

'Dirty Zionist motherf*ckers': Recordings show threats against UK rabbi after IDF duty

Among some 300 calls and texts were threats of murder and rape against Rabbi Zecharia Deutsch and his family, which forced them into hiding

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Rabbi Zecharia Deutsch, Jewish chaplain at the University of Leeds, in the fall of 2023, during his reserve duty during Israel's war against Hamas. (screen capture: X, used in accordance with clause 27a of the Copyright Law)

British media has published details on the contents of threats against a Jewish chaplain at the University of Leeds, whose reserve duty in Israel during the war led to intense harassment and [forced him and his family into hiding](#).

The Daily Mail [shared select recordings](#) of some of the approximately 300 phone calls and messages that Rabbi Zecharia Deutsch and his wife Nava received, as a result of an organized social media campaign against them.

Local police transferred the family to a safe location after the threats emerged against them, when Deutsch returned from Israel at the beginning of January.

"Tell that Jewish son-of-a-bitch we're coming for him," one of the callers told Nava, when she picked up the phone. "We're coming to his house and we're going to kill him in his house and you as well you f*cking racist bitch, slag."

"We are going to get you, we're going to get your husband and we are going to get you as well, love," another caller threatened Nava. "It's as simple as that. How dare you come to Leeds and expect the Muslims not to do 'owt, when all you lot have been doing is killing innocent children?"

"Us Muslims are coming for you, you dirty Zionist motherf*ckers," a third caller said.

All the callers spoke with a Yorkshire accent, which is indigenous to Leeds.

The couple were also threatened via text: "Oi, you ugly c*nt," a 1:30 a.m. message sent to Zecharia read. "Gonna be waiting for you, you daft c*nt. Gonna bend your wife over."

The Daily Mail said the threats against Deutsch were influenced by a social media campaign led by pro-Palestinian influencers, podcasters, and reporters — including a columnist who writes for The Guardian.

Deutsch, who was called up to reserve duty in the Israel Defense Forces as part of Israel's war against Hamas, sent a video of himself in uniform during the war to Jewish students, telling them that Israel was fighting an ethical war in order to destroy what he called an evil enemy. The video ended up reaching the hands of Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan, a Leeds-based columnist for The Guardian, who began an online campaign on November 11, calling for Deutsch's ouster as chaplain.

Two days later, two Leeds-based podcasters started an online petition also calling for Deutsch's removal. The petition received nearly 12,000 signatures. Comments beneath the petition called Deutsch "a baby killer," "garbage," and "kelb," the Arabic word for dog.

The campaign, unsuccessful in ousting Deutsch, briefly waned, but then was reinvigorated last Thursday, several weeks after his return to Leeds, when the Muslim Association of Britain retweeted the video, questioning Deutsch's return to campus.

The campaign gained further traction after being picked up by Dilly Hussain, the deputy editor of the British-Muslim publication 5Pillars. Hussain posted a phone number for the university, encouraging followers to complain about the return of Deutsch.

Afterward, the Leeds branch of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign began organizing protests against Deutsch. While demonstrations at the Leeds campus are typically held at the steps of the university, the organizers chose to protest at the Marjorie and Arnold Ziff Building, named after two Jewish philanthropists.

From there, the campaign reached Mothin Ali, a British Green Party candidate for local elections in Gipton and Harehills, who spoke about Deutsch in a TikTok video, saying: "This creep, that's the only way I can describe him, is someone who went from Leeds to Israel to kill children and women and everyone else over there."

"You should be protecting students from this kind of animal," Ali continued.

Several hours after Ali's video was posted, hundreds of threats began reaching the Deutsch family. In a statement, the Green Party refused to condemn Ali, saying that he was exercising his free speech rights.

On Western university campuses, the war between Israel and Hamas has sparked unprecedented anti-Israeli protests, which sometimes feature thinly veiled antisemitic rhetoric. At the University of Leeds, the Jewish campus Hillel House was recently defaced with "Free Palestine" graffiti on its walls.

Like other Diaspora communities, British Jewry has faced rising levels of antisemitism amid the current Gaza conflict, including attacks on [a kosher supermarket](#) and [a group of Israelis](#) putting up posters of hostages. A recent poll [found](#) "frightening" rates of antisemitic tropes among British youth, the Campaign Against Antisemitism watchdog said.



Ohr Torah Stone announces in 2021 that Rabbi Zecharia and Nava Deutsch will be taking up the position of campus chaplains at Leeds University in England. (Courtesy)

Rabbi Deutsch and his wife Nava, who have two children, both trained for two years at Ohr Torah Stone's Straus-Amiel Institute for rabbinical emissaries in Jerusalem. They previously worked with the Jewish community in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The war was triggered by Hamas's October 7 onslaught, which saw thousands of Hamas-led terrorists storm southern Israel to kill some 1,200 people, mainly civilians, and take 253 hostages of all ages.

Following the shock assault, Israel launched a massive offensive in the Gaza Strip, which has claimed the lives of over 28,000 Palestinians to date, according to the Hamas-run health ministry. The figure, which cannot be independently verified, does not distinguish between civilians and combatants, of whom the IDF claims to have killed over 10,000. The army also said it killed some 1,000 Hamas operatives in Israel on October 7.