

Grahame Morris MP
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Friday 29th January 2016

Dear Grahame,

I believe that you are planning to host an event in parliament next Tuesday, which Labour Friends of Palestine and the Middle East are promoting, at which Abdel Bari Atwan will be the moderator.

I am not sure if you are aware, but Mr Atwan has made a number of deeply concerning statements in the past. In 2007, he appeared on Lebanese TV and stated: "... Allah willing it [Iran] will attack Israel as well. If the Iranian missiles strike Israel, by Allah, I will go to Trafalgar Square and dance with delight if the Iranian missiles strike Israel".

In 2010, at an appearance at the LSE, Mr Atwan was questioned about these comments. According to a report in the Jewish Chronicle, he then turned to a Jewish questioner and said: "This is a smear campaign against me. Who is bombing? Am I bombing the Israelis? Are Gazans bombing Israelis? Who bombed Gaza? Who killed thousands of people in Lebanon? They should be ashamed of themselves. You are bombing us every day." The JC reports he also suggested that the "Jewish lobby" was "extremely dangerous and is endangering the whole planet, the whole world", and that it "controlled" the American Senate, Congress and media. When asked to condemn Hamas and Hizbollah, Mr Atwan declared: "Do you want me to condemn people for resisting the occupation? Did Hamas commit ethnic cleansing?"

As the LSE's then-antiracism officer, Ben Grabiner, stated at a later point in the meeting to Mr Atwan, accusations of Jewish control of the world, government and media, as well as blaming Jews as a collective for imagined or real atrocities, constitutes antisemitism, as does the use of the term "Jewish" and "Zionist" lobby interchangeably.

I very much hope that, now you are aware of these facts, you will either ask Mr Atwan not to moderate the meeting or withdraw from hosting it yourself, and that the use of LFPME's logo on promotional emails for the meeting will cease forthwith.

I am sure that, like all Labour MPs, you will be keen to demonstrate our party's utter intolerance of antisemitism and revulsion at attacks on Israel.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,



Rt Hon Joan Ryan MP
Chair, Labour Friends of Israel