



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

*Secretary of State for Levelling up Housing &
Communities*

Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

2 Marsham Street

London

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Marie van der Zyl OBE
President
The Board of Deputies of British Jews
55 Ludgate Hill
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6 June 2023

Dear Marie,

Thank you for your letter of 15 May regarding your concerns about Roger Waters' upcoming This Is Not A Drill Tour.

It is unacceptable that Jews in the UK continue to encounter antisemitism. The work that you and the Board of Deputies do is invaluable; I just wish that it was not necessary. We will continue to support efforts to build friendly, working relationships between people of different faiths and to promote tolerance and understanding.

The Government firmly believes that antisemitism is abhorrent and has absolutely no place in civilised society. We appointed Lord Mann as an Independent Adviser on Antisemitism and are considering his recommendations. We also recently increased the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant administered by the CST to £15m, and the Home Secretary announced a new UK Jewish Community Police, Crime and Security Taskforce to ensure we are doing all we can to prevent and respond to antisemitism. Tackling the evil of antisemitism in all its forms is a government priority and we firmly believe that people of all religions and beliefs should feel safe and able to continue their practices freely.

My officials have investigated the ownership of the O2 Arena, which you reference in your letter, and I can confirm that this is not owned by HM Government or our agents.

The Government is clear that everyone has a fundamental right to freedom of speech and artistic expression, so long as they remain within the boundaries set by law. There is also a societal expectation placed on people with a significant public profile to behave responsibly and not abuse their platform. This is an expectation of which Roger Waters is reportedly falling short.

The UK has some of the strongest legislation in the world to tackle hate crime, and if you feel anything that Roger Waters says or does crosses the line into that which is unlawful, this should of course be reported to the Police.

I am of course happy to discuss this further, if you would like. I hope we can continue to work closely together to fight antisemitism.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
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