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Police Probe Repeated Graffiti Attacks on South Yarra Synagogue

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Victoria Police are investigating multiple graffiti attacks on the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation in South Yarra, raising concerns about rising antisemitic vandalism.

Detectives from the Melbourne Crime Investigation Unit are probing a series of vandalism incidents targeting the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, a heritage-listed synagogue in South Yarra, Victoria, with the latest attack occurring overnight on July 30, 2025. The synagogue, located on Toorak Road, was defaced with graffiti reading “war crimes” alongside a Star of David, marking the fourth such incident in five weeks, according to Rebel News. Victoria Police confirmed the vandalism took place around 8:30 PM, and the investigation is exploring potential links to prior attacks, including one

on June 22, 2025, where “Free Palestine” and “Iran is da bomb” were spray-painted in red, per 9News.

Rabbi Shlomo Nathanson, speaking to The Age, condemned the attacks as unacceptable, emphasizing that the synagogue, established in 1841, serves as a place of worship and community, not a political battleground. He urged against bringing Middle East tensions into Australian communities, noting the congregation’s commitment to continue serving despite the vandalism. Cleaners removed the graffiti using specialized chemicals, but the repeated targeting has heightened community concerns, with security footage handed to police, per The Age.

Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan, from the Australian Labor Party (ALP), called the June vandalism “disgraceful” and “senseless,” but the Opposition, led by Brad Battin, criticized the ALP for delays in implementing promised anti-vilification laws, per ABC News. Shadow Police Minister David Southwick, whose electorate includes South Yarra, labeled the attacks “cowardly,” arguing to ABC News that the ALP’s slow response to antisemitic incidents fails to reassure Jewish communities. Victoria Police’s Counter Terrorism Command is assisting, though the incidents are not yet classified as terrorism, per The Age.

The Jewish Community Council of Victoria expressed exhaustion and anger, with CEO Naomi Levin stating to ABC News that the community seeks only to practice their faith in peace. With antisemitic incidents rising—65 reported in Victoria in 2024 per the Executive Council of Australian Jewry—the Opposition demands stronger police presence and legislative action to protect places of worship, per The Guardian. Police are appealing for witnesses to contact Crime Stoppers.

Victoria Police’s Melbourne Crime Investigation Unit is investigating repeated vandalism at the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation in South Yarra, with the latest incident on July 30, 2025, involving graffiti linking “war crimes” to a Star of David. This marks the fourth attack in five weeks, following earlier defacement with pro-Palestine slogans. Rabbi Shlomo Nathanson condemned the acts, while the Opposition criticized the Australian Labor Party (ALP) for delayed anti-vilification measures. Police are reviewing footage and seeking witnesses amid rising antisemitic incidents.