

Stage 2 complaint to BBC Executive Complaints Unit (ECU) From Jenny Manson

Panorama is an investigative documentary series. But this programme was not an investigation. It revealed ignorance and prejudice about Jews in the UK.

The title begs these questions;

- are some or all British Jews afraid?
- if so why:
 - from fear of antisemitism?
 - from reactions to Israeli state actions?
 - other reasons?
- If [as] there are different responses from the many Jewish Communities, what is the basis for these differences?

What Panorama should have included to provide balance

We know from the Community Security Trust's (CST) that big spikes in incidents of antisemitism occur after "trigger events in the Middle East", events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Jewish views about the cause of the rise in antisemitism are diverse; the Panorama team did not reflect this diversity.

It is little understood that the Chief Rabbi represents only the United Synagogue, and the Board of Deputies (BOD) does not represent all synagogues. They do not speak at all for the Charedi Jews who are the largest religious Jewish group in the UK. Nor do any of the regular spokespeople speak for secular Jews and since these Jews are not easily identified, their views are not represented in survey results.

I am Jewish and I find this spike in antisemitism very worrying. I am chair of Jewish Voice for Liberation and am involved in Jews for Justice for Palestine. Eleven Jewish groups attend the Jewish Bloc on Palestine Marches. This includes the Holocaust Survivors and their Descendants group but not all the Jews on the Marches; on several occasions, this has exceeded 1000 people.

If our views were heard on Panorama, we would have said that we are welcomed and do not experience or witness antisemitism on the marches but rather warm comradeship. There is sometimes aggressive name calling and occasionally violence by Pro-Israel groups; they taunt the marchers, particularly the Jewish group.

Among my Jewish connections, the view is that the increase in antisemitism is connected with the claim by the Israeli government, the Chief Rabbi and the BOD, that all Jews as Jews support Israel right or wrong. This does not detract from the horror of antisemitism but it is important and it requires consideration including from the BBC.

Rather than increasing antisemitism, we think the Palestine Marches tend to reduce antisemitic hate. So Panorama should have interviewed Jews who attend those marches. The statement by Rabbi Neuberger needed a repost; she said "mostly what happens is people use the cover of criticising the actions of the Israeli government to be antisemitic.."

There were plenty of possible interviewees among Jewish critics of Israeli policies. Many are well known to the BBC, such as Stephen Kapos or Anne Karpf from the Holocaust group, Rabbi Herschel Gluck and Naomi Wimborne- Idrissi and myself from JVL.

Panorama used an estimate of the number of 'Anti- Zionists' to justify there being no "editorial need" to interview Jews like us. But it is not only those who describe themselves as anti-Zionist who campaign for Palestinian rights. People who identify as 'Zionist' march too and there is no simple or single interpretation of Zionist, anti or non-Zionist. Our Jewish family histories include centuries old division over Zionism. The difference today is the new conflation with antisemitism.

As to the suggestion of 3500 arrests, it is incorrect to state that there was no breakdown of the figures from the Met Police. It seems that there have been around 500 arrests since October 2023 relating directly to the Marches (therefore, excluding the Palestine Action arrests) and most of these arrests were of far-right counter protesters. Please refer to the Met report of 12 November 2023, published by the BBC and the figures reported after the rallies of 17 May 26.

Panorama questioned my figures for anti Muslim hate crime. The CSEW do not record 'victim- less' public order offence. But CSEW figures holds accredited official statistics status and Police recorded hate crime reports do not. See the report by the UK Statistics Authority in January 2014.

The Police report statistics are affected by victim reporting rates. Importantly CSEW statistics cover those hate crimes not reported to Police which represent over half of the total. The CSEW data covers both strands of Race, around 70% of Police recorded hate crimes, and Religion about 6% of Police recorded hate crimes, yet the Police data only covers the smaller strand of Religion.

As to this report, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025>, Panorama quote from Section 2, the police data.

But I specified section 3 of this report, the CSEW data. This contradicts the assertion based solely on Police reports. As the CSEW is a victim based survey their results are obviously not affected by any MPS data omissions.

[NB. CSEW = Crime Survey England and Wales]

BBC Complaints Team 1b response sent June 10, 2026

Dear Jenny Manson,

Thank you for your email, please treat this as a 1b response to your complaint.

The reason the programme used the police recorded figures is because the CSEW figures do not record public order offences which account for about 50% of all hate crimes recorded by the Police. As you know the programme looked in part at the impact that some of the slogans and chants from Pro-Palestinian protests were having on the mainstream Jewish community, so to exclude these figures would have given a very misleading impression of the scale of the issue.

It is also important to note that the link you included in your email contains this caveat: "*Due to the change in the MPS crime recording system, MPS data for the year ending March 2025 are not comparable with data supplied in previous years and have been excluded from the trend analysis in this bulletin.*" The area served by MPS has the highest concentration of Jews in any of the police service areas in England and Wales.

The Home Office statistics for Hate Crime in England and Wales for the year ending March 2025, that that do include public order offences and MPS figures can be see here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025>

These state:

"In the last year, there were 106 religious hate crimes per 10,000 population targeted at Jewish people, the highest rate for any religious group. The next highest rate was for hate crimes targeted at Muslims, with 12 per 10,000 population."

Because the programme was about rising levels of antisemitism there was no editorial need to include a contribution from the 'Jewish bloc' that you refer to or to feature any of the people you have named. Surveys suggest that just 12% of all British Jews describe themselves as 'anti-Zionists'. Whilst it is clear that you would have preferred that the programme more closely interrogated the views of this small minority, this was not the editorial focus of this film, and as such there was no editorial reason to interview Jewish people who attended the protests. You will know from the film however, that it reported that Jewish people attend marches and protests. Neither was this a film about whether Jews support Israeli Government policy, so again there was no editorial reason to include this in the programme.

This was not a programme about Palestine Action, which was not named in the programme or indirectly referred to, thus there was no editorial reason to include any more information in the programme about its proscription or the attempts to overturn that at the High Court.

Contrary to what you say it is not possible to break down the arrests of the marchers and the far right as the police do not provide these figures. Some information is released piecemeal but an overall picture is not available.

We hope that the above has addressed the further issues you have raised.

This concludes Stage 1 of our complaints process. That means we can't correspond with you further here. If you remain unhappy, you can now contact the BBC's Executive Complaints Unit (ECU). The ECU is Stage 2 of the BBC's complaints process. You'll need to explain why you think there's a potential breach of standards, or if the issue is significant and should still be investigated. Please do so within 20 working days of this reply.