

Maccabi Tel Aviv fan ban

This is a House of Commons committee report, with recommendations to government. The Government has two months to respond.

Fifth Report of Session 2024–26

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↪ [Copy URL](#)

Contents

— [1 Background](#)

[\(https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-0\)](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-0)

— [2 The actions of West Midlands Police](#)

[\(https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-1\)](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-1)

— [3 The role of the Safety Advisory Group](#)

[\(https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-2\)](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-2)

— [4 Response of the Home Office and Government](#)

[\(https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-3\)](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-3)

— [5 Conclusion](#)

[\(https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-4\)](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-4)

— [Conclusions and recommendations](#)

[\(https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-5\)](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-5)

— [Formal minutes](#)

[\(https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-6\)](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-6)

— [Witnesses](#)

[\(https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-7\)](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-7)

— List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

[. \(https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-8\)](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhaff/1553/report.html#heading-8)

1 Background

1. On 16 October 2025, it was announced that the Birmingham City Council Safety Advisory Group (SAG)¹ had decided that the fans of Maccabi Tel Aviv would not be allowed to attend the 6 November Europa League fixture at Aston Villa. Following this announcement we wrote to the then Chief Constable of West Midlands Police to request further information about the risk assessment for the fixture and the basis on which the SAG was advised not to allow away fans to attend.² We intended to give West Midlands Police the opportunity to respond to some of the criticism of the decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans, as well as to provide transparency about the reasons for what was a highly unusual decision with serious implications.³

2. In their response of 21 November, West Midlands Police failed to provide the key details we requested, including a copy of the full risk assessment presented to the SAG. In providing an assessment of events in Amsterdam in November 2024 (when Maccabi Tel Aviv played Ajax), which informed their decision, they also relied upon claims relating to responsibility for violence around this fixture which were subsequently disputed by the Dutch Police.⁴

3. Ordinarily, the Home Affairs Committee does not scrutinise the operational decisions of individual police forces. However, given the significant public interest in this decision and its wider political ramifications, as well as our concerns about the information initially provided to us by West Midlands Police, we decided to conduct a short inquiry into the original decision and the advice that led to it. We took oral evidence from West Midlands Police on two occasions, as well as from other parties including the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, Birmingham City Council and the UK Football Policing Unit. We received a significant volume of other information including recordings of the relevant SAG meetings and intelligence reports from West Midlands Police. Where possible we have published this information; where it has been provided to us in confidence to protect personal data and ongoing formal investigations, we have drawn upon it in reaching our conclusions.

4. Following the decision to exclude Maccabi Tel Aviv fans, several other reviews and inquiries have been commissioned. Initially, West Midlands Police commissioned the UK Football Policing Unit (UKFPU) to conduct a peer review of their intelligence and decision-making. We requested and have published this peer review as part of our inquiry.⁵ The Home Office commissioned a review of West Midlands Police's use of intelligence in this case, which was conducted by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).⁶ HMICFRS has conducted a forensic and detailed investigation of the intelligence used in this case and we have made use of their findings in our deliberations. A subsequent second part of this inquiry will be reviewing how police forces input into SAG meetings in general. In addition, the Cabinet Office is reviewing the guidance provided to SAGs.⁷ The issue is also now subject to a conduct investigation by the Independent Office for Police Conduct.⁸

5. Given the number of reviews ongoing into this matter and our own remit, we have limited our inquiries to some key areas. This report sets out our findings and conclusions in relation to:

- The actions of West Midlands Police, including the use of intelligence and presentation of evidence in oral evidence to us,
- The role of the Birmingham City Council SAG, and
- The actions of the Home Office and the Government.

2 The actions of West Midlands Police

Use of intelligence

6. On 1 December 2025 former Chief Constable Guildford told us that “the decision to restrict the away fans was based on a very careful assessment [...] [looking] at information and intelligence.”⁹ The initial classification of the fixture as high-risk was based on information and intelligence. In early September, West Midlands Police received high-confidence intelligence that there was a high level of local community tension around the fixture, and calls to protest. In particular, West Midlands Police received intelligence that there had been a call among some local communities to “arm themselves” ahead of the fixture.¹⁰ West Midlands Police recognised the international context and presented information to the SAG about where protest surrounding the presence of Israeli teams in Europe had recently led to disorder.¹¹ Sir Andy Cooke, His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue services, stated in his review that he is “satisfied that [West Midlands Police] recognised that this was a high-risk fixture, the policing of which would involve added complexity because of national and international events.”¹² We agree that this risk was real and was identified by West Midlands Police on the basis of information and intelligence.

7. The prospect of Maccabi Tel Aviv playing in Birmingham clearly presented some specific challenges. Since the beginning of the current conflict in Gaza on 7 October 2023, the UK has seen a substantial and persistent level of protest relating to the conflict, including in Birmingham.¹³ Birmingham has a significant Muslim minority (29.9%), and in the 2024 general election pro-Palestinian independent candidates performed well, including in Birmingham Perry Barr where Villa Park is located.¹⁴ In addition, the participation of Israeli football teams in FIFA and UEFA tournaments has been the subject of protest. Alongside this local, national and international context, West Midlands Police had also experienced significant disorder from Legia Warsaw fans in 2023; former Chief Constable Guildford told us the force “wanted to avoid” similar disorder surrounding this fixture.¹⁵

8. As West Midlands Police noted in evidence to us, there are various options available to police forces to manage high risk fixtures, including but not limited to the use of ‘bubble’ arrangements where away fans are kept separate, both from home fans and the local community.¹⁶ West Midlands Police originally based their planning for the fixture on the assumption that away fans would attend. The key factor that led to the decision to ban away fans—the “tipping point”—was West Midlands Police’s assessment of the events that accompanied the Ajax match in Amsterdam in November 2024.¹⁷

9. On 1 December we gave West Midlands Police an opportunity to clarify their account about events in Amsterdam. In particular, we questioned the claims, since denied by Dutch Police, that 500–600 Maccabi Tel Aviv fans were involved in disorder that targeted local communities, that 200 Maccabi fans had links to the Israel Defence Forces, and that Maccabi fans threw locals in the river.¹⁸ Despite these claims having been directly contradicted by the Dutch Police, former Chief Constable Guildford told us he had no concern about the integrity of the Chief Inspector who spoke to the Dutch Police, or about “what he told me and what he documented from the Dutch police.” He further indicated that Dutch Police had been under pressure from politicians to change their account of events.¹⁹ It is difficult to assess what exactly was said in this conversation because, as it was subsequently revealed to the disquiet of the Committee, the contemporaneous handwritten notes taken by the West Midlands Police officer in attendance had been destroyed. However, the Dutch Police’s account to us, the Amsterdam Mayor’s report of November 2024, and the subsequent report of the Dutch Justice Inspectorate, all give the same broad view of events: that there was some initial disorder from Maccabi Tel Aviv fans, consistent with the behaviour of other ‘Ultra’ football groups, followed by a violent and antisemitic response from elements of the local community.²⁰

10. The claim by West Midlands Police that Maccabi Tel Aviv fans presented a unique challenge because “they attack community members, not rival fans” is particularly problematic. Former Chief Constable Guildford made this claim in oral evidence on 1 December, and it was also made in the document presented to the SAG on 24 October 2025.²¹ While there is some evidence to suggest that a minority of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans were involved in aggressive behaviour towards citizens of Amsterdam, this was limited: there are two reported incidents of Palestinian flags being torn down, and a small number of taxis being hit with belts.²² There is no

evidence to suggest that Maccabi Tel Aviv fans as a whole “attack community members”. In particular, the suggestion that Maccabi Tel Aviv fans would pose a particular risk to local Muslim communities is not borne out by any evidence, and was also specifically denied by Dutch Police, who pointed out that “disturbances took place in the city center, not in neighbourhoods where many Muslims live”.²³

11. West Midlands Police told us on 1 December that they were told by Dutch Police that “they would never want to have Maccabi Tel Aviv playing in Amsterdam again in the future.”²⁴ It is clear that West Midlands Police placed significant weight on this remark, made during a conversation with Dutch Police on 1 October 2025. However, given that the factual account West Midlands Police later presented has been proved to contain substantial inaccuracies, it appears that they have placed disproportionate weight on this remark. While Dutch Police did agree that this remark was made, they emphasised to us that this was due to the disorder and confrontation between both Maccabi Tel Aviv fans and locals, and not just because of the behaviour of Maccabi fans.²⁵ In addition, we have since seen confidential evidence which indicates that some of the key claims presented by West Midlands Police in relation to the Amsterdam disorder originated from a query to Microsoft Copilot AI. Senior officers later quoted this inaccurate information, including in meetings of the SAG and in oral evidence to us, suggesting that proper due diligence was not applied, as we discuss later.²⁶

12. In addition to presenting an inaccurate account of events in Amsterdam in November 2024, West Midlands Police downplayed the level of risk presented by local communities in Birmingham. In their initial response, West Midlands Police told us that the risk of antisemitic hate crimes was “not assessed to be the predominant threat” when evaluating the risk of the fixture. Instead, they told us that the principal risks related to spontaneous public disorder, organised protest activity and “violence involving risk supporters affiliated with Maccabi Tel Aviv”.²⁷ However, the UK Football Policing Unit’s peer review, and subsequent disclosures by West Midlands Police, show that there was a high level of threat to Maccabi Tel Aviv fans, with local communities in Birmingham threatening to “arm themselves” against the Maccabi fans.²⁸ Subsequently, Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) O’Hara told us that it was the combination of the “very hot community reception” in Birmingham as well as the events in Amsterdam which led to the recommendation to ban away fans; however, evidence presented by West Midlands Police to the SAG focused heavily on the risks posed by Maccabi Tel Aviv fans, rather than any risks posed by elements of local communities.²⁹

13. CONCLUSION

The interim report of Sir Andy Cooke, His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary, concluded that West Midlands Police had been subject to “confirmation bias” in their assessment of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans. We agree with this judgment; our inquiry has found that despite a wealth of evidence available regarding the Amsterdam disorder, West Midlands Police relied on inaccurate information on the behaviour of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans in reaching a view of them as unusually high-risk. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly why this inaccurate narrative took hold, but it is clear that West Midlands Police failed to do even basic due diligence on the information they received. This included false information that was generated by AI. West Midlands Police also failed to retain contemporaneous notes relating to matters central to their decision making. In addition, West Midlands Police continually emphasised that it was this unique risk from the Maccabi Tel Aviv fans which led to the recommendation to ban away fans, and not local community tensions, despite evidence of risk emanating from local communities in Birmingham. The initial attempt by West Midlands Police to downplay the role of local community tensions was unbalanced and ultimately served to undermine confidence in both the decision and the force itself.

Consultation with the Jewish community

14. It is now well established that West Midlands Police failed properly to engage with the local Jewish community until after the decision to exclude Maccabi Tel Aviv fans was made, a point conceded to us by ACC O’Hara, and for which he apologised for indicating otherwise in his first appearance before the Committee.³⁰ While West Midlands Police did consult with the Community Security Trust, despite being alerted to the fact that the ban might be considered antisemitic, and would feel like an attack on the local Jewish community, the force did not consult with local Jewish representatives ahead of that decision being taken.³¹ We have received many representations from members of the Jewish community of Birmingham who feel badly let down by West Midlands Police, both by the decision and the failure to engage with them.

15. It is not just that West Midlands Police harmed their relations with the Jewish community; their failure to engage may have weakened the robustness of their decision-making. West Midlands Police evidently received many representations about Maccabi Tel Aviv fans from those, not just in Muslim communities, opposed to the fixture taking place and to the presence of Israeli fans.³² By failing to take similar representations from Jewish fans, West Midlands Police missed an opportunity to hear any contrary views from those who had no objection to the fixture taking place, and who may have had a different perspective on the Maccabi Tel Aviv fans themselves.

16. West Midlands Police recognised this gap, and in the wake of the decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans there was more direct engagement with the local Jewish community.³³ Acting Chief Constable Scott Green has acknowledged that West Midlands Police's approach "damaged our relationship with individuals and the Jewish community" and has met with members of the Jewish community to apologise. West Midlands Police has since launched Operation Strive, which promises to investigate every reported antisemitic hate crime.³⁴

17. CONCLUSION

West Midlands Police failed to engage directly with the Birmingham Jewish community early enough in relation to this fixture. As a result, West Midlands Police limited their access to information that might challenge their narrative about Maccabi Tel Aviv fans and also underestimated the impact of the decision to ban fans on local Jewish communities. While we have not received any evidence to suggest that antisemitism was a motivating factor in the decision, the failure to consult with the local Jewish population, in contrast to the comprehensive engagement with other communities, significantly damaged relations with the Jewish community, and provided a basis for some to perceive the decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans as antisemitic. We welcome the steps that West Midlands Police are now taking to rebuild trust with the Jewish community.

18. RECOMMENDATION

The next permanent Chief Constable of West Midlands Police should continue the work to rebuild trust with the Jewish community as a priority.

Conduct during oral evidence

19. Two elements of the oral evidence given by former Chief Constable Guildford and ACC O'Hara were of particular concern. First, on 1 December, ACC O'Hara made the claim that members of the local Jewish community had both been consulted about the proposed ban, and were in favour of it.³⁵ After being alerted to the error, we wrote to West Midlands Police on 9 December 2025 to ask for an explanation; ACC O'Hara and former Chief Constable Guildford apologised for the error, and stated that the error was as a result of misspeaking in attempting to respond to a question with multiple parts, with no intention to mislead.³⁶

20. However, ACC O'Hara's oral evidence is not the only place where West Midlands Police claimed to have consulted the local Jewish community. West Midlands Police briefed the SAG on 7 October that "probably every community in Birmingham had raised a concern" in relation to the fixture, and that this included "Jewish community groups."³⁷ This claim was repeated in the paper presented by West Midlands Police to the SAG on 24 October, in which it was claimed that "there is great concern amongst a range of local community groups including Jewish communities".³⁸ While there is no specific reference here to Jewish communities being in favour of the ban, it is clear that West Midlands Police were incorrectly briefing that local Jewish communities (rather than the Community Security Trust) had been consulted ahead of the decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans. In addition, the Community Impact Assessment produced by West Midlands Police does include a reference to local Synagogue leaders being "concerned at threats towards the synagogues in Singers Hill and Jewellery Quarter", without it being noted that this feedback was not via direct engagement.³⁹

21. CONCLUSION

Given the damage caused to community relations by the decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans, it is surprising and disappointing that Assistant Chief Constable O'Hara was not more precise in his remarks about whether Jewish representatives had supported the ban. However, we note his personal apology to representatives of the local Jewish community and have no evidence to suggest that ACC O'Hara intended to mislead the Committee on this point. More concerning is the fact that the Safety Advisory Group was

incorrectly briefed on several occasions that the Jewish community had been consulted; West Midlands Police clearly believed that consulting the Community Security Trust was equivalent to consulting the Jewish community and did not attach significant priority to engaging the local community directly. This falls some way short of the level and quality of community engagement that the Birmingham residents are entitled to expect from their police service.

22. A further concern arose around the inclusion of a reference to a match between West Ham United and Maccabi Tel Aviv in the document that was submitted to the SAG on 23 October 2025. This match was fictitious.⁴⁰ On 1 December former Chief Constable Guildford described this reference as being as a result of “social media scraping” and denied that it had been the result of an AI search.⁴¹ Subsequently, on 6 January, former Chief Constable Guildford told us that he had “a note” on the use of AI, claiming that West Midlands Police had “got to the bottom of” the matter. He told us explicitly “[West Midlands Police] do not use AI” and that the information regarding the West Ham match had resulted from a Google search.⁴²

23. Subsequently, former Chief Constable Guildford wrote to us to confirm that the reference to the West Ham match had indeed come from the use of Microsoft Copilot AI. He told us that he had been made aware of this in the course of the force’s response to the HMICFRS inquiry. He apologised for the error and stated that his remarks on 6 January 2026 represented his “honestly held” belief and was as a result of advice he had been given.⁴³ We have subsequently seen further evidence from West Midlands Police which suggests that the use of Copilot was unauthorised and not initially disclosed to former Chief Constable Guildford and ACC O’Hara. The conduct of officers involved in the gathering and presentation of information during this operation is subject to an IOPC investigation.⁴⁴

24. CONCLUSION

Former Chief Constable Guildford was not informed ahead of giving oral evidence on 6 January that Microsoft Copilot AI had been used to generate the erroneous information about a match between West Ham and Maccabi Tel Aviv. On this basis we can only conclude that the former Chief Constable did not intentionally mislead the Committee. However, by 6 January 2026 we understand that the use of AI had been disclosed within West Midlands Police, so it is reasonable to expect that former Chief Constable Guildford and Assistant Chief Constable O’Hara should have been accurately briefed on this matter. Having been asked specifically about the use of AI on 1 December 2025, it demonstrates a remarkable lack of professional curiosity on the part of the former Chief Constable not to interrogate the evidential basis to furnish himself with accurate information ahead of our session on 6 January. The fact that he was able to give the Committee incorrect information on two separate occasions is more evidence of the poor due diligence which West Midlands Police applied to information in this case. It should not have taken two oral evidence sessions and a subsequent written correction to achieve candour and accuracy; this raises serious questions about the culture of transparency and commitment to accuracy in West Midlands Police.

25. RECOMMENDATION

Promoting a culture of transparency and attention to detail should be a priority for both the Acting Chief Constable and next permanent Chief Constable of West Midlands Police to address.

3 The role of the Safety Advisory Group

26. Responsibility for the decision to exclude Maccabi Tel Aviv fans from the match against Aston Villa ultimately rested with Birmingham City Council, through the provision of a safety certificate for the event. The role of Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) is to provide specialist safety advice regarding the event and whether any conditions should be placed on the certificate.⁴⁵ SAGs are not always called for specific fixtures, but on this occasion a SAG was convened by Birmingham City Council, which met on 7 October, 16 October (when the decision to exclude Maccabi fans was taken), 24 October and 3 November 2025.⁴⁶ We have reviewed the recordings and transcripts of those meetings alongside the unredacted minutes of the October meetings.

27. We are aware that in some other areas elected politicians do not sit on SAGs, to avoid any inference of political interference.⁴⁷ In Birmingham, similarly to other areas, routine SAGs are held at intervals during the football season, supplemented by additional SAGs as required. We heard from Birmingham City Council that the first suggestion to hold a SAG for this fixture was made by the Sports

Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA), and that Aston Villa FC and West Midlands Police also supported this. The Chair of the SAG ultimately made the formal decision, but Birmingham City Council state that it was a “multi-agency view that a SAG was appropriate”.⁴⁸

28. It is clear that the input of West Midlands Police was the main driver of the decision to exclude Maccabi Tel Aviv fans. Officers presented to the SAG on 7 October, describing the events in Amsterdam in November 2024, stating that there was a high risk of protest and potential disorder from Maccabi fans, and that there was significant concern from local communities in Birmingham about the fixture. On 8 October, the then Gold Commander wrote to the Chair of the SAG in order to explicitly recommend that the SAG “undertake a review of [...] attendance of away supporters.”⁴⁹ On 16 October 2025, the meeting at which the decision was taken to ban Maccabi fans, there was a further presentation from West Midlands Police, including a description of disorder resulting from protests against other Israeli sports teams playing in Europe, and a further reference to community concerns.⁵⁰

29. We now know that on 9 October 2025, following the first SAG meeting, the Chair of the SAG also wrote to West Midlands Police asking for a “slightly more clear rationale” for West Midlands Police’s preference for no away fans, stating that there had been “challenge” to the proposal.⁵¹ The then Gold Commander for the operation wrote a reply on 10 October which included questionable information, some of which we now understand to have been gathered via an AI search, about the Amsterdam disorder, including that 2,000 Dutch police had been deployed, that “people were thrown into the river” and that the disorder was “well organised and targeted towards Muslim communities.”⁵² On 24 October the SAG met again, apparently for a fresh consideration of the risk assessment after the Government made clear that other options should be pursued.⁵³ At this point West Midlands Police presented a written document which contained significantly more detail about West Midlands Police’s version of events in Amsterdam, including the fictitious West Ham fixture and false claims, partly AI-generated, about the behaviour of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans.⁵⁴ In addition, this document included the claim that 5,000 police officers were deployed in Amsterdam, which former Chief Constable Guildford later admitted was a “professional assumption” rather than a verified fact.⁵⁵

30. While it is right that SAGs are convened to gather the expert safety advice of various partners, and that this advice is respected, we believe that the SAG in this instance failed to provide sufficient challenge to the evidence it received from West Midlands Police. Rather than probing whether the recommendation of West Midlands Police was proportionate and evidence-based, the SAG accepted the recommendation on so little evidence that it had to ask for further justification after the fact. While we appreciate that the SAG will not have wished to second guess the information provided to it by partner organisations, the events in Amsterdam were a matter of public record and some critical appraisal should have been applied. Instead, West Midlands Police were given the opportunity to further harden their evidence, to the extent that false claims were made.

31. CONCLUSION

It is particularly surprising that firm challenge was not applied given the political sensitivity of this decision. The Safety Advisory Group recognised this in asking West Midlands Police for a clearer recommendation and clearer justification to exclude away fans. However, the Safety Advisory Group clearly lacked the ability to consider issues other than narrow safety considerations, including community cohesion and both local and national political consequences. The Safety Advisory Group process rightly focuses on safety but in instances where judgements around safety may be politicised and have national as well as local political ramifications, Safety Advisory Groups are not equipped to challenge the evidence they receive or balance local and national considerations.

32. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Office’s review of guidance to Safety Advisory Groups should identify whether more guidance is needed on the level of challenge that Safety Advisory Groups should be resourced to provide. The Government should also consider whether an escalation process is required in the rare cases where the decisions of Safety Advisory Groups may have broader community and political consequences.

33. We have also considered the presence of Birmingham City councillors on the SAG. In particular, the SAG membership for this fixture included councillors who had been campaigning against the fixture taking place. Councillor Mumtaz Hussain, the councillor for Aston Ward, appeared in a video promoting a petition to cancel the fixture in September 2025.⁵⁶ When she attended the SAG meeting on 7 October, she failed to declare an interest, and later characterised some Maccabi Tel Aviv fans as “thugs” in her contribution to the

meeting.⁵⁷ In subsequent meetings all councillors declared their interests, and Cllr Hussain recused herself from the meeting of 24 October on the advice of the SAG.⁵⁸ We note that Cllr Zaffar (who has since passed away) did declare his interest as a campaigner against the match at the first SAG. However, while his contributions to the SAG on 7 October mostly related to safety, he nonetheless relayed the view of his community “that this game should not go ahead”.⁵⁹ We note that Birmingham City Council has commissioned an independent review of its SAG processes, including the presence of councillors on SAGs, and that in other areas, it is not common practice for councillors to sit on SAGs.⁶⁰

34. CONCLUSION

While we cannot conclude that the Safety Advisory Group’s decision was made because of political pressure, on the basis of the evidence we have seen we also cannot conclude with any confidence that the decision was not politically influenced. It is clear that on this occasion councillors, with a stated political aim, had a disproportionate opportunity to influence Safety Advisory Group decision-making on a deeply divisive political issue. While the presence of elected politicians on Safety Advisory Groups has potential benefits in terms of local representation, it also risks decision-making becoming politically motivated, undermining trust in the process. It is right given the role of the Safety Advisory Group in this matter that the Government is conducting a review of Safety Advisory Group governance.

35. RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Government takes the necessary steps to ensure that elected politicians cannot sit on Safety Advisory Groups.

4 Response of the Home Office and Government

36. On 17 October 2025 Simon Foster, the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), issued a statement explaining that he was requesting documentation from the Birmingham City Council SAG to review the decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans.⁶¹ Subsequently, in his reply to the Committee on 20 November 2025, the PCC told us that he had had several briefings with West Midlands Police officers and had reviewed written documentation including the Community Impact Assessment, the UKFPU peer review and, crucially, “information on the disorder in Amsterdam” in November 2024.⁶²

37. However, in his letter the PCC did not raise any concerns about the evidence he had received and emphasised that “accountability and liability” for the decision rests with the SAG, and that the decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans was “not a decision of West Midlands Police.” In addition, he cited disorder surrounding a cancelled Tel Aviv derby match in 2025 and questioned “why Ministers remained keen to facilitate [Maccabi Tel Aviv] fans coming to Birmingham to attend the match”.⁶³

38. Subsequently, in oral evidence on 1 December 2025, Simon Foster told us that he had written to the Chief Constable asking him to account for inconsistencies in the evidence West Midlands Police provided to the SAG and told us he was “satisfied” with former Chief Constable Guildford’s confidence in the intelligence, albeit that his inquiries were continuing. Yet in the same session, Simon Foster quoted at length from the Dutch Inspectorate of Justice and Security report which contains a detailed and authoritative account of events in Amsterdam in 2024 that contradicts the information provided by West Midlands Police.⁶⁴

39. CONCLUSION

While the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was not involved in the Safety Advisory Group process, and it is right that the principle of operational independence is respected, the West Midlands PCC appeared to prioritise defending the Chief Constable above holding him to account, until this approach proved untenable with the release of further information.

40. Following the decision to exclude Maccabi Tel Aviv fans on 16 October 2025 the Prime Minister posted on X calling it “the wrong decision” and stating the Government “will not tolerate antisemitism on our streets”.⁶⁵ On 16 October the Home Secretary posted on X that the Government “is doing everything in our power to ensure all fans can safely attend the game.”⁶⁶ On 20 October, the Secretary

of State for Culture, Media and Sport made a statement in the House of Commons in which she reiterated that the Government was working with West Midlands Police and Birmingham City Council “to support them to consider all the options available and to tell us what resources are needed to manage the risks”.⁶⁷

41. We heard that the very public interventions of the Government helped to increase the profile of the subsequent fixture, which in turn increased risk. For example, West Midlands Police and the UKFPU peer review highlighted that the raised profile of the fixture led to the far-right activist Tommy Robinson (Stephen Yaxley-Lennon) announcing his intention to travel to Birmingham to counter-protest at the fixture, along with high-risk fans associated with Chelsea FC.⁶⁸ In the event, even without the presence of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans, the cost of policing the fixture was estimated to be around £2 million. This cost occurred in a pressurised financial climate; in the next financial year it is suggested that West Midlands Police is likely to have to make savings of £15 million.⁶⁹

42. On 1 December, Sarah Jones MP, the Policing Minister, told us that ahead of the decision being made the Home Office had been told in the week of 6 October 2025 only “that a range of options were being considered” for policing the fixture, and that the Home Office was not informed that an away fan ban was likely.⁷⁰ This was reiterated by the Home Secretary on 14 January 2026 when she told the House that she “refute[s] any suggestion that [she] was told definitively on 8 October” that Maccabi Tel Aviv fans would be banned from the fixture.⁷¹ Minutes of the meeting at which former Chief Constable Guildford briefed the Home Secretary on plans for the match confirm that the Home Secretary was only told that banning away fans was a possible option.⁷²

43. However, the UKFPU peer review document makes clear that while the Home Secretary was only briefed that banning away fans was possible, the Home Office was briefed that banning away fans was probable. Following the Home Secretary’s meeting involving former Chief Constable Guildford on 8 October, the Home Office emailed the UKFPU asking:

We’ve heard that the West Midlands Chief briefed the Home Sec earlier that a condition of the match going ahead may be to ban away fans. Do you know how far progressed this thinking is?

Four minutes later, the UKFPU replied to the Home Office to state that while no final decision had been taken by the SAG, “its working assumption at this stage is [...] there be no away fans.” The email further stated that the UKFPU “suspect[s] this will be the final outcome.”⁷³ The Home Secretary subsequently confirmed that her officials had been advised that the decision to ban away fans “would likely be the eventual outcome.”⁷⁴ The Home Secretary has provided us with a timeline of communications but we still lack information about when Ministers were informed by officials. In addition, the UKFPU peer review highlights that the Home Office was asked by No. 10 for details regarding the fixture on or before 6 October 2025, indicating that there was some cross-Government focus on this fixture in advance of the SAG meeting on 7 October.

44. Governmental responsibility for safety at sports grounds is split across several departments. In oral evidence on 1 December the Policing Minister described the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as the “lead across Government” on the issue.⁷⁵ DCMS also sponsors the SGSA, the Government’s statutory advisor on safety at sports grounds; however, the policing of football is a Home Office responsibility. This split may have led to missed opportunities ahead of the fixture; in particular, the Home Secretary told us that Birmingham City Council had “sought advice from the SGSA about whether any central government cover could be offered”, and despite concern over the fixture within central government, the SGSA was advised by DCMS that “no such levers were available”.⁷⁶ It appears that the relevant departments did not take this opportunity to agree with No. 10 on a common approach to this fixture.

45. On 4 February 2026, the Home Secretary told us that she “couldn’t override [the] risk assessment” of West Midlands Police due to operational independence, and that only once the decision was made was the Home Office able to explore “is there a way of mitigating the risks [West Midlands Police] say exist that we could assist with that would allow this match to go ahead.”⁷⁷ The Home Secretary further told us that if West Midlands Police had said the risks could not be mitigated, “it wouldn’t be possible to override that either.” However, the Prime Minister himself was clear in his statement that the decision not to allow Maccabi Tel Aviv fans to attend was “wrong”, and the Home Secretary said that “every football fan, whoever they are, should be able to watch their team in safety.”⁷⁸ The Government’s stated intention on 16 October was to enable Maccabi Tel Aviv fans to attend the match, yet in the days between 8 and 16 October 2025 the Government failed to take effective action to achieve this.

46. The Home Secretary stated that the Home Office should be wary of “just [taking] one incident and to try to say we should interfere in operational independence.”⁷⁹ However, the issue of government intervention in high profile football matches on safety grounds has been raised recently. In 2021, Baroness Casey published a review into the events of the Euro 2020 final, where ticketless supporters violently forced their way into Wembley Stadium. The review recommended that the Government should introduce a new category of “football matches of national significance”, which could give the Government more options to ensure that security and governance arrangements are sufficiently robust for matches of this nature, and may have been relevant in this case.⁸⁰

47. CONCLUSION

The principle of police operational independence is an extremely important one, so it is right that Ministers are cautious about intervening in police decision-making. However, by intervening only after the decision to ban away fans was taken, the Government increased tension around the fixture but was ineffectual in enabling Maccabi Tel Aviv fans to attend the fixture, which reflects unfavourably on the culture of the Home Office. While the Home Secretary herself was not informed directly, it is clear that both the Home Office and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport were informed on 8 October 2025 that Maccabi fans were likely to be banned from attending the match against Aston Villa. If the Government had intervened privately at this point, to make its preference known, and to offer assurances that the Government was prepared to support with additional resources, a different outcome might have been achieved. The Home Office failed to recognise the significance of the decision and escalate appropriately, which is surprising given that it had already been asked by No. 10 for information regarding the fixture. We believe that early intervention could have been achieved in a way that was sensitive to operational independence. This would have been preferable to the action the Government did take in publicly challenging a policing decision before the event had taken place, without full consideration of the evidence that supported that decision.

48. CONCLUSION

Given the international context and location of this fixture, it may have been proportionate to designate this fixture as one of national significance, had the recommendation of Baroness Casey been adopted.

49. RECOMMENDATION

The Government should give serious consideration to the proposal to introduce a new category for football matches of national significance, with a process for designation, to provide a stronger basis for intervention in the future.

5 Conclusion

50. CONCLUSION

This incident has caused serious damage to trust in West Midlands Police, particularly among the local Jewish community, as well as to public confidence in the effectiveness of the force. Assistant Chief Constable O’Hara told us that there was no conspiracy to ban away fans, and we have seen no evidence of such. However, we cannot rule out the suggestion that political pressure played a part in the decision. West Midlands Police were clearly scarred by the visit of Legia Warsaw fans in 2023 and understandably wished to avoid the risk of similar disorder. This risk mitigation, combined with local political pressure and community tensions related to the international situation, led to the exceptional decision to exclude Maccabi Tel Aviv fans. West Midlands Police were warned that their preliminary recommendation would be badly received and should have been more careful in their subsequent due diligence and adopted a more robust approach to interrogating their initial findings, as well as been more transparent about the reasons for recommending a ban. Instead, evidence was selected partially in order to justify the ban, and West Midlands Police were overly reliant on inaccurate and unverified information about the Maccabi Tel Aviv fans. This has undermined faith in the competence of West Midlands Police and provided a basis for those questioning their motivation. It is right that former Chief Constable Guildford has retired so that West Midlands Police can begin to address the loss of trust and confidence that has resulted from this episode.

Conclusions and recommendations

The actions of West Midlands Police

1. The interim report of Sir Andy Cooke, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, concluded that West Midlands Police had been subject to "confirmation bias" in their assessment of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans. We agree with this judgment; our inquiry has found that despite a wealth of evidence available regarding the Amsterdam disorder, West Midlands Police relied on inaccurate information on the behaviour of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans in reaching a view of them as unusually high-risk. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly why this inaccurate narrative took hold, but it is clear that West Midlands Police failed to do even basic due diligence on the information they received. This included false information that was generated by AI. West Midlands Police also failed to retain contemporaneous notes relating to matters central to their decision making. In addition, West Midlands Police continually emphasised that it was this unique risk from the Maccabi Tel Aviv fans which led to the recommendation to ban away fans, and not local community tensions, despite evidence of risk emanating from local communities in Birmingham. The initial attempt by West Midlands Police to downplay the role of local community tensions was unbalanced and ultimately served to undermine confidence in both the decision and the force itself. (Conclusion, Paragraph 13)

2. West Midlands Police failed to engage directly with the Birmingham Jewish community early enough in relation to this fixture. As a result, West Midlands Police limited their access to information that might challenge their narrative about Maccabi Tel Aviv fans and also underestimated the impact of the decision to ban fans on local Jewish communities. While we have not received any evidence to suggest that antisemitism was a motivating factor in the decision, the failure to consult with the local Jewish population, in contrast to the comprehensive engagement with other communities, significantly damaged relations with the Jewish community, and provided a basis for some to perceive the decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans as antisemitic. We welcome the steps that West Midlands Police are now taking to rebuild trust with the Jewish community. (Conclusion, Paragraph 17)

3. The next permanent Chief Constable of West Midlands Police should continue the work to rebuild trust with the Jewish community as a priority. (Recommendation, Paragraph 18)

4. Given the damage caused to community relations by the decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans, it is surprising and disappointing that Assistant Chief Constable O'Hara was not more precise in his remarks about whether Jewish representatives had supported the ban. However, we note his personal apology to representatives of the local Jewish community and have no evidence to suggest that ACC O'Hara intended to mislead the Committee on this point. More concerning is the fact that the Safety Advisory Group was incorrectly briefed on several occasions that the Jewish community had been consulted; West Midlands Police clearly believed that consulting the Community Security Trust was equivalent to consulting the Jewish community and did not attach significant priority to engaging the local community directly. This falls some way short of the level and quality of community engagement that the Birmingham residents are entitled to expect from their police service. (Conclusion, Paragraph 21)

5. Former Chief Constable Guildford was not informed ahead of giving oral evidence on 6 January that Microsoft Copilot AI had been used to generate the erroneous information about a match between West Ham and Maccabi Tel Aviv. On this basis we can only conclude that the former Chief Constable did not intentionally mislead the Committee. However, by 6 January 2026 we understand that the use of AI had been disclosed within West Midlands Police, so it is reasonable to expect that former Chief Constable Guildford and Assistant Chief Constable O'Hara should have been accurately briefed on this matter. Having been asked specifically about the use of AI on 1 December 2025, it demonstrates a remarkable lack of professional curiosity on the part of the former Chief Constable not to interrogate the evidential basis to furnish himself with accurate information ahead of our session on 6 January. The fact that he was able to give the Committee incorrect information on two separate occasions is more evidence of the poor due diligence which West Midlands Police applied to information in this case. It should not have taken two oral evidence sessions and a subsequent written correction to achieve candour and accuracy; this raises serious questions about the culture of transparency and commitment to accuracy in West Midlands Police. (Conclusion, Paragraph 24)

6. Promoting a culture of transparency and attention to detail should be a priority for both the Acting Chief Constable and next permanent Chief Constable of West Midlands Police to address. (Recommendation, Paragraph 25)

The role of the Safety Advisory Group

7. It is particularly surprising that firm challenge was not applied given the political sensitivity of this decision. The Safety Advisory Group recognised this in asking West Midlands Police for a clearer recommendation and clearer justification to exclude away fans. However, the Safety Advisory Group clearly lacked the ability to consider issues other than narrow safety considerations, including community cohesion and both local and national political consequences. The Safety Advisory Group process rightly focuses on safety but in instances where judgements around safety may be politicised and have national as well as local political ramifications, Safety Advisory Groups are not equipped to challenge the evidence they receive or balance local and national considerations.

(Conclusion, Paragraph 31)

8. The Cabinet Office's review of guidance to Safety Advisory Groups should identify whether more guidance is needed on the level of challenge that Safety Advisory Groups should be resourced to provide. The Government should also consider whether an escalation process is required in the rare cases where the decisions of Safety Advisory Groups may have broader community and political consequences. (Recommendation, Paragraph 32)

9. While we cannot conclude that the Safety Advisory Group's decision was made because of political pressure, on the basis of the evidence we have seen we also cannot conclude with any confidence that the decision was not politically influenced. It is clear that on this occasion councillors, with a stated political aim, had a disproportionate opportunity to influence Safety Advisory Group decision-making on a deeply divisive political issue. While the presence of elected politicians on Safety Advisory Groups has potential benefits in terms of local representation, it also risks decision-making becoming politically motivated, undermining trust in the process. It is right given the role of the Safety Advisory Group in this matter that the Government is conducting a review of Safety Advisory Group governance. (Conclusion, Paragraph 34)

10. We recommend that the Government takes the necessary steps to ensure that elected politicians cannot sit on Safety Advisory Groups. (Recommendation, Paragraph 35)

Response of the Home Office and Government

11. While the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was not involved in the Safety Advisory Group process, and it is right that the principle of operational independence is respected, the West Midlands PCC appeared to prioritise defending the Chief Constable above holding him to account, until this approach proved untenable with the release of further information.

(Conclusion, Paragraph 39)

12. The principle of police operational independence is an extremely important one, so it is right that Ministers are cautious about intervening in police decision-making. However, by intervening only after the decision to ban away fans was taken, the Government increased tension around the fixture but was ineffectual in enabling Maccabi Tel Aviv fans to attend the fixture, which reflects unfavourably on the culture of the Home Office. While the Home Secretary herself was not informed directly, it is clear that both the Home Office and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport were informed on 8 October 2025 that Maccabi fans were likely to be banned from attending the match against Aston Villa. If the Government had intervened privately at this point, to make its preference known, and to offer assurances that the Government was prepared to support with additional resources, a different outcome might have been achieved. The Home Office failed to recognise the significance of the decision and escalate appropriately, which is surprising given that it had already been asked by No. 10 for information regarding the fixture. We believe that early intervention could have been achieved in a way that was sensitive to operational independence. This would have been preferable to the action the Government did take in publicly challenging a policing decision before the event had taken place, without full consideration of the evidence that supported that decision. (Conclusion, Paragraph 47)

13. Given the international context and location of this fixture, it may have been proportionate to designate this fixture as one of national significance, had the recommendation of Baroness Casey been adopted. (Conclusion, Paragraph 48)

14. The Government should give serious consideration to the proposal to introduce a new category for football matches of national significance, with a process for designation, to provide a stronger basis for intervention in the future.
(Recommendation, Paragraph 49)

Conclusion

15. This incident has caused serious damage to trust in West Midlands Police, particularly among the local Jewish community, as well as to public confidence in the effectiveness of the force. Assistant Chief Constable O'Hara told us that there was no conspiracy to ban away fans, and we have seen no evidence of such. However, we cannot rule out the suggestion that political pressure played a part in the decision. West Midlands Police were clearly scarred by the visit of Legia Warsaw fans in 2023 and understandably wished to avoid the risk of similar disorder. This risk mitigation, combined with local political pressure and community tensions related to the international situation, led to the exceptional decision to exclude Maccabi Tel Aviv fans. West Midlands Police were warned that their preliminary recommendation would be badly received and should have been more careful in their subsequent due diligence and adopted a more robust approach to interrogating their initial findings, as well as been more transparent about the reasons for recommending a ban. Instead, evidence was selected partially in order to justify the ban, and West Midlands Police were overly reliant on inaccurate and unverified information about the Maccabi Tel Aviv fans. This has undermined faith in the competence of West Midlands Police and provided a basis for those questioning their motivation. It is right that former Chief Constable Guildford has retired so that West Midlands Police can begin to address the loss of trust and confidence that has resulted from this episode.
(Conclusion, Paragraph 50)

Formal minutes

Tuesday 10 February 2026

Members present

Karen Bradley, in the Chair

Lewis Atkinson

Paul Kohler

Margaret Mullane

Chris Murray

Peter Prinsley

Joani Reid

Bell Ribeiro-Addy

Jo White

Maccabi Tel Aviv fan ban

Draft report (*Maccabi Tel Aviv fan ban*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 50 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fifth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

Adjournment

Adjourned till Tuesday 24 February 2026

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](https://committees.parliament.uk/work/9470/Football-Policing/publications) (<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/9470/Football-Policing/publications>), of the Committee's website.

Monday 1 December 2025

Lord Mann, Independent Adviser on Antisemitism

[Q1-32 \(https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/\)](https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/)

Sarah Jones MP, Minister of State for Policing and Crime Prevention, Home Office; **Richard Clarke**, Director General, Public Safety Group, Home Office

[Q33-108 \(https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/\)](https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/)

Craig Guildford, Chief Constable, West Midlands Police; **Mike O'Hara**, Assistant Chief Constable, West Midlands Police; **Simon Foster**, Police and Crime Commissioner, West Midlands Police

[Q109-147 \(https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/\)](https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/)

Tuesday 6 January 2026

Craig Guildford, Chief Constable, West Midlands Police; **Mike O'Hara**, Assistant Chief Constable, West Midlands Police; **Mick Wilkinson**, Chief Inspector, West Midlands Police; **Chief Constable Mark Roberts**, National Lead for Football Policing, UK Football Policing Unit

[Q148-303 \(https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16975/html/\)](https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16975/html/)

Councillor John Cotton, Leader, Birmingham City Council; **Richard Brooks**, Executive Director of City Operations, Birmingham City Council; **Anthony Cox**, Director of Law and Governance, Birmingham City Council

[Q304-371 \(https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16975/html/\)](https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16975/html/)

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/83/Home-Affairs-Committee/publications/reports-responses/) (<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/83/Home-Affairs-Committee/publications/reports-responses/>), of the Committee's website.

Session 2024–26

| Number | Title | Reference |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| 4th | The Home Office's management of asylum accommodation | HC 580 |
| 3rd | Tackling violence against women and girls: funding | HC 741 |
| 2nd | Police response to the 2024 summer disorder | HC 381 |
| 1st | Appointment of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration | HC 713 |
| 3rd Special | The Home Office's management of asylum accommodation: Government Response | HC 1642 |
| 2nd Special | Tackling violence against women and girls: Funding: Government Response | HC 1352 |
| 1st Special | Police response to the 2024 summer disorder: Government Response | HC 1099 |

Footnotes

¹ Under the Safety of Sports Ground Act 1975, [Safety Advisory Groups \(https://sgsa.org.uk/regulatory-support/safety-certification/safety-advisory-groups/\)](https://sgsa.org.uk/regulatory-support/safety-certification/safety-advisory-groups/), provide safety advice to inform the provision of safety certificates by local authorities.

² Letter from the Chair to the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable regarding Aston Villa v Maccabi Tel Aviv, [4 November 2025 \(https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50083/documents/269948/default/\)](https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50083/documents/269948/default/).

³ Chief Constable Roberts told us that denying access to away fans was “rare” and cited disorder in Manchester surrounding the 2008 UEFA Cup final; on this occasion despite 39 injuries to police officers and 39 arrests, Rangers fans were still able to travel to Manchester for their next fixture there in 2010. [Q213 \(https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16975/html/\)](https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16975/html/).

⁴ For example, West Midlands Police told us in their letter that “between 500 and 600 Maccabi fans deliberately targeted Muslim communities.” Letter from Assistant Chief Constable O’Hara regarding Aston Villa v Maccabi Tel Aviv, [21 November 2025 \(https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50374/documents/272467/default/\)](https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50374/documents/272467/default/); The Sunday Times, ‘Police ‘used fake claims’ to ban Maccabi fans from Aston Villa game, [22 November 2025 \(https://www.thetimes.com/uk/politics/article/police-used-fake-claims-to-ban-maccabi-fans-from-aston-villa-game-vcvhw0jz\)](https://www.thetimes.com/uk/politics/article/police-used-fake-claims-to-ban-maccabi-fans-from-aston-villa-game-vcvhw0jz).

⁵ UK Football Policing Unit, [Op Parkmill Peer Review \(https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50919/documents/282057/default/\)](https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50919/documents/282057/default/), 21 October 2025

- 6 HMICFRS, 'Confirmation bias influenced West Midlands Police's recommendation to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans', 14 January 2026 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspection-of-police-forces-contributions-to-safety-advisory-groups-west-midlands-police>).
- 7 HC Deb, 8 December 2025, col 38 (<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2025-12-08/debates/30B942BA-CA34-4E71-8B5E-1097F4D4BD27/MaccabiTelAvivFCAwayFansBan>).
- 8 IOPC, 'IOPC announces independent investigation into Maccabi fans ban', 19 January 2026 (<https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/iopc-announces-independent-investigation-maccabi-fans-ban>).
- 9 Q33 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>).
- 10 UK Football Policing Unit, Op Parkmill Peer Review (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50919/documents/282057/default/>), 21 October 2025; and West Midlands Police Intelligence Log, provided to us in confidence
- 11 Minutes of the Aston Villa v Maccabi Tel Aviv SAG meeting, 16 October 2025 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50901/documents/281975/default/>).
- 12 HMICFRS, 'Confirmation bias influenced West Midlands Police's recommendation to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans', 14 January 2026 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspection-of-police-forces-contributions-to-safety-advisory-groups-west-midlands-police>).
- 13 BBC News, 'Thousands join pro-Palestinian march in Birmingham' (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-67117891>), 15 October 2023
- 14 Birmingham City Council, 2021 Census profile for Birmingham, accessed 5 February 2026 (https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/25602/2021_census_profile_for_birmingham); UK Parliament, 'Birmingham Perry Barr', accessed 5 February 2026 (<https://members.parliament.uk/constituency/3913/election/422>).
- 15 Q33 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>).
- 16 Q6 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>), [Lord Mann], Q33 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>), [Chief Constable Guildford]
- 17 UK Football Policing Unit, Op Parkmill Peer Review (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50919/documents/282057/default/>), 21 October 2025
- 18 Q42 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>).
- 19 Q47 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>).
- 20 Letter from Amsterdam Mayor and on behalf of the Chief Prosecutor and Police Chief, 8 November 2024, shared with us and published elsewhere; Report of the Inspectorate of Justice and Security, May 2025, shared with us and published elsewhere; Response from Amsterdam Police to the Chair, 20 January 2026 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/51162/documents/283938/default/>).
- 21 Q75 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>); West Midlands Police, 'Op. Parkmill SAG Considerations', 23 October 2025, shared with us and published elsewhere
- 22 Report of the Inspectorate of Justice and Security, May 2025, shared with us and published elsewhere

23 Response from Amsterdam Police to the Chair, 20 January 2026

(<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/51162/documents/283938/default/>).

24 Q33 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>).

25 Response from Amsterdam Police to the Chair, 20 January 2026

(<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/51162/documents/283938/default/>), and further correspondence with us.

26 Q42 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>); SAG recording, 24 October 2025

27 Letter from Assistant Chief Constable O'Hara regarding Aston Villa v Maccabi Tel Aviv, 21 November 2025

(<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50374/documents/272467/default/>).

28 UK Football Policing Unit, Op Parkmill Peer Review

(<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50919/documents/282057/default/>), 21 October 2025; and West Midlands Police Intelligence Log, provided to us in confidence

29 Q217 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16975/html/>); SAG recording, 24 October 2025

30 Qq257-258, Q270 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16975/html/>).

31 West Midlands Police, Op Parkmill Community Impact Assessment, provided to us by West Midlands Police in confidence

32 West Midlands Police have provided us with both their Community Impact Assessment and a log of community engagement which show that there was significant engagement with local Muslim communities as well as Christian representatives. Feedback from these meetings was presented to the SAG.

33 Q257 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16975/html/>).

34 BBC News, 'Force to 'work tirelessly' to rebuild trust', 27 January 2026 (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5ydell4kzeo>).

35 Qq88-89 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>).

36 Letter from former Chief Constable Guildford to the Chair, 19 December 2025

(<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50893/documents/281812/default/>).

37 SAG Recording, 7 October 2025

38 West Midlands Police, 'Op. Parkmill SAG Considerations', 23 October 2025, shared with us and published elsewhere

39 West Midlands Police, Op Parkmill Community Impact Assessment, provided to us by West Midlands Police in confidence

40 Q34 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>).

41 Q34 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>).

42 Q196 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16975/html/>).

43 Letter from former Chief Constable Guildford to the Chair, 12 January 2026

(<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/51041/documents/282958/default/>).

44 IOPC, 'IOPC announces independent investigation into Maccabi fans ban', 19 January 2026

(<https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/iopc-announces-independent-investigation-maccabi-fans-ban>).

45 Sports Ground Safety Authority, 'Safety Advisory Groups' (<https://sgsa.org.uk/regulatory-support/safety-certification/safety-advisory-groups/>), accessed 10 February 2026

46 Birmingham City Council, SAG Minutes, 7, 16 and 24 October (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50901/documents/281975/default/>).

47 As part of our inquiry, we visited the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Police and Manchester City FC to discuss football policing.

48 Letter from Sajeela Naseer to the Chair, 6 February 2026 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50900/documents/285859/default/>).

49 Letter from the Gold Commander to the SAG Chair, 8 October 2025 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/51223/documents/284219/default/>).

50 SAG recording, 16 October 2025

51 The Sunday Times, 'Police drew up false evidence after decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans' (https://www.thetimes.com/uk/politics/article/police-drew-up-false-evidence-after-decision-to-ban-maccabi-tel-aviv-fans-9m6pw5qbd?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=AWETsqcrrmCXQMZqItkFGGoog-QNL6GFbDIulavJnErI5Uej8FaKIgnifyWY5e9y60DM%3D&gaa_ts=6984b4af&gaa_sig=gad9VO5wYzR9EslIWOAyPoKlaLCHezluqrtra62pi9hTyf9RUCO-gwxnvYyXSyANyeWeJpvhRkbbkusRQ%3D%3D), 4 January 2026

52 Letter from the Gold Commander to the SAG Chair, 10 October 2025 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/51223/documents/284219/default/>).

53 Letter from Richard Brooks to the Chair, 18 December 2025 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50894/documents/281813/default/>).

54 West Midlands Police, 'Op. Parkmill SAG Considerations', 23 October 2025, shared with us and published elsewhere

55 Q33 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/>).

56 Ayoub Khan MP, post on X, 17 September 2025

57 SAG recording, 7 October 2025

58 SAG recording, 24 October 2025

59 SAG recording, 7 October 2025

60 Letter from Richard Brooks to the Chair, 12 January 2026 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/51164/documents/283942/default/>).

61 West Midlands PCC, 'PCC Statement: Aston Villa v Maccabi Tel Aviv', 17 October 2025 (<https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/pcc-statement-aston-villa-v-maccabi-tel-aviv/>).

62 Letter from Simon Foster to Chair, 20 November 2025 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50373/documents/272468/default/>).

63 Letter from Simon Foster to Chair, 20 November 2025 (<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50373/documents/272468/default/>).

[64 Q105; Q103 \(https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/\)](https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16807/html/).

[65 Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP, post on X, 16 October 2025 \(https://x.com/Keir_Starmer/status/1978914187649618400\)](https://x.com/Keir_Starmer/status/1978914187649618400).

[66 Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, post on X, 17 October 2025 \(https://x.com/ShabanaMahmood/status/1979226420992733685\)](https://x.com/ShabanaMahmood/status/1979226420992733685).

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