

# London university hosts event on 'understanding Hamas' led by professor who claimed that labelling Hamas terrorists was an 'obstacle to peace'



*Thanks to Dr Chesler I had notice of this on Monday to enable me to watch out for it. This is the [GB News report](#), the first in the UK press.*

A London university is hosting an event on “understanding Hamas”, led by a professor who taught civil servants that labelling Hamas as terrorists was an “obstacle to peace”.

Students at The London School of Economics (LSE) received an email on Monday evening advertising an upcoming event titled “Understanding Hamas and Why That Matters.”



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The event, which will be hosted by the school’s Middle East Centre on March 10, was described as a launch for a new book of the same name.

The description read: “Across Western mainstream discourse, the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has been subjected to intense vilification. Branding it as ‘terrorist’ or worse, this demonisation intensified after the events in Southern Israel on October 7, 2023.

“This book does not advocate for or against Hamas. Rather, in a series of rich and probing conversations with leading experts, it aims to deepen understanding of a movement that is a key player in the current crisis.

“It looks at, among other things, Hamas’s critical shift from social and religious activism to national political engagement; the delicate balance between Hamas’s political and military wings; and its transformation from early anti-Jewish tendencies to a stance that differentiates between Judaism and Zionism.”

Jewish students at LSE described being disturbed by the email, with one second year named Ryan telling GB News: "It's become clear that LSE does not care about its Jewish or Israeli students. For a higher education institution, which I am paying a lot of money to be at, to promote the discourse that students should seek to 'understand' terrorists is deplorable. It is explicit in stating that Hamas should not be branded as terrorists (despite being proscribed as such by the UK Government) but then goes on to say it does not advocate for or against Hamas. These two statements are mutually exclusive. If the authors (who have been endorsed by the LSE) disagree with the UK Government on its proscription of Hamas as a terrorist organisation, they are advocating for Hamas."

The geography student went on to describe feeling scared at the fact that his fellow peers support similar rhetoric, saying he rarely frequents campus anymore due to the hostile environment.

One of the people advertised as a speaker at the event is visiting LSE Professor Jeroen Gunning, who led a seminar held by The Foreign Office in February 2024 at which officials were told that calling Hamas terrorists was an "obstacle to peace".

A member of LSE's Jewish Society (Jsoc) who wished to remain anonymous echoed similar feelings, saying there was "widespread shock and worry among Jewish and Israeli students and staff as we received news of this event which essentially condones Hamas in its assertion that it has transformed 'from early anti-Jewish tendencies to a stance that differentiates between Judaism and Zionism'."

The Jsoc member described how a recurring theme in the university's response when Jewish students complain is claiming they have to protect freedom of speech. She said: "We are often told because of legal reasons, for example protecting freedom of speech, there is not much recourse when we have an issue."

The master's student added: "I do believe in freedom of speech but I think it's sad how easy it is to host such controversial speakers who spew misinformation about Israel."