



University College London

Investigation into the UCLU Friends of Israel Society
event on 27th October 2016 ("the Event")

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OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

1. On the evening of 27th October 2016, the UCLU Friends of Israel Society conducted an event featuring an external speaker, Hen Mazzig (the "Event"). The Event was held to enable the external speaker and participants to discuss his experiences as an ex-commander in the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) unit in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) interfacing between the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority. The event was intended to take place at 19:00 in a seminar room (Room G6 LT) in the Archaeology Department at UCL.
2. The Event was disrupted by a protest organised by a number of pro-Palestinian individuals and groups including some external to UCL. In consideration of the potential for disruption, UCL Security Services ("UCL Security") changed the venue to a new room in 26 Bedford Way. However, protestors entered the building where the event was to take place and so it was

plan for and administer such events

respond to large protests and to major public order incidents on or in the vicinity of campus all with a view to establishing and maintaining the right balance between freedom of speech and the right to protest whilst minimizing the prospect of public disorder on or around campus.

9. Where my investigation finds evidence of misconduct, behaviour contrary to UCL policies

13. The findings of the investigation are being published in this written report which will be made available to the public.
14. The investigation would like to record its thanks to all the individuals who contributed evidence to the investigation and thus assisted its work. In response to the call for written evidence, a total of nineteen formal submissions were received from individuals both inside and outside UCL; nine submissions were from attendees and eight from individuals taking part in the protest. Four individuals were subsequently interviewed in line with the process to clarify specific points. In addition, twenty-five videos and seventeen still images were submitted and the investigation identified a further 113 pages of social media evidence plus relevant CCTV footage from UCL.

LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 15.

included in codes of practice, policies and procedures that students agree to comply with on commencement of their studies.

20. The UCL Code of Conduct for Students is also relevant and provides the following useful definition of good conduct:

the UCLU Friends of Israel Society event. The message did not reflect the fact that due process had been followed in appealing the original decision. It has not been possible to conclusively determine the origin or authorship of this message. The message was widely circulated among student and student society websites and the investigation has identified the message on KCL Action Palestine (Facebook site), Kingston University PalSoc (Facebook site), London School of Economics (LSE) Students' Union Palestine Society (Facebook site) and a posting on 4Chan. The message contains a call to disrupt the event and prevent the speaker from giving his talk.

The message posted online (various lightly edited versions exist) reads:

separate a small number of individuals. This calmed the situation; many people left apparently informed of the new venue. At around 19:30 UCL Security asked everyone within 26 Bedford Way to leave and ultimately the lecture theatre was emptied and secured.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE EVENT ON 27th OCTOBER 2016

59. After the Event finished, the speaker was escorted to his vehicle (dressed in a security high visibility jacket to make him appear like a member of UCL Security staff) leaving from the

entered the Haldane Room through the windows. In doing so they intentionally disrupted and interfered with an event organised by a UCLU student society on UCL premises; and acted in a manner which deviates from the UCL Code of Conduct for Students. I have therefore concluded that the actions of [redacted] and [redacted] in relation to this incident should be considered under UCL's Student Disciplinary Code and Procedure.

2. Testimony and video evidence (described in Appendix 5) identifies UCL student [redacted] as having made a number of statements prior to and during the Event to UCL staff and in public that indicated his planned intention to prevent the Event taking place. This constitutes a deliberate attempt to prevent freedom of expression and intentional disruption and interference with an event organised by a UCLU student society on UCL premises. However, other evidence indicates that [redacted] appeared to assist with the safe management of the protest by interacting with UCL Security staff. I have therefore concluded that the actions of [redacted] in relation to this incident should be considered under UCL's Student Disciplinary Code and Procedure.
3. Outside the Haldane Room, video evidence (described in Appendix 5) and written testimony indicates that UCL student [redacted] engaged in physically aggressive behaviour towards attendees that included attempting to block entry to the Haldane Room, and pushing a female attendee necessitating police intervention. However, video evidence also indicates that [redacted] (para 77, below and accompanying video evidence) played a role in this incident. I have nevertheless concluded that [redacted] actions in relation to this incident should be considered under UCL's Student Disciplinary Code and Procedure.
4. Outside the Haldane Room, evidence (described in Appendix 5) shows that UCL student [redacted] engaged in physically aggressive and insulting behaviour towards attendees. I have therefore concluded that his actions in relation to this incident should be considered under UCL's Student Disciplinary Code and Procedure.

77. The evidence also shows that a small number of non-UCL attendees also behaved in a verbally and physically aggressive manner that protestors found intimidating.

1. Outside the Haldane Room, video evidence (described in Appendix 5) and written testimony demonstrates that an individual that the investigation identifies as [redacted], engaged in physically aggressive behaviour and made comments which could be interpreted as Islamophobic (video evidence external to UCL [redacted]). [redacted] is not a member of UCL staff or student but I have concluded that his actions in relation to this incident were unacceptable on campus.

78.

campus, in particular the factors that created a situation where attendees and protestors came together and aligned in a situation that led to the adverse outcomes described here.

80. These contributing factors failed the protestors as much as the attendees, for they allowed a situation to take place that inflamed passions and tensions by the too-close proximity of those legitimately wanting to protest a speaker whose opinions they did not agree with and those legitimately wanting to hear that speaker.
81. Remedies to prevent a similar situation arising in future, whether with this UCLU Society or any other where freedom of expression might be an issue, must therefore not only focus on individuals who can be identified whose behaviour transgressed UCL codes of conduct, but perhaps more importantly on fixing these latent factors that aligned on the night of October 27th 2016. This will protect both the right to protest and the right to free speech on campus.
82. The investigation has identified four key factors that aligned in this incident:
 - I. An initial failure to accurately assess and report risk and need for Security by the UCLU Friends of Israel Society on their speaker request form. This was an error and did not follow the training provided to UCLU Friends of Israel Society and other student societies. Failure to accurately assess risk and the need for security subsequently put time pressure on events and reduced the ability for UCLU, UCL and the UCLU Friends of

The following individual cannot be considered for disciplinary action by UCL as he is not a member of UCL and was a visitor on campus at the time of the recorded incident. UCL does not have a visitor code of conduct.

1.

The investigation recommends that UCL develops a Code of Conduct for visitors (student and non-student) on campus that sets out expected standards of behaviour, and an appropriate process for dealing with situations where those standards of behaviour are not adhered to.

88. Recommendation 2. The following actions are recommended to strengthen UCL/UCLU event management in order both to encourage and protect free speech and safe legal protest
- a) UCLU Friends of Israel Society officers should be asked to repeat UCLU induction training for student societies to ensure they are thoroughly familiar with the need to accurately report and assess risk in the event management process. UCLU should reassure themselves that all current student society presidents have already received this induction training.
 - b) UCL should redraft its Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (last updated in 2010) to consider (a) simplifying the appeals process with fewer steps (b) include absolute requirements for the timeline in working days of each step, providing sufficient time for an appeals process (c) identification of grounds on which an appeal can be considered (specifically, only on the grounds of new information)
 - c) In redrafting the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, the investigation commends best practice in the sector (e.g. at University of Leeds and University of Manchester^{6, 7}) to include (a) an overview of the context and law and balancing academic freedom and speech with health, safety and sep

89. Recommendation 3. UCL/UCLU together with UCL Security should review and consider revising the operational protocol and training for high risk events. This should explicitly consider
- a) Prohibiting the use of loudspeakers or other forms of amplification in the vicinity of high risk campus events, and revising student and staff codes of conduct to make clear this context-sensitive prohibition.
 - b) Preparing a list of suitable rooms and lecture theatres where an appropriate separation can be maintained between any protestors and attendees at high risk events, including use of temporary restrictions on card access to UCL premises around the venue, and consideration of potential routes of ingress/egress to the venue.
90. Recommendation 4. UCL should take steps to pro-actively promote racial and religious tolerance in university culture and life and consider the following actions:
- a) Convening a UCL Interfaith forum, for staff and students, to seek to increase trust, tolerance and respect between different groups through promoting inter and intra-religious understanding, and with a specific request for the group to have input (as one of many relevant groups) into redrafting the UCL Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech
 - b) Appoint a UCL Senior Management Team Interfaith Champion, in line with existing Race, Gender, Disability and LGBTQ+ Champions, and with a specific request to consider how best to prevent anti-Semitic and Islamophobic incidents on campus.
 - c) Communicate with University of London authorities plus senior management representatives at institutions whose students were associated with the Event, to make them aware of the outcome of this investigation; and invite them to consider actions to

APPENDIX 2

Organisations Referred to in this Report

Community Security Trust – a British charity established in 1994 to ensure the safety and security of the Jewish community in the UK

KCL Israel Society – a society affiliated to KCL

Kingston University

LSE – the London School of Economics

SOAS – School of Oriental and African Studies

UCL – University College London

UCLU – University College London Students Union

UCLU Friends of Israel Society - a society affiliated to UCLU

UCLU Friends of Palestine Society – a society affiliated to UCLU

APPENDIX 3 – EVENT TIMELINE

This event timeline has been collated using evidence gathered from UCL Security, UCL and UCLU on 14th December 2016.

Date & Time	Source	Instance
11 October 2016		
-	UCLU	External Speaker Request received from UCLU Friends of Israel Society by UCLU Clubs & Societies Admin.

		<p>media interest, nor would it require UCL Security</p> <p>The failed to follow external speaker request regulations by advertising the speaker prior to approval.</p>
11:00	UCLU	<p>UCLU Activities and Skills Manager (Societies) phoned the UCLU Friends of Israel Society President and explained why the request was rejected (purely on failing to adhere to regulations and procedures, nothing to do with the speaker himself) and spoke at length with her about her options and offered assistance to help with following procedures</p>

The obligation on UCL to take such steps as

		of risk of violence resulted in police support being requested by Security Management to assist keeping the peace. Occupation discovered at previous venue.
19:15	UCL Security	Fresh venue identified on main Campus. UCLU

APPENDIX 5 – IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS