

Antisemitism Expert and Cambridge Fellow, Charles Small: Attack Reflects Normalization of Antisemitism in Britain

CAMBRIDGE , UNITED KINGDOM, October 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dr. Charles Asher Small , Founding Director of ISGAP, and Director of the ISGAP-Woolf Institute Fellowship Training Programme in Critical Contemporary Antisemitism Studies, Discrimination, and Human Rights at the Woolf Institute, Cambridge, UK. Research Fellow at St. Edmund's College, Cambridge University, has condemned the Yom Kippur attack at Heaton Park Synagogue in Manchester, calling it evidence of a broader normalization of antisemitism across the United Kingdom. In a statement released after the incident, he said the events point to systemic failures in law enforcement and civic leadership and urged a decisive response from government and police.



Photo Credit: Yossi Zeliger

“The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) is horrified and outraged by the terrorist attack yesterday morning at Heaton Park Synagogue in Manchester, United Kingdom. ISGAP and our colleagues of top scholars and policy experts from around the world condemn it in the strongest terms. That this attack occurred on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, underscores the calculated hatred behind it. The timing was deliberate, chosen to maximize casualties when the attacker knew Jews would be gathered in prayer on this sacred day.”

Dr. Small, an academic whose work for decades has mapped how extremist ideologies incubate in institutions and public discourse, said the timing and targeting of worshippers were part of a wider pattern, not an aberration. He noted that, in recent years, anti-Semitic language and threats have moved from the fringes to the mainstream, setting the conditions in which violent acts can occur. His concern focuses on a “permissive climate” that, he argues, has taken root in civic spaces, educational institutions, and parts of the media.

"We extend our deepest sympathies to the victims, their families, and the entire Manchester Jewish community. We commend the extraordinary courage of Rabbi Daniel Walker, synagogue staff, congregants, security personnel, and the police, whose swift action and rapid response prevented a far greater tragedy."

According to Dr. Small, the outpouring of support for the congregation, and the rapid response by security teams and police, highlights the difference that preparation and coordination can make. Yet he cautioned that emergency heroism cannot substitute for consistent and even-handed enforcement of the law. The incident, he said, demonstrates how repeated failures to prosecute incitement and harassment allow hostility to fester.

"This terror attack is a stark manifestation of escalating antisemitism, which is now normalized across the United Kingdom and reflects a permissive climate of anti-Jewish hatred taking hold throughout the Western world. In the UK, selective enforcement of laws concerning incitement to violence, particularly when directed at Jewish communities, has created a culture of impunity. Those calling for violence against Jews under the guise of political protest remain unchecked."

The scholar warned that the line between speech and violence narrows when calls for harm are routinely excused as political expression. He said Jewish communities in British cities have repeatedly reported threatening rhetoric and intimidation that too often go unaddressed. In this environment, he argued, it becomes easier for violent actors to believe their actions will be excused or minimized.

"In Manchester and in London, anti-Semitic abuse and harassment are commonplace. The failure to hold perpetrators accountable, whether for shouting abuse or organizing demonstrations featuring anti-Semitic rhetoric, sends a clear message: such hatred will be tolerated. Yesterday's attack reflects the normalization of antisemitism in British society and is a direct consequence of institutional inaction, legal inconsistency, and failure to confront anti-Jewish hatred with the seriousness it demands."

Dr. Small's intervention also turned to the upstream sources of radicalization. As an academic who has long examined how ideas shape action, he framed the attack as the violent culmination of ideological currents that have been allowed to spread without challenge in key civic institutions. He pointed to the need for a sustained strategy targeting the intellectual and organizational drivers of anti-Jewish hatred, not only its violent manifestations.

"ISGAP exists to confront this challenge to our democratic values and way of life, at its roots. Anti-Semitic violence begins with anti-Semitic ideas: the demonization of Jews, their communities, and their institutions. Our work focuses on the battlefields of ideas where anti-Semitic ideology is formulated, legitimized, and spread in particular, and most shamefully, in our best universities and in the media of record. Through rigorous scholarship, policy engagement, and educational programming, we expose and dismantle the intellectual and institutional drivers

of antisemitism. We confront this hatred wherever it manifests, in universities, civil society, politics, and digital spaces, and ensure that governments, institutions, and communities can respond with clarity and courage.”

The Cambridge fellow urged authorities to pair immediate protective steps with long-term measures that address radicalization where it begins. He called for consistent application of existing laws, renewed investment in counter-extremism, and a focus on the ideological processes that convert hatred into action.

“We call on His Majesty's Government, local authorities, and law enforcement to act decisively and without delay. They must dismantle the culture of impunity that has allowed anti-Semitic hatred to flourish, a culture that is fundamentally incompatible with democratic values and the rule of law. Hate crime legislation must be applied consistently and without exception, ensuring that all perpetrators of anti-Semitic violence and incitement face the full consequences of their actions. Authorities must urgently reinvest in counter-extremism and counter-terrorism efforts, providing the resources and political will necessary to identify and neutralize threats before they materialize. Above all, they must confront anti-Semitic radicalization at its source, intervening in the ideological processes that transform hatred into violence, especially when it occurs in our universities, in the media and then on our streets. The safety of Jewish communities and the integrity of our basic democratic values in the United Kingdom depend on it.”

Dr. Small said the lesson of Manchester is not solely about synagogue security but about societal resolve. The choice, he argued, is between normalization and accountability. Britain, he insisted, cannot afford ambiguity.

About ISGAP

The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) is a research and policy institute dedicated to analyzing contemporary antisemitism and crafting actionable responses through scholarship, education, and engagement with governments and civil society. Its recent “Follow the Money” initiative examines how foreign funding networks shape campus climates and public discourse, highlighting the role of ideology and institutional capture in normalizing anti-Jewish hatred.

Raoul Wootliff

N10S

+972 546921720

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/855416019>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable

in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.