# Gary Lineker removes Instagram post amid antisemitism concerns over rat emoji



Gary Lineker has found himself at the centre of a controversy following his deletion of an Instagram post that he later acknowledged as problematic. The post, which he re-shared from the Palestine Lobby, contained the phrase "Zionism explained in two minutes" alongside an illustration of a rat—a symbol historically used as an antisemitic insult, notably by Nazi Germany to depict Jews. Lineker's agent stated that the presenter removed the post promptly upon realising the unintended implications of the imagery involved. “Whilst viewing and reposting a video, Gary did not notice a rodent emoticon added by the author of the post,” the agent confirmed, emphasising that there was no intention to connect the rat emoji with any derogatory connotation.

This incident follows a series of contentious posts by Lineker regarding Israel and Palestine. Just last month, he sought to draw attention to the ongoing conflict, stating, "What’s going on there [Gaza], the mass murder of thousands of children is probably something we should have a little opinion on." His comments were made in an interview with BBC presenter Amol Rajan, where he insisted that facts override the supposed need for the BBC's impartiality. He argued that the broadcaster had demonstrated partiality in past conflicts, subtly critiquing its approach.

Lineker's previous social media activity, specifically a post urging that Israel be banned from international football due to alleged human rights violations, has also drawn ire from Conservative lawmakers and Jewish community leaders in the UK. This call was made in connection to campaigns advocating for the suspension of Israeli sports membership in response to violations of international law. Once again, upon facing backlash, Lineker deleted the post, clarifying that he misunderstood its intent as merely sharing information rather than promoting a boycott. Critics promptly labelled his actions "ill-informed," prompting discussions around the BBC's guidelines on presenters’ social media engagement.

In a follow-up to the criticisms, Jewish staff members at the BBC lodged formal complaints against Lineker's posts, voicing concerns over potential antisemitism and questioning the BBC’s handling of such issues internally. The BBC responded by assuring that they have robust processes in place to deal with complaints of this nature while offering support to staff who may require it.

The ongoing discourse surrounding Lineker's posts highlights a broader conversation about the responsibilities of public figures, especially those in positions linked to media, when expressing views on contentious subjects. The Board of Deputies of British Jews suggested that the situation could warrant a complete reevaluation of Lineker’s role within the BBC, stating, “He has caused great offence with this video—particularly with his egregious use of a rat emoji to illustrate Zionists.”

This incident not only reignites the dialogue on antisemitism in the media but also raises questions regarding the boundaries of personal expression for BBC presenters. As such discussions unfold, the implications of social media’s reach and impact on public figures continue to evolve, revealing the complexities of contemporary discourse on sensitive global issues.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
2. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
3. Paragraph 3
4. Paragraph 4
5. Paragraph 3
6. Paragraph 4
7. Paragraph 3

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

## Bibliography

* <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c39x0133e2wo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.timesofisrael.com/top-bbc-presenter-gary-lineker-urges-boycott-of-israeli-sports-later-deletes-post/> - Gary Lineker, the BBC's highest-paid presenter, shared and later deleted a post urging FIFA and the International Olympic Committee to boycott Israel over alleged human rights violations. The post, from the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel, called for international sports bodies to suspend Israel's membership until it ends its alleged violations. The deletion followed criticism from Conservative lawmakers and the antisemitism watchdog in the UK. Lineker's agent stated he misunderstood the post's intent and removed it upon realizing the controversy. The incident has sparked discussions about the BBC's guidelines on presenters' social media use.
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/01/15/gary-lineker-social-media-israel-football-team/> - Gary Lineker faced criticism after retweeting a post calling for Israel to be banned from international football due to alleged violations of international law. The post, from the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, urged FIFA and the International Olympic Committee to suspend Israel's membership. Lineker deleted the retweet following backlash from MPs who deemed his action 'ill-informed' and 'inappropriate.' Sources indicated that Lineker misunderstood the post, believing it was about Israel being banned rather than advocating for such a ban.
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/01/23/jewish-bbc-staff-formal-complaint-antisemitism-gary-lineker/> - Jewish BBC staff members filed formal complaints regarding Gary Lineker's social media activity, expressing concerns over alleged antisemitism and the corporation's coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict. The complaints addressed Lineker's sharing and subsequent deletion of a post calling for Israel to be banned from international football tournaments. Staff members also raised issues about the BBC's defense of Lineker and its handling of alleged antisemitism within the workplace. The BBC stated it has robust processes in place to handle such concerns and offers support to staff who may need it.
* <https://news.sky.com/story/gary-lineker-match-of-the-day-host-removes-social-media-post-calling-for-israel-to-be-banned-from-football-13049378> - Gary Lineker, host of BBC's 'Match of the Day,' deleted a social media post that called for Israel to be banned from international football. The post, shared from the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, urged FIFA and the International Olympic Committee to suspend Israel's membership until it ends alleged violations of international law. Lineker believed he was sharing news about Israel being banned, not advocating for it. The BBC did not consider the incident a breach of its social media guidelines.
* <https://inews.co.uk/news/media/gary-lineker-israel-post-breach-bbc-rules-3100317> - Gary Lineker's sharing of a post calling for Israel to be banned from international football has been criticized as a potential breach of BBC's impartiality rules. The post, from the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, urged FIFA and the International Olympic Committee to suspend Israel's membership due to alleged violations of international law. Lineker deleted the post after backlash from MPs and Jewish leaders. The BBC's guidelines prohibit presenters from taking positions on controversial issues that overlap with their broadcasting roles.
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/01/19/gary-lineker-adds-disclaimer-social-media-row/> - Following controversy over a post calling for Israel to be banned from international football, Gary Lineker updated his social media profile to include a disclaimer stating that 'retweets are not endorsements.' The post, shared from the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, urged FIFA and the International Olympic Committee to suspend Israel's membership until it ends alleged violations of international law. Lineker believed he was sharing news about Israel being banned, not advocating for it. The BBC did not consider the incident a breach of its social media guidelines.