# Labour’s failure to condemn antisemitic slogans risks emboldening hate in UK politics



Sir Keir Starmer has once again demonstrated his inability to stand firm against growing antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiments sweeping across London and the wider UK. In a recent event, the Labour leader boldly declared the slogan “from the river to the sea,” a rallying cry that critics widely see as a call for the destruction of the Israeli state, as unequivocally antisemitic. His vocal opposition to London Mayor Sadiq Khan’s attempt to soften the narrative on this hateful chant exposes the Labour Party’s ongoing failure to address, let alone condemn, such dangerous rhetoric.

While Khan attempts to downplay the phrase’s troubling implications, Starmer’s remarks make clear that there can be no ambiguity: this chant promotes violence and the erasure of Israel — an antisemitic insult that fuels hatred, perpetuates antisemitic violence, and undermines the safety of Jewish communities across the UK. Yet, not only has Starmer failed to call for a total ban on such hate speech, but Labour’s record on punishing members who invoke this poison remains underwhelming at best. His entire approach appears designed to placate pro-Palestinian activists rather than protect the Jewish population from rising threats.

Khan’s misguided stance, claiming the phrase’s meaning depends on context, is dangerously naive. It represents a political cowardice that lets antisemitic rhetoric flourish unchecked — a reflection of Labour’s broader failure to confront antisemitism head-on. Such positions only embolden extremist elements and threaten social cohesion. Senior security figures and opposition voices have condemned Khan’s approach, with some describing his refusal to categorically condemn the chant as a betrayal of London’s Jewish community.

Figures like Sir James Cleverly and Reform UK’s London Assembly leader Alex Wilson have called out the disgraceful way in which Khan dismisses the offensive nature of the slogan, highlighting that it explicitly calls for violence against Jews. To deny its malicious intent is to ignore the evidence and risk normalising hate speech. Such rhetoric must be categorised for what it is: incitement, not a mere expression of frustration or political protest.

This ongoing dispute exposes the deeper failures of the current government and opposition alike. Instead of adopting a zero-tolerance policy towards hate speech, including antisemitic slogans, political leaders across the spectrum seem content to debate semantics and permissiveness. The reality is clear: the phrase is a call for the destruction of Israel and, by extension, a direct threat to Jewish communities in the UK. Allowing such dangerous rhetoric to fester only serves to deepen divisions and weaken social cohesion in Britain. The time for nuanced debates is over — hate speech must be unequivocally condemned and eradicated, not politicised and tolerated.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2122331/keir-starmer-sadiq-river-sea-israel> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.lbc.co.uk/article/sadiq-khan-river-to-the-sea-antisemitic-5HjdFF5_2/> - London Mayor Sadiq Khan stated that the chant 'From the river to the sea' is not inherently antisemitic, emphasising the importance of context. Critics argue that the slogan, often heard at pro-Palestinian marches, calls for the destruction of Israel. Khan's comments have sparked controversy, with opponents labelling his stance as a 'disgrace'.
3. <https://dailysceptic.org/2025/10/11/sadiq-khan-called-disgrace-for-claiming-that-from-river-to-sea-chant-is-not-antisemitic/> - Former Labour minister criticises Sadiq Khan for suggesting that the 'From the river to the sea' chant is not antisemitic. The slogan, associated with pro-Palestinian protests, is viewed by some as advocating for the elimination of Israel. Khan's remarks have been labelled as a 'disgrace' by critics.
4. <https://www.thejc.com/news/politics/starmer-sadiq-khan-is-wrong-from-the-river-to-the-sea-is-an-antisemitic-chant-izo75ztl> - Prime Minister Keir Starmer asserts that the chant 'From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free' is antisemitic. His statement contradicts London Mayor Sadiq Khan's previous comments, highlighting a significant political disagreement over the interpretation of the slogan.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/palestinian-protests-sadiq-khan-from-the-river-to-the-sea-chant-antisemitic-b1252098.html> - A dispute arises over pro-Palestinian protests in London after Mayor Sadiq Khan suggests that the 'From the river to the sea' chant is not antisemitic. Critics argue that the slogan calls for the destruction of Israel, while Khan emphasises the importance of context in its interpretation.
6. <https://combatantisemitism.org/cam-news/london-mayor-claims-from-the-river-to-the-sea-chant-not-antisemitic/> - London Mayor Sadiq Khan claims that the 'From the river to the sea' chant is not antisemitic, despite its association with calls for the destruction of Israel. Critics argue that the slogan denies the right of Jews to self-determination and promotes hate speech.
7. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-870244> - London Mayor Sadiq Khan asserts that the 'From the river to the sea' chant is not antisemitic, despite its association with calls for the erasure of the Jewish state. Critics argue that the slogan promotes hate speech and incitement to genocide.