

Beat: News

Labour Party not doing enough on anti-Semitism - lawmakers

UK

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USPA NEWS - Britain's opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has not done enough to stamp out anti-Jewish sentiment in his party, a prominent parliamentary committee said on Sunday.

Lawmakers on the multi-party Home Affairs Committee said the veteran socialist had a proud record fighting racism

but his lack of command on the issue had created a safe space in Labour ranks "for those with vile attitudes towards Jewish people".

"The failure of the Labour Party to deal consistently and effectively with anti-Semitic incidents in recent years risks lending force to allegations that elements of the Labour movement are institutionally anti-Semitic," the report said.

"The result is that the Labour Party, with its proud history of fighting racism and promoting equal rights, is seen by some as an unwelcoming place for Jewish members and activists."

In a lengthy response, Corbyn said the lawmakers had ignored anti-Semitism in other parties, had heard evidence from too narrow a pool of opinion and had criticised individuals without giving them a right to be heard.

"Under my leadership, Labour has taken greater action against anti-Semitism than any other party," said Corbyn, who was unexpectedly elected leader last year after three decades on the left-wing fringes of the party.

Reports of anti-Semitic incidents in Britain, which has the fifth largest Jewish population in the world with about 270,000 Jews, have surged over the last two years, a factor which prompted the lawmakers' inquiry.

Police figures showed an increase of more than 60 percent in anti-Semitic hate crimes in London last year, while the number of incidents recorded by the Community Security Trust, which provides security advice to Britain's Jews, rose by 11 percent in the first six months of this year.

"APPALLING ABUSE"

Against this backdrop, a number of rows have erupted over comments by Labour members and activists that were widely seen as anti-Semitic. The party suspended several people, including one of its lawmakers and former London mayor Ken Livingstone.

Some Corbyn supporters say the claims against Labour, which is bogged down in internal strife between those who back the leader and those who think he is making the party unelectable, are being used to smear him.

They say some people who merely express legitimate concerns about Israel are labelled anti-Semitic.

An internal party inquiry in June cleared Labour of having a problem with anti-Semitism, but the committee said its findings had been thrown into question after its chair, Shami Chakrabarti, was subsequently nominated for a peerage by Corbyn.

Corbyn said the report unfairly criticised Chakrabarti, who he said had only been offered the appointment to the House of Lords after completion of her report.

But the committee's lawmakers said they were "not persuaded that Corbyn fully appreciates the distinct nature of post-Second World War anti-Semitism".

"Jewish Labour MPs have been subject to appalling levels of abuse, including anti-Semitic death threats from individuals purporting to be supporters of Mr Corbyn," the report said.

It also criticised Twitter, saying it was shocked by the volume and nature of the anti-Semitic tweets aimed at lawmakers and that the social media giant could and should do much more to address the problem.

"In the context of global revenue of \$2.2 billion, it is deplorable that Twitter continues to act as an inert host for vast swathes of anti-Semitic hate speech and abuse," the report said.

A spokesman for Twitter said hateful conduct had no place on the social media platform and the company would "continue to tackle this issue head on alongside our partners in industry and civil society".

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-9571/labour-party-not-doing-enough-on-anti-semitism-lawmakers.html>

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