

# Senior UK rabbi arrested after sex-crime investigation

Accusations against Chaim Halpern have divided London's Haredi community since coming to light in the fall

BY MIRIAM SHAVIV | February 20, 2013, 3:30 pm |

**L**ONDON — A man believed to be Chaim Halpern, a London rabbi, was arrested Wednesday morning in connection with investigations into sexual assault and perverting the course of justice.

The London Metropolitan Police will not name him, but the man appears to be Halpern, a former religious judge for the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, who has been at the center of a sexual abuse scandal that has roiled London's Haredi community since October.

Three more men were also arrested Wednesday morning on suspicion of perverting the course of justice in the case. They are all in custody at a north London police station and may be held for up to 48 hours without charge.

One is believed to be a brother of Halpern.

According to the London Metropolitan Police, all the arrests were made at addresses in the borough of Barnet, which includes the Orthodox suburb of Golders Green, where Halpern is a resident. The main suspect is 54; the others are 64, 62 and 25.

Last month, a religious court convened by the UOHC began deliberating on the case of Halpern, who has been accused of inappropriate sexual conduct with approximately 30 women who came to him for counseling and religious guidance. The judges were due to reconvene in early March.

Halpern is a member of one of London's most prominent Haredi families, and attempts to force him out of his public positions have deeply divided the community. Although he resigned as a religious judge and rabbinic adviser to several London institutions in November, he continued to serve as rabbi of his own synagogue. In December, five senior London rabbis issued a public statement declaring him "not fit and proper to act in any rabbinic capacity."

After months of public silence, Halpern recently went on the offensive, earlier this month securing a high court order for Google to identify the IP address of the owner of [lfyoutickleus](#), a blog that

has covered the case closely, as well as the IP addresses of more than 20 commentators on the site. His lawyers claimed the comments were defamatory.

The London Metropolitan Police's Barnet Borough Commander, Adrian Usher, said: "In Barnet, we are currently working with members of all our communities to ensure the voices of victims of abuse are heard. My message to those victims is simple: Come forward and we will listen to, support and believe you."

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