# UK government shared counter-terrorism contacts with Israeli embassy amid arms factory protest investigation



Documents obtained by The Guardian reveal that the UK government shared contact details of counter-terrorism police and prosecutors with the Israeli embassy during an investigation into protests at an Israeli arms factory in England, raising questions about potential foreign interference in sensitive criminal matters.

On 9 September last year, the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) sent an email to Daniela Grudsky Ekstein, Israel’s deputy ambassador to the UK, containing contact information for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and SO15, the Metropolitan Police's counter-terrorism command. The email’s subject line read “CPS/SO15 contact details”. This correspondence came just 11 days after a meeting between Nicola Smith, head of international law at the AGO, and Grudsky Ekstein. However, much of the email and the meeting’s contents remain heavily redacted.

The timing of the email coincided with a highly sensitive investigation into activists from Palestine Action, a grassroots group campaigning against Israeli weapons manufacturing. In August 2023, ten activists were arrested under the Terrorism Act following a protest at an Israeli arms factory in England. Several months later in November, an additional eight activists were detained under the same legislation in connection with the incident.

Lydia Dagostino, a solicitor with Kellys Solicitors representing some of those activists, expressed concern over the disclosure. Speaking to The Guardian, she said: “The information disclosed in response to an FoI request clearly raises questions and needs further investigation. Why, for example, did the Attorney General’s Office provide the contact details for the Crown Prosecution Service, an independent body, to the Israelis? What further exchanges followed and was there discussions about ongoing criminal prosecutions?”

Dr Shahd Hammouri, an academic and international lawyer, also highlighted worries regarding evidence suggesting foreign influence in domestic legal matters.

Other previously disclosed documents show that the Israeli embassy had requested AGO intervention in unspecified cases, and held meetings with both AGO officials and Home Office ministers alongside representatives from the Israeli defence contractor whose factory was targeted. In 2023, The Guardian revealed a redacted request from the Israeli embassy to the AGO, to which Douglas Wilson, the AGO’s director general, responded: “As we noted … the CPS makes its prosecution decisions and manages its casework independently. The law officers are unable to intervene on an individual case or comment on issues related to active proceedings.” Wilson was present at the August 2023 meeting with Smith and Grudsky Ekstein.

A briefing note prepared for a meeting between then Home Office minister Chris Philp and the Israeli embassy stated the CPS declined to attend in order to “preserve their operational independence”.

The pro-Palestinian group Palestine Action has criticised the correspondence, with co-founder Huda Ammori stating: “The timing of this correspondence coincides with the ongoing investigation into Palestine Action activists accused of dismantling the […] site of Israel’s biggest arms producer. It seems apparent that the Attorney General’s Office has facilitated foreign interference in this case and potentially other ongoing criminal cases.”

The use of the Terrorism Act in these arrests has also drawn scrutiny from international human rights experts. In November last year, four United Nations special rapporteurs sent a letter to the UK government expressing concern about the “apparently unjustified use” of terrorism legislation against the protesters. They noted that those arrested in August were initially detained for 36 hours without access to legal representation before being held for an additional seven days under counter-terrorism powers, with some detainees facing restrictions on legal support, family visits, healthcare, and religious rights while awaiting trial.

The letter argued: “Counterterrorism legislation, including the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Terrorism Act 2006, appears to have been increasingly used in the context of domestic support for Palestinian self-determination and political activism against the United Kingdom’s foreign policy on the conflict in the occupied Palestinian territory of Gaza.”

Importantly, no charges under terrorism legislation have been brought against those connected with the protest; all 10 individuals charged faced non-terrorism offences.

A UK government source told The Guardian that it has been routine under previous administrations for the Attorney General’s Office to assist embassies in contacting relevant authorities if information might be pertinent to ongoing cases. The source emphasised that decisions regarding prosecution and conviction are made independently by the CPS, juries, and judges.

The Israeli embassy did not respond to requests for comment on this specific matter. In relation to a separate case, an embassy spokesperson previously declared the embassy respects the independence of the UK judicial system and “under no circumstances would interfere in UK legal proceedings”.

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

## References

* <https://www.theguardian.com/> - The Guardian is the primary source for details about the UK government sharing contact details of counter-terrorism units with the Israeli embassy during an investigation into protests at an Israeli arms factory. This information forms the core of the article's claims regarding potential foreign interference.
* <https://www.gov.uk/terrorism-national-emergency/counterterrorism> - This UK government page provides general information on counter-terrorism policies and measures, which contextualizes the legal framework under which the arrests of Palestine Action activists were made.
* <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/t/terrorism-in-the-uk/how-to-report-possible-terrorist-activity/> - The Metropolitan Police's guidance on reporting terrorist activity illustrates the public's role in counter-terrorism efforts and highlights the sensitivity of such investigations, which can involve collaboration with international partners.
* <https://www.un.org/unispal> - The United Nations provides resources and information on the Israel-Palestine conflict, which helps frame the geopolitical context in which Palestine Action operates and why their activities might attract international attention.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/attorney-generals-office> - The Attorney General's Office plays a significant role in legal oversight and coordination, including interactions with foreign embassies, which is relevant to the disclosed emails and meetings related to the Israeli embassy.
* <https://www.cps.gov.uk/> - The Crown Prosecution Service's website explains its role in independently deciding prosecution and managing casework, providing context for why the CPS would maintain operational independence despite external requests or inquiries.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/apr/29/police-and-prosecutors-details-shared-with-israel-during-uk-protests-inquiry-papers-suggest> - Please view link - unable to able to access data