Ministry of Justice Independent
Advisory Group on Hate Crime; membership of the MPS Hate Crime Diamond Group; membership of the CPS Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel; membership of the MOPAC London Hate Crime Panel; membership of the Cross Government Working Group on Antisemitism; close working relationship with GALOP, Tell Mama, The Monitoring Group, Choice and Mind via the CATCH hate crime partnership in parts of London; and various engagements with expert groups across the country.

Antisemitic Incidents

6. CST Antisemitic Incident figures suggest a long term trend of rising incident totals since 2000, punctuated by occasional short term falls. Data shows that when trigger events occur, as they did during the decade following 2000, successive spikes in antisemitic incident levels generate a gradual, long-term increase in the baseline level of antisemitic incidents recorded in the UK. Trigger events usually, but not necessarily, involve conflicts between Israel and her neighbours which can lead to antisemitic reactions against Jewish communities.

7. The most obvious example of this was during the 2014 conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and Israel. During the two months of conflict (July and August), CST recorded 544 antisemitic incidents – more incidents recorded than the entirety of 2013. This led to a record level of incidents being recorded throughout that year (1180).

8. Since this spike, CST has recorded a sustained high level of antisemitic incidents without a notable or obvious trigger event. In early 2015, when deadly antisemitic jihadi inspired attacks targeted Jewish communities in Paris and Copenhagen, CST recorded a general increase in reporting of antisemitic attacks, perhaps as a result of communal sensitivity around antisemitism. In the first six months of 2016, CST recorded a similar general increase, at a time when there was sustained public debate about antisemitism, particularly in relation to the labour party. Regardless of contributing factors, since summer 2014 CST has consistently recorded notably larger monthly average antisemitic incident totals than before.

9. In 2015 CST recorded 924 incidents in total, and in the first 6 months of 2016 CST recorded 557. For comparison, in the full calendar years of 2013 CST recorded 529 antisemitic incidents, 649 in 2012 and 609 in 2011.

10. As well as the impact of repeated incident spikes over several years and contributing factors outlined above, the gradual increase in incident totals also reflects better awareness in the Jewish community of CST’s work, and a consequent improvement in the rates of reporting antisemitic incidents to CST by Jewish communities around the UK.

11. It is also influenced by the introduction of new sources of antisemitic incident reporting, such as online incident reporting facilities and the information exchange programme with Police. In addition, in recent years social media has provided a new arena and medium for antisemitic incidents to occur and be reported.

Violent Antisemitic Incidents – general

12. Though in general the UK Jewish Community is well integrated, confident and outward looking, due to a long history of violent antisemitic threats directed against it, the community values widespread protective security measures at its locations. This threat
has been ongoing for decades, but in recent years has become more acute. In three years, European Jewish communities have faced four successful deadly hate attacks against Jewish locations. These include the 2012 attack against a Jewish school in Toulouse where one teacher and three children were shot dead; the 2014 attack against the Jewish Museum in Brussels, leaving four dead; four killed at a Parisian Kosher Supermarket in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo massacre in January 2015; and a Jewish volunteer security guard being shot dead whilst guarding Copenhagen’s Great Synagogue in February. All of these attacks were undertaken by European Jihadists, and in the context of more frequent Jihadist attacks against wider European targets.

13. During this same time period, a number of reportedly Islamist-motivated antisemitic stabbing attacks have been perpetrated around the world. This includes incidents such as non-fatal stabbing attacks against visibly Orthodox Jews in Marseilles, Milan and Strasbourg, as well as the fatal stabbing of a local Jewish businessman in Uruguay.

14. CST is aware of several foiled terrorist plots that were allegedly targeting the UK Jewish community in a violent manner in recent years. If any of these had been successful, or indeed any future violent hate crimes that target the Jewish community are, cross communal cohesion would be sorely tested.

15. CST works hard to train volunteer security officers within the Jewish community, and in supporting and partnering with Jewish communal locations in order to pay for and bolster protective security measures.

16. Successive Governments have recognise the threat of terrorism and violent hate crime against the Jewish community. Since 2010 the Jewish community has been in receipt of Government funds that pay for security guarding at many Jewish locations. This was initially limited to Government Grant Maintained Jewish schools, but in the wake of Paris and Copenhagen in 2014 was substantially increased to provide guarding at many other sensitive communal locations. This grant is administered to the Jewish community by CST.

**Violent Antisemitic Incidents - specific**

17. For recording purposes, CST classifies an antisemitic incident as any malicious act aimed at Jewish people, organisations or property, where there is evidence that the act has antisemitic motivation or content, or that the victim is targeted because they are (or believed to be) Jewish.

18. CST classifies antisemitic incidents into 6 main categories: Extreme Violence; Assault; Damage and Desecration to property; Threats; Abusive Behaviour; and Literature. Additionally, alleged incidents that are reported to CST, but after investigation are found not to have been motivated by antisemitism are categorised (but not included in the annual incident total) as follows: Non-Incident; Criminal; Information Collection; and Suspicious Behaviour. Explanatory notes to this categorisation can be found on the CST website at [www.cst.org.uk](http://www.cst.org.uk).

19. Despite the threats outlined above and steps taken to mitigate against them, the majority of street level hate incidents directed against the Jewish community in recent years have not been characterised by violence, with most being categorised as abusive behaviour.
20. The following annual statistics are for incidents categorised as extreme violence and assault, which therefore include a violent element:

2011  Extreme Violence: 2 incidents
      Assault: 93 incidents
      Combined (total range of physical): 95 incidents (16% of 609 total incidents)

2012  Extreme Violence: 2
      Violent Assault: 67
      Combined (total range of physical attacks): 69 (11% of 650 total incidents)

2013  Extreme Violence: 0
      Violent Assault: 69
      Combined (total range of physical attacks): 69 (13% of 535 total incidents)

2014  Extreme Violence: 1
      Violent Assault: 80
      Combined (total range of physical attacks): 81 (7% of 1180 total incidents)

2015  Extreme Violence: 4
      Violent Assault: 82
      Combined: 86 (9% of 924 total incidents)

2016  Extreme Violence: 0
      (Jan-Jun) Violent Assault: 41
      Combined (total range of physical attacks): 41 (7% of 557 total incidents)

21. Statistics for the five previous years can be noted as including an increased number of violent antisemitic incidents, which also made up a greater percentage of the total incident figures: 2010 – 115 combined (18% of 646); 2009 – 124 combined (13% of 931); 2008 – 88 combined (16% of 546); 2007 – 117 combined (21% of 561); 2006 – 114 combined (19% of 598).

Reporting Antisemitic Incidents

22. As with all Hate Crimes, it is likely that many antisemitic incidents go unreported either to CST or to the Police, and therefore the true figures will be higher than those recorded. It is also likely that non-reporting varies from category to category. The UK component of the 2013 multi European Country Fundamental Rights Agency Survey on Perceptions and Experiences of Antisemitism among Jews (which can be read here), found that 72% of British Jews who had experienced antisemitic harassment over the previous five years had not reported it to the Police or any other organisation. Additionally, 57% of British Jews who had experienced antisemitic violence or the threat of violence had not reported it, and 46% of those who had suffered antisemitic vandalism to their home or car had not reported it.
23. The same survey researched reasons why victims of antisemitic incidents would not report it to CST, the Police or any other authority (results can be explored here). UK recipients who did not report ‘the most serious incident of antisemitic harassment in the past 5 years’ that occurred to them, chose reasons that included: nothing would happen or change by reporting the incident (40%); the problem was dealt with alone, or with the help of family or friends (23%); it was not worth reporting as it happens all the time (19%); it would have been too bureaucratic / time consuming (18%); concern that it would not be taken seriously or believed (10%).

24. Other reasons not to report, heard anecdotally by CST include: a ‘sticks and stones’ attitude, whereby slander isn't treated seriously; and, not needing a police report to validate an insurance claim – which would be valid in crimes directed at property.

25. CST works hard to increase reporting rates of antisemitic incidents in the UK by the Jewish community, in order to try and reflect the true number of incidents occurring. This is a slow and cumulative process which is affected by several factors including, but not limited to: increased visible campaigning in the Jewish press and in Jewish areas, including specific campaigns whereby CST services are advertised on billboards and leaflets; increased recognition of the security threat by the Jewish community, whereby CST’s awareness is built as the principal actor in this sphere; increased working relations and partnerships with national and local Police, local and national Government, and within wider Hate Crime circles; an expansion of awareness within the ultra-orthodox Jewish communities whose obvious Jewish physical appearance can make them more likely to be targets of hate; increased awareness within the Jewish community due to CST administering Government security grants; the probability that security guards outside Jewish locations are more likely to observe antisemitic incidents and report them to CST; and, as outlined earlier in the submission, an increased sensitivity and awareness around security and antisemitism by the UK Jewish community due to terror threats and political discourse.

**Social Media and antisemitism**

26. CST does not 'trawl' social media platforms to look for antisemitic comments. However, CST will record antisemitic comments posted on internet forums or blog talkbacks, or transmitted via social media, if they have been reported to CST by a member of the public who fulfils the role of a victim or witness; if the comment shows evidence of antisemitic content, motivation or targeting; and if the offender is based in the UK or has directly targeted a UK-based victim.

27. In line with the growth of social media, the ease with which social media can be used, and with patterns seen with in other forms of hate crime, antisemitism online is a growing issue.

28. From Jan-June 2016 CST recorded 133 antisemitic incidents that took place on social media, which comprised 24% of the total number of incidents recorded. In the whole of 2015 CST recorded 159 social media incidents, comprising 17% of the overall total. In 2014 233 incidents comprised 20% of the total, and in 2013 86 incidents comprised 16%. 
29. Most antisemitic incidents occurring on social media are categorised as abusive behaviour, though some are categorised as threats.

30. Increasingly, social media is being used as a tool harnessed by perpetrators to specifically target victims with hate crime. A clear example of this is the ongoing case involving Luciana Berger MP. Ms Berger was initially targeted on Twitter by a UK based Far Right activist with an antisemitic meme. As a result, the perpetrator was arrested, tried, convicted and handed a custodial sentence and a fine. In response, Far Right US based activists initiated and unleashed an antisemitic Twitter storm against Ms Berger, resulting in thousands of abusive tweets being sent to her in a matter of weeks. Online activity also heightens the potential for actual violence, meaning that violent threats made against Ms Berger result in her being rightly concerned for the safety and security of her and her staff.

31. Online hate campaigns have not been restricted to targeting politicians. In recent years, there are numerous examples of high profile Jewish students being targeted with similar methods by US and UK based Far Right groups who espouse and glorify violence.

32. Jihadists also utilise social media platforms to espouse antisemitism and incite violence. During the so-called ‘Stabbing Intifada’ in Israel in late 2015, CST recorded an exponential increase of the use of the hashtag ‘Slaughter the Jew’ in Arabic. From October 1st to October 31st, this was shared over 82,000 times, with some cases of it migrating into English and being shared amongst English users accordingly.

33. CST has built good working relations with various social media platforms in recent years, which has resulted in CST having a preferential reporting status with some. Though inconsistent, this has meant that more antisemitic posts are being bought down in quicker times. However, the system is not perfect, and has shown to be inadequate when mass hate campaigns have been initiated.

34. CST has been an active participant in the Cyberhate Working Group initiated by the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism and facilitated by the Anti-Defamation League. The product of those negotiations are contained in ‘Best Practices for Challenging Cyberhate’ (see here) which formed the basis for the Code of Conduct on illegal online hate speech agreed between the European Commission and the social networks.

35. CST welcomes the formation of a specialist police online hate crime ‘hub’, supported by MOPAC and housed with the MPS, which aims primarily to ‘improve the police response, capability and intelligence to facilitate counter measures that can reduce and prevent further criminal activity and victimisation’. Via various forums, CST expects to be consulted on the antisemitism element of the hub’s work.

Current legislation and Community Based Organisation (CBO) consultation

36. CST welcomed the Law Commission’s review of Hate Crime legislation in 2014 (see here), which recommended that enhanced sentencing be implemented in relation to Hate Crime prosecutions. In general, CST believes that the UK has an adequate body of law dealing with Hate Crime and its violent consequences.
37. With the publication of the Guidelines on prosecuting cases involving communications sent via social media (see here), the UK now has a body of laws suited to prosecuting online hate crime and countering online harassment and multiple threats.

38. CST believes however that additional training is required for Police and prosecutors to recognise the nature and extent of cyberhate and to understand the weapons available to them to counter these new crimes. CST has therefore been pleased to have participated in a number of workshops during 2015 and 2016 organised by the NPCC and the CPS to demonstrate the corrosive and dangerous nature of such crimes and to demonstrate the remedies available to them.

39. Additionally, CST has helped the CPS develop a specialised training package for their prosecutors that covers antisemitic (and anti-Muslim) hate crime. CST commends this programme, and the efforts taken by CPS to implement several recommendations made by the 2015 APPG Antisemitism Inquiry on religiously aggravated and antisemitic crime.

40. CST also welcomes the recent Home Office Hate Crime Action Plan.

41. Police and Government consult CST, and other specialist CBO’s, through collective and individual frameworks. CST recognises the importance in doing so and welcomes this continued endeavour.