



Christians harassed on Via Dolorosa

Christians walking the Via Dolorosa through the Old City of Jerusalem are facing increased harassment, [Church Times reports](#).

“Anti-Christian harassment is undeniably and disturbingly on the rise,” Dr Faydra Shapiro, the the founding director of the Israel Center for Jewish-Christian Relations, told the UK newspaper.

In the latest incident, a group of Church of England ordinands were spat at by a Hasidic Jewish boy.

Dr Shapiro told *Church Times* that more rabbis needed to condemn actions such as this, and to “instruct particularly their young yeshiva students that this kind of behaviour is not only bad manners, but forbidden”.

“We also need to encourage Jews to remember that we are not living in 18th-century Poland, with all of its attendant vulnerability and fear. We are a free people in our sovereign nation. Let’s start acting like it. And remember that the first test of a democracy is how it treats minorities,” Dr Shapiro said.

The Dean of St George’s College, Jerusalem, Canon Richard Sewell, who was leading the ordinands told the paper the group “did not feel frightened or deeply upset, I think it’s symptomatic of a growing problem in the city”.

The Latin Patriarch, Cardinal-designate Pierbattista Pizzaballa, [told Vatican News](#) that harassment had increased in recent months, and that the authorities in Israel were not doing enough to respond to the

issue.

But there were “reasons for hope, because these incidents have spurred strong reactions even from Jewish religious leaders in Israel: I believe that over time this awareness of the problem will bear fruit”.

Dr Shapiro noted the “very difficult historical relationship” that Jews have had with Christianity, and that it was a relationship “that we still have a lot of anxiety about, particularly at a time when anti-Semitism is on the rise around the world”.

In January [two teenagers were charged with vandalising dozens of graves](#) at a historic Protestant cemetery on Mount Zion, close to the walls of the Old City,

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