# Currys scraps Palestinian flag name badges after customer complaints



High street retailer Currys has decided to discontinue the use of staff name badges featuring the Palestinian flag due to complaints that they created an 'intimidating' atmosphere for Jewish customers. The badges were initially introduced to indicate which staff members could speak Arabic, aligning with Currys' inclusion policies.

The change comes after several complaints highlighted discomfort experienced by customers. An Israeli man visiting a Currys store in Cambridge reported that he felt uneasy when approached by a staff member wearing the Palestinian flag on his badge. He stated his apprehension, saying, "It's hard for me because of the flag," despite attempting to convey that it was 'not personal'.

The situation escalated when he sought assistance from another employee, only to be told by a manager that he should not be served due to being perceived as 'rude'. Consequently, he left the store and chose to purchase his £1,500 television elsewhere.

Another incident involved a Jewish customer who expressed feeling uncomfortable being served by a staff member wearing the Palestinian flag. Following his complaint, he claimed he was ejected from a store in Hemel Hempstead after he took a photograph of the assistant in question. The customer alleged that the staff member followed him into the car park, taking pictures of him and his family, as well as their vehicle and registration number.

Responsive to the situation, Currys stated that the staff member’s actions followed an offensive gesture made by the customer. The man expressed astonishment at the encounter, saying, "The badge made me feel uncomfortable because it was unnecessary and was clearly there to make a political statement." He emphasised the impact on his family, stating, "We were effectively refused service because we were Jewish. I never expected to be treated that way in Britain."

UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI), advocating for the customers, highlighted to the retailer that the Palestinian flag is laden with political implications and has often symbolised opposition to the state of Israel. In their correspondence, UKLFI argued that allowing staff to display such flags could breach the Equalities Act 2000 by potentially creating a "hostile and intimidating atmosphere" for Jewish and Israeli customers. They suggested an alternative approach by recommending that staff badges simply indicate language capabilities, stating, "I speak Arabic".

In light of the complaints, Currys acknowledged the concerns and reversed their policy on the flags. A spokesperson for Currys remarked, "We are sorry to learn of two instances of customers feeling unwelcome in our stores because of flags displayed on colleague name badges." They reiterated their commitment to inclusivity, stating, "We remain committed to an inclusive Currys where everyone feels welcome." The retailer is now exploring alternatives to ensure both customers and staff feel comfortable within their stores.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.gbnews.com/news/pro-palestine-protesters-central-london-biggest-march-us-embassy> - This article discusses pro-Palestine protests in London, highlighting the political and symbolic significance of the Palestinian flag, which is relevant to the context of the Currys controversy.
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/11/15/nhs-staff-wore-free-palestine-shirts-claim-lawyers/> - This article reports on NHS staff wearing pro-Palestine symbols, which created a hostile environment for Jewish patients, similar to the complaints faced by Currys.
* <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/34/contents> - This link provides access to the Equality Act 2000, which UK Lawyers for Israel referenced as potentially being breached by displaying the Palestinian flag in a retail setting.
* <https://www.currys.co.uk/> - The official Currys website, where customers would typically interact with staff and potentially encounter the name badges in question.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - The source article mentions Noah Wire Services as the origin of the story about Currys discontinuing the use of staff name badges featuring the Palestinian flag.