



Subject: Deep Concern Regarding Recent Violence in Amsterdam During the Maccabi Tel Aviv vs. Ajax Match – and an Invitation for Joint Reflection

My name is Matan Segal, and I am reaching out on behalf of *Kick It Out Israel*, a program under the Givat Haviva Center for a Shared Society, dedicated to fighting racism and violence on and around Israeli football fields. For over 21 years, our program has worked to reduce racism, violence, and homophobia in Israeli football, meticulously monitoring stadium events and reporting dangerous, life-threatening trends. We believe that incidents in football don't stay confined to the game, and that matches must not become battlefields where players and fans are subjected to humiliation and violence based on their identity.

In light of the troubling incidents surrounding the recent match between Maccabi Tel Aviv and Ajax in Amsterdam, we are compelled to reach out with a heavy heart. We urge FARE to lead a thorough discussion on preventive approaches for managing high-stakes games prone to tension. As a program dedicated to promoting tolerance and personal accountability while advocating for regulatory and enforcement reforms, we would gladly participate in these discussions and collaborate in designing mechanisms to curb violence and racism in football, both in Israel and globally, to prevent future incidents like those witnessed last Friday.

While *Kick It Out Israel* is an Israeli initiative, we are not blind to the inappropriate conduct by a small number of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans who visited Amsterdam, including racist chants and vandalism, such as the removal of Palestinian flags. Yet, we are even more disturbed by the severe acts of violence following the match, when Maccabi Tel Aviv fans were repeatedly attacked with shocking brutality. It is unacceptable for gangs to attack civilians in a European city and then document these assaults on social media for public entertainment.

I am confident that our two organisations, driven by our shared mandates, recognise the urgent need to explore the increasing connection between sports and national and ethnic tensions, both in stadiums and surrounding areas. I believe the next step should be a collaboration to develop practical recommendations for decision-makers.

We would be very pleased to arrange an online meeting at your earliest convenience to advance actionable steps toward our common goals.

Sincerely,

Matan Segal
kikeitout@givathaviva.org.il
+972-526220802
Kick It Out Israel

