FORM 3 (Rules 6 and 17)

Clergy Discipline Measure 2003

Statement in support of a Complaint, or in support of an Answer to a Complaint

Box for use only by the Registrar of Tribunals	*Statement submitted by:* *Name of maker of statement:* *Date of statement:*

In the matter of the complaint

Enter the name of the complainant.
Enter the name of the member of the clergy about whom a complaint is made.

made by The Board of Deputies of British Jews

against: Rev Dr Stephen Sizer

My full name is: **Right Rev. Riah Abo El Asal**

My contact address, including postcode, is:

PO Box 1007
17110 Nazareth Illit
Israel

***Telephone & e-mail details are optional, but it could be helpful to the registrar and bishop to have them.*

**My telephone number is: +972 (0) 4656 2726

**My e-mail address is: bp.riah@gmail.com

The matters in this statement to which I refer are all within my own knowledge, except where I indicate otherwise. If anything is not within my own knowledge then I set out the source of any matters of information and belief:

You must explain in your statement how you know about each of the matters you describe, ***unless*** *you know about them because you have* ***personally*** *seen or observed them.*

Salaam and grace from our Lord Jesus Christ, and every blessing for a joyous Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

I write to you today in regard to the unwarranted and groundless attacks on the good name of one of your committed and faithful priests, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Sizer, who has powerfully and consistently raised awareness of the plight of our fellow Palestinian and Israeli brothers and sisters, as have many others. He continues to remind us of our Christian duty, to uphold Human Rights, a vital step if, Israel and Palestine are to take committed steps towards a lasting peace. In his opinion, and I share this with him, that a road map of compassion is sorely needed by both sides to end decade long conflict through the fulcrum of peaceful negotiations.

It is right for democratic and public debate to bring to light and criticize Israel's politics which daily violate the basic rights of all Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. It is equally right to speak of Palestinian breaches of international law.

I have known Stephen for over thirty years. I know him as a man of integrity and forthright views with the courage to express those views. He has always been measured , and his message is, and has been, one of Christian faith and the love of truth. His books and his articles are suffused with objective discipline. There is nothing in them, or him, that could be remotely construed as anti-Jewish, anti-Jew, anti-Semite or even anti-Israel as a state.

Importantly, supporting a Pro-Palestinian right of self-determination and or an independent state in accordance with UN Resolutions must not be viewed as being anti-Jewish. This, his view, is also mine.

I have experienced first-hand Israel's obdurate politics, when I received a four year travel ban when suggesting that cultural exchange, dialogue in music, could be, another approach to peace. There was no charge.. Even when I put to Israel that I be tried in court, there was no charge, because, there was no truth in the allegation that I represented a security risk for advocating peaceful exchange. Eventually the ban was lifted and I continued to spread the message of love and reconciliation at home and abroad.

Therefore, if one speaks out and persistently, it is historically clear, that one will be accused of being anti-Semitic and anti-Israel. Stephen has mentioned this in his writings Zion's Christian Soldiers.

Stephen writes: "fear of being accused of anti-Semitism for challenging the Zionist agenda is enough to keep many evangelicals under their beds. In my view, and that of an increasing number of other evangelicals, it is time to speak out because Christian Zionism has become a formidable and dangerous movement. By portraying the modern state of Israel as God's chosen people on earth, the role of the church has been reduced in the eyes of many to providing biblical justification for Israel's colonization of Palestine. Those who oppose her are demonized."

Further Stephen is compassionately aware of Israel, her citizens and the mandate of the church : "It is not an understatement to say that what is at stake is our understanding of the Gospel, the centrality of the Cross, the role of the Church and the nature of our missionary mandate, not least, to the beloved Jewish people". These are not the words of an anti-Semite but the thoughts of a man with genuine concerns for the Church and the citizens of both Israel and Palestine.

Finally, Stephen is a man to be listened to. He is a man of God, in the footsteps of the old prophets, and should be valued by the Church for he has taken up the missionary mandate of the Church, bringing a rare clarity, sincerity of spirit, and persuasive intellect to what has proven thus far, to be an intractable problem, even for the best intentioned, namely a joyful and long awaited peace between Israel and Palestine.

I believe the facts in my statement to be true. I am aware that the contents of this statement may be made public

You must sign and date this statement.

Signed: +Riah

Dated: 27 November 2018