

Hearing: “Addressing the Scourge of Anti-Semitism in Europe”

Testimony Before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN THOMAS KEAN, JR.

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

December 12, 2023

ELAN S. CARR

Chief Executive Officer, Israeli-American Council (IAC)

Former United States Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism

Chairman Kean, Ranking Member Keating, Honorable Members of the Europe Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to testify before you today, and thank you for focusing on the crisis of rising anti-Semitism, which poses a threat not only to Jews, but to society itself.

My name is Elan Carr, and I am the CEO of the Israeli-American Council (IAC), the advocacy and mobilizing organization for the Israeli-American community. During the last administration, I served as the United States Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, in which capacity I led America’s fight against Jew-hatred throughout the world, including in Europe.

Members of Congress, anti-Semitism has been rising dramatically in much of the world for over a decade now, and Europe is no exception. In 2018, the European Union’s Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) conducted a survey of Europe’s Jews, and the results were alarming. Ninety percent of those polled said that anti-Semitism was rising, 85% rated anti-Semitism as the biggest social or political problem in their country, 40% feared that they would be physically attacked within the year, and over one-third reported avoiding Jewish sites or events.¹ The FRA is expected soon to release an updated survey conducted this year,² and we can expect the results to be even worse. Who could have imagined that less than 80 years since the end of the Holocaust, Jew-hatred would be surging, even in the very countries where the Holocaust occurred?

The October 7th pogrom in Israel dramatically accelerated the trends of the past decade. More than 1,000 anti-Semitic attacks occurred in France in the month after October 7.³ In the first week following the Hamas massacre, Germany saw a 240% increase of such incidents,⁴ and in the two weeks after the massacre, hate crimes against Jews in London jumped 1,350%.⁵ One

¹ <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/experiences-and-perceptions-antisemitism-second-survey-discrimination-and-hate>

² <https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2023/major-eu-survey-antisemitism-and-jewish-life-launched>

³ https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/11/05/in-france-1-040-anti-semitic-acts-perpetrated-since-october-7_6230045_4.html#

⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/marking-kristallnacht-pogrom-scholz-expresses-shame-over-anti-semitism-wave-2023-11-09/>

⁵ <https://www.jta.org/2023/10/23/global/london-sees-1350-jump-in-antisemitic-hate-crimes-since-start-of-israel-hamas-war>

might have thought that the murder of 1,200 Israeli children, women, and men, often in acts of incomprehensibly sadistic cruelty, and the kidnapping of 240 more, would have at least temporarily quieted the world’s Jew-haters. On the contrary, the massacre catalyzed a global anti-Semitic frenzy in which Jews have been attacked, bullied, and harassed, and in which genocide against Jews has been either openly or tacitly celebrated.

Three distinct extremist ideologies are driving this disturbing surge in Jew-hatred, both in Europe and here at home: Racial supremacists on the far right see Jews and Jewish organizations as a threat to the cultural or religious purity of the West. Militant Islamists consider Jews to be dangerous heretics who have no place in society, and certainly no place in the Middle East. And neo-Marxists on the radical left pervert concepts of social justice to define Jews as apex predators within an intersectional hierarchy of systemic oppression and racism. This view targets both diaspora Jewish communities and the Jewish state, such that Israel is seen as a White-passing colonialist power against whom any form of so-called resistance is justified.

Propagators of all three poisonous worldviews use the internet and social media to great effect, spreading their venom virally and globally at the speed of a click and rapidly radicalizing thousands.

It is important to remember that each of these three ideologies pose a threat not only to Jews, but to all of us — to our pluralistic societies and democratic values. These are in essence destructive movements whose goal is to dismantle fundamental aspects of our civilization. That goes also for the far right, despite its tendency to cloth hatred in the language of patriotism. At stake, therefore, in this fight against anti-Semitism is not only the future of the global Jewish community, but the very survival of modern Europe and America as we define them today.

Rather than further dwell on the extent of the problem, allow me respectfully to propose seven tangible measures that if implemented would go a long way to reversing this terrible trend:

First, The United States should encourage our European allies to subsidize the cost of security for Jewish communities.

Static security personnel for synagogues and Jewish schools is an essential measure, especially now. Some European governments partially subsidize that cost; for example, the United Kingdom makes an annual grant of £15 million for this purpose.⁶ Many other countries do not. During a diplomatic visit I paid to one such country, a senior leader of its Jewish community told me that it is too costly to take schoolchildren to a nearby park for a field trip because of the need to have additional security personnel escorting the pupils on their walk.

U.S. diplomats should press our allies to help defray reasonable costs of their Jewish communities’ security requirements.

⁶ <https://cst.org.uk/security/government-grant#:~:text=On%20behalf%20of%20the%20Home,Jewish%20communal%20premises%20throughout%20Britain.>

Second, Europe must correct the hostile climate in its universities.

I had met with Jewish student leaders in multiple European countries, and what they reported to me is similar to what I hear from students in America: The price Jewish students must pay for physical safety on campus is their complete divorce from Zionism and the State of Israel. A student embraces Israel and Zionism and his or her peril, I was told. It should go without saying that it is anti-Semitic to coerce Jews to forgo aspects of their Jewish identity, including Zionism and a relationship with the State of Israel.

Since October 7, the campus climate has become dramatically worse. Thirty days after the massacre, the European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS) reported a “horrendous increase” in anti-Semitism and tracked 68 separate incidents on European universities, including physical attacks, vandalism, and anti-Semitic demonstrations.⁷ Even university officials have been a source of the poison. For example, the trade union for the staff of University College London, Britain’s second largest university, passed a motion calling for a “mass uprising” against Israelis and “Intifada until victory”.⁸

Widespread anti-Semitism in educational systems is doubly dangerous, in that it produces the next generation of anti-Semites while inculcating fear in the next generation of Jews. U.S. officials can apply pressure here by making public visits to European campuses, holding press conferences with Jewish student leaders, and pushing our allies to condemn and counter anti-Semitism, including anti-Zionism, in Europe’s universities.

Third, we should work with our allies to implement the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism.⁹

Defining anti-Semitism is a critical first step in combating it, and the IHRA definition is the global standard for doing so. Europe has been a leader in adopting the definition, which as of now has been embraced by over 1,200 entities worldwide.¹⁰ But for the definition to be effective it must be implemented, for example, by incorporating it into the training of law enforcement personnel and university administrators and by employing it as a teaching tool in schools.

We should work with our allies, to increase and improve implementation of the IHRA definition in training and education.

⁷ <https://eujs.org/resources/antisemitism/report-rise-of-antisemitic-acts-and-incidents-in-universities-across-europe-since-7th-of-october-2023/>

⁸ <https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/an-utter-disgrace-ujs-condemns-university-union-calls-for-a-mass-uprising-against-israeli-citizens/>

⁹ <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>

¹⁰ <https://ihra.combatantisemitism.org/>

Fourth, European countries should refuse to harbor militant Islamists.

Reflecting the danger that radical Islam poses to society, a moderate French Imam recently called for the deportation of all militant Islamists who are not citizens of France.¹¹ France had previously expelled several radical Imams who spread anti-Semitism within their communities.¹² Militant Islamist populations are a threat to moderate Muslims, as well as to Jews, Christians, and society as a whole. Political parties in several countries have begun to gain ground by running on this issue. European governments would be wise not to wait for elections before exercising their legal authority to remove dangerous persons who do not hold citizenship.

Fifth, we should hold our allies accountable for casting consistently anti-Israel or pro-Iran United Nations votes.

Some European countries repeatedly vote in favor of overtly anti-Israel resolutions. Just last week, the United States cast the lone vote at the Security Council to veto a one-sided resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. We are grateful to the Biden Administration for doing the right thing here. We should follow up by pressuring, punishing, or publicly challenging European countries whose UN voting record reflects enduring hostility to the Jewish state.

Furthermore, if recent disasters cause a reevaluation of our Iran policy, as I pray they will, then President Biden will be in a uniquely strong position to lead our allies back into a maximum pressure sanctions campaign and to hold them accountable for not following suit. The Islamic Republic is the world’s chief state sponsor of both terrorism and anti-Semitism.¹³ The rogue regime presents an existential threat to Israel and our Arab allies in the Gulf and is a threat to peace and stability in the world. It is high time for the United States and Europe to unite around a strong Iran policy.

Sixth, we should devote resources to countering the torrents of hate on the Internet and social media, without violating free speech protections.

For all the good they bring, the Internet and social media have also been the chief vectors of anti-Semitism and so many other societal ills. A European study found that online radicalization is more efficient, effective, and rapid than radicalization by other means. To address this challenge within the framework of the First Amendment, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and I convened the first-ever U.S.-government sponsored conference focused on combating online hate.¹⁴ A number of solutions were presented, among them using artificial intelligence to analyze social media posts in real time to predict when and where violence is likely to occur; creating partnerships between civil society and internet advertisers so that advertising dollars are

¹¹ <https://tvpworld.com/73424475/french-imam-calls-for-expulsion-of-islamists-from-france-as-country-reels-after-knife-attack>

¹² <https://www.france24.com/en/20120402-france-orders-deportation-five-alleged-islamist-radicals>

¹³ <https://nypost.com/2020/08/18/how-team-trump-is-combating-irans-militant-anti-semitism/>

¹⁴ <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Ancient-Hatred-Modern-Medium-Program.pdf>

voluntarily channeled away from hateful content; creating networks of Internet users who can collaborate to challenge the hateful posts most likely to gain traction; and using social media platforms to educate users on the IHRA definition.

We should continue to encourage this work through follow-on conferences, working groups, and grants, because there can be no complete solution to rising anti-Semitism that does not also focus on the primary vehicles through which hatred is currently being propagated.

Seventh and finally, we should work with Europeans to combat anti-Semitism proactively through philo-Semitism.

No war can ever be won only by playing defense. Going on the offense against anti-Semitism requires proactively inculcating an understanding and appreciation of the history of the Jewish people and the values of Judaism that played a central role in the development of Europe and the West. In 2021, Germany marked 1,700 years of Jewish history within its borders. German leaders understood the importance of teaching about Jewish contributions to society, both as an end in itself and as a weapon against Jew-hatred.

In the United States, thanks to bipartisan Congressional authorization, every May is presidentially designated to be Jewish American Heritage Month. European countries may find it suitable to designate a month in which the contributions of the Jewish people to society will be taught and celebrated each year, and the United States can play a central role in globalizing the practice of Jewish heritage month.

These seven measures do not exhaust the list of what may be done, but they represent actions that will likely produce far-reaching results. If we focus on achievable steps such as these, I am confident that we will roll back this scourge and build the better and more just world that our children and grandchildren so richly deserve.

Thank you again for your time.