# Gary Lineker to resign from BBC amid antisemitism row over social media post



Gary Lineker, the BBC's highest-paid presenter and a prominent figure in British broadcasting, has once again found himself at the centre of a controversy following his recent social media activity, which has led to speculation about his future with the broadcaster. The former England football captain is slated to announce his resignation from the BBC next week, after issuing an apology for sharing a video discussing Zionism that was accompanied by an emoji of a rat. This image has drawn allegations of antisemitism, prompting significant backlash.

Lineker's agent asserted that he was unaware of the offensive nature of the image when he shared it. However, the former footballer quickly deleted the post upon realising its implications. In an official statement, Lineker expressed regret, noting, "I very much regret these references. I would never knowingly share anything antisemitic. It goes against everything I believe in." His apology aims to clarify that while he is committed to advocating for humanitarian issues, the manner of expression requires careful consideration.

The latest incident adds to a lengthy history of controversies surrounding Lineker's outspoken views on social matters. For instance, he has been an advocate for liberal immigration policies, having voiced strong opposition to the UK government's approaches, particularly regarding asylum seekers. In March 2023, he likened government language on asylum policies to that of 1930s Germany, describing the measures as "immeasurably cruel." This remark resulted in a temporary suspension from his hosting role on "Match of the Day." Following public support from colleagues such as Ian Wright and Alan Shearer, who boycotted the show in unity with Lineker, the BBC faced intense pressure, eventually restoring him to the programme.

Throughout his time with the BBC, Lineker has frequently mentioned political issues. In 2018, his criticisms of the Conservative Party led to a public rebuke from fellow BBC presenter Jonathan Agnew, who insisted that Lineker, as a prominent sports figure, should uphold the corporation's impartiality standards. He faced additional scrutiny in 2022 for questioning then-foreign secretary Liz Truss regarding her party's financial links to Russian donors amid the Ukraine conflict.

Lineker's criticisms extend beyond UK politics. Ahead of the 2022 Qatar World Cup, he publicly challenged government advice for LGBT+ fans to "respect the host nation," arguing that such guidance came across as an unacceptable compromise on human rights. Additionally, he has been uncompromising in his stance on humanitarian issues related to Gaza, a position that has further complicated his relationship with the BBC, particularly in light of the current geopolitical climate.

The BBC has taken steps to address the growing tension surrounding its presenters’ social media conduct. A review of social media guidelines was announced, aiming to strike a balance between the freedom of expression of presenters and the expectations of the audience regarding impartiality and civility. This review comes in the wake of Lineker’s critiques and aims to foster an environment that encourages respectful discourse, underscoring the importance of the BBC's editorial values.

As Lineker prepares for what may be the final chapter in his long association with the BBC, he continues to receive significant public and media interest. His ongoing commitment to discuss humanitarian issues suggests that, despite potential exits from flagship roles, he aims to retain a voice on pressing matters. The recent backlash, however, raises questions about the nature of discourse in the current media landscape and the responsibilities of high-profile figures in navigating these turbulent waters.

As he transitions away from "Match of the Day," Lineker will continue to participate in BBC coverage of the FA Cup and the 2026 World Cup, signalling that his presence in sports broadcasting may not vanish entirely. The BBC's handling of his career and the associated controversies will likely play a pivotal role in shaping its public image moving forward, particularly as concerns about impartiality remain a focal point of debate within the broadcaster and beyond.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/gary-lineker-bbc-match-of-day-tweets-b2752415.html), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/c8b36a075eeb5be35603d2548fcead3a)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/gary-lineker-bbc-match-of-day-tweets-b2752415.html), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/c8b36a075eeb5be35603d2548fcead3a)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/gary-lineker-bbc-match-of-day-tweets-b2752415.html), [[3]](https://www.fourfourtwo.com/news/gary-lineker-bbc-tweet-i-wasnt-concerned-id-done-anything-wrong-i-stated-a-fact-it-was-taken-out-of-proportion-and-people-have-recognised-that-they-misread-the-situation-a-bit)
4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/gary-lineker-bbc-match-of-day-tweets-b2752415.html), [[3]](https://www.fourfourtwo.com/news/gary-lineker-bbc-tweet-i-wasnt-concerned-id-done-anything-wrong-i-stated-a-fact-it-was-taken-out-of-proportion-and-people-have-recognised-that-they-misread-the-situation-a-bit)
5. Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/gary-lineker-bbc-match-of-day-tweets-b2752415.html), [[4]](https://www.lemonde.fr/sport/article/2024/11/13/gary-lineker-ex-gloire-du-football-anglais-devenu-icone-en-impertinent-presentateur-va-quitter-la-bbc_6391976_3242.html)
6. Paragraph 6: [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/c8b36a075eeb5be35603d2548fcead3a), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-66940530)
7. Paragraph 7: [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/c8b36a075eeb5be35603d2548fcead3a), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-66940530)
8. Paragraph 8: [[4]](https://www.lemonde.fr/sport/article/2024/11/13/gary-lineker-ex-gloire-du-football-anglais-devenu-icone-en-impertinent-presentateur-va-quitter-la-bbc_6391976_3242.html), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-66940530)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/gary-lineker-bbc-match-of-day-tweets-b2752415.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/c8b36a075eeb5be35603d2548fcead3a> - Gary Lineker, the BBC's highest-paid presenter, apologized for sharing a social media post criticized as antisemitic. The post, from the Palestine Lobby, included an image of a rat with the text 'Zionism explained in two minutes,' drawing backlash due to historical antisemitic imagery. Lineker removed the post upon realizing its offensive content and emphasized his opposition to antisemitism and commitment to responsible discourse. This incident adds to Lineker's history of social media controversies, including a temporary suspension in 2023 for criticizing UK asylum policies. Despite stepping down from 'Match of the Day' after 25 years, Lineker will continue with BBC coverage of the FA Cup and the 2026 World Cup. BBC director-general Tim Davie emphasized the importance of upholding the broadcaster’s values. Meanwhile, the Campaign Against Antisemitism has called for Lineker's dismissal, questioning his intentions given his influential media presence. Lineker defended his stance on humanitarian issues, especially the conflict in Gaza, but acknowledged the need for careful communication.
3. <https://www.fourfourtwo.com/news/gary-lineker-bbc-tweet-i-wasnt-concerned-id-done-anything-wrong-i-stated-a-fact-it-was-taken-out-of-proportion-and-people-have-recognised-that-they-misread-the-situation-a-bit> - Gary Lineker, a long-time presenter of BBC's Match of the Day, was briefly suspended in 2023 for a tweet criticizing the UK government's asylum seeker policy. Lineker called the policy 'immeasurably cruel' and compared the language used to that of 1930s Germany. Despite the backlash and calls for political impartiality from BBC, Lineker insisted he did nothing wrong, merely stating facts and advocating for kindness towards all people. His suspension led to a show of solidarity from colleagues Ian Wright, Alan Shearer, and Micah Richards, who refused to appear on the show, forcing BBC to air a stripped-down version. Reflecting on the incident, Lineker emphasized his pride in working for the BBC despite the challenges and scrutiny it faces.
4. <https://www.lemonde.fr/sport/article/2024/11/13/gary-lineker-ex-gloire-du-football-anglais-devenu-icone-en-impertinent-presentateur-va-quitter-la-bbc_6391976_3242.html> - Gary Lineker, former international English footballer and iconic presenter of the BBC's 'Match of the Day' (MOTD), is set to gradually step down from the British public broadcaster. The BBC confirmed that he will present MOTD for the last time at the end of the season, continue to commentate on the FA Cup until the 2025-2026 season, and the 2026 World Cup before retiring. Lineker, nearly 64 years old, had expressed his intention to slow down due to his high salary, which has weighed on the BBC's difficult financial situation. The arrival of Alex Kay-Jelski at the head of BBC Sport also contributed to this decision. Lineker, famous for his phrase 'Football is a simple game... and in the end, the Germans always win,' saw his relationship with the BBC deteriorate after a controversy in 2023 regarding a criticism he made on Twitter about the British government. Despite his departure, his popular podcast 'The Rest is Football' will remain hosted on BBC Sounds.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/posts-about-linekers-match-day-absence-missing-context-2024-02-20/> - Some headlines on Facebook have misleadingly suggested that Gary Lineker was 'silenced' regarding his social media posts in 2024. However, the former England soccer captain clarified on X that he could not present 'Match of the Day' on February 10 due to a severe cold, not due to social media posts. Various news outlet headlines shared on Facebook lacked this context, leading to assumptions among users that Lineker was forced to step aside again, similar to 2023 when the BBC temporarily suspended him for sharing political views. Despite some user comments indicating he was silenced, the claim lacks accurate context, and Gary Lineker's absence was solely due to illness.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-66940530> - The BBC announced a review of its social media guidelines following a controversy involving presenter Gary Lineker. The review was prompted by Lineker's posts earlier in the year, which the BBC deemed a breach of its impartiality rules. The new guidelines emphasize 'high standards of civility in public discourse,' including treating others with respect and avoiding offensive language. The BBC stated that the guidance balances freedom of expression with the responsibilities of freelancers and the expectations of audiences, ensuring the rules are clear, simple, transparent, and enforceable. The report also notes that staff and freelancers outside flagship shows and news and current affairs are not required to uphold the BBC's impartiality on social media.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-68215168> - Gary Lineker has said he is using Twitter/X less often as the platform has become 'increasingly toxic.' The Match of the Day presenter has been criticized in recent years after speaking out on political issues such as the government's Rwanda policy. His comments led to a debate about impartiality rules and BBC presenters' behavior on social media. But Lineker says he is trying to stay away from the 'vitriolic side' of the platform. 'You can't have a nuanced conversation on there anymore so I've stepped away from that side of things,' he said at a Broadcasting Press Guild lunch. 'Obviously [Twitter has] always been a bit of a cesspit and it's become increasingly toxic.' The presenter added the changes made since Elon Musk took over X regarding blue ticks and what users see in their feed means he now sees the more venomous side of the platform more often. 'For your mental health it's probably quite important not to read too much of that,' he added.