



**Statement by Stacy Burdett**

**Vice President, Government Relations, Advocacy & Community Engagement**

**Before the**

**House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

**Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Hearing:**

***Anti-Semitism across Borders***

**March 22, 2017**

On behalf of the Anti-Defamation League, I commend Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and the Members of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations for holding today's hearing on anti-Semitism across borders and for the ongoing effort of this subcommittee to keep the fight against anti-Semitism a priority human rights issue.

Anti-Semitism is a major concern for the Anti-Defamation League – not only because we are a Jewish community organization, but because anti-Semitism, the longest and most persistent form of prejudice, threatens security and democracy and poisons the health of a society as a whole. We view the fight against anti-Semitism today as enhancing and strengthening the fight against all forms of hatred and hate crime. Human rights are universal, and ADL was founded in a belief that safeguarding Jewish rights, or those of any targeted group, advances the cause of rights for everyone.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was established in 1913 to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and secure justice and fair treatment for all.” ADL does not view defending the Jewish people and securing civil rights for others as an “either/or” choice. Rather it always has been a matter of “both/and.” We strengthen our own safety and dignity when we fight for others, and fighting for others strengthens our cause.

This mission has driven ADL to become a leading resource on effective responses to violent bigotry, defending democratic ideals and protecting civil rights for all. Today, ADL carries out its mission through a network of 27 Regional Offices in the United States and abroad.

## **Anti-Semitic Harassment and Violence**

Anti-Semitism is a form of hatred, mistrust, and contempt for Jews based on a variety of stereotypes and myths, and often invokes the belief that Jews have extraordinary influence with which they conspire to harm or control society. It can target Jews as individuals, as a group or as a people, or it can target the State of Israel as a Jewish entity. Criticism of Israel or Zionism is anti-Semitic when it uses anti-Jewish stereotypes or invokes anti-Semitic symbols and images, denies the Jewish right to self-determination, or holds Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel.

Today, overt anti-Jewish discrimination is not state-sponsored as it once was in many countries and it does not bar Jews from full participation in their society. Instead, in many regions, a Jew's right to live in security and to express his/her identity with dignity is threatened by an atmosphere of intimidation, harassment and violence against Jews and Jewish sites like schools, synagogues, shops and cemeteries. It is this everyday fear that prevents Jews in many places from being able to express who they are, to freely wear yarmulkes, Stars of David, or even T-shirts bearing Hebrew lettering or slogans.

Several factors affect the confidence level of Jews to live openly and freely as Jews, and those factors differ in emphasis in different communities. The Jewish communities in France and Hungary are both under significant threat, for instance, but the threats themselves differ significantly. These differ from, for example, South Africa or Argentina.

Key indicators of rising anti-Semitism are: (1) the degree of anti-Semitic attitudes held by the general population; (2) the number and nature of anti-Semitic incidents; (3) anti-Semitism in politics and media; and (4) the reaction of governments and civil society to these incidents. In 2014, ADL released a groundbreaking survey to establish for the first time comprehensive, data-based research of the level and intensity of anti-Jewish sentiment around the world. [The ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-Semitism](#) surveyed 53,100 adults in 102 countries and territories and found that more than one-in-four adults, 26 percent of those surveyed, hold anti-Semitic attitudes. A [follow-up to this survey was done in 2015](#) and found that although anti-Semitic attitudes dropped slightly in European countries such as France, Belgium, and Germany, concern about violence directed against Jews in those countries increased dramatically.

## **When Hate Comes Home**

As recent desecrations of Jewish cemeteries in St. Louis, Philadelphia and Rochester, and the 165 bomb threats (as of 3/21/17) against Jewish institutions in the United States and Canada demonstrate, despite efforts to educate, raise awareness, and advocate, anti-Jewish attitudes and incidents in the United States remain a disturbing part of the American Jewish experience. See Appendix I for a map of where the threats have taken place.

The latest [ADL Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents](#) found that in 2015, there were 941 anti-Semitic incidents, a three percent increase over the 912 incidents reported in 2014. The *Audit* included 56 cases of anti-Semitic assaults, a dramatic increase from the 36 reported in 2014; 508 anti-Semitic incidents of harassment, threats and events, a slight decrease from the 513 in 2014; and 377 cases of anti-Semitic vandalism, an increase from 363 in 2014.

Fringe anti-Semitic conspiracy theorists rarely miss an opportunity to exploit tragedies to promote their hatred of Jews, as they did blaming Jews for events ranging from coordinated terror attacks across Paris in November 2015 to the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre in December 2012 to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Some social media users responded by posting vehemently anti-Semitic messages on Twitter, making accusations similar to those of David Duke or Veterans Today, either blaming Jews themselves for perpetrating the attacks or Jewish control of a number of sectors in the U.S. for inspiring the attacks.

### **Cause for Concern Around the World**

The challenges facing Jewish communities are diverse, even just within Europe. The numbers of documented anti-Semitic incidents in 2016, compared to 2015, were higher in the UK and lower in France, but both communities report increasing concerns about the mainstreaming of anti-Semitic political discourse. In Western Europe, security concerns continue to dominate, although there were no large-scale terror attacks on Jewish targets in 2016. In Central and Eastern Europe, [media](#) outlets like Radio Maryia in Poland, create a toxic atmosphere by broadcasting anti-Semitism. The rise of far-right groups, who may use the refugee crisis or economic distress to foment fear, scapegoating and bigotry, contributed to unease in some Jewish communities.

#### **Sample Best Practice:**

*In May, ADL will host 10 European Jewish students – 19 and 20 year olds – from smaller communities in Europe for a training program on responding to anti-Semitism and anti-Israel bias. This “First Responders” program is co-sponsored by the European Jewish Congress and the Jewish Community of Oslo. The multiplier value of this program is already coming to bear. Two of the Norwegian students in last year’s pilot program are conducting their own seminar this Sunday for non-Jewish Norwegian students to explain anti-Semitism to them and speak about anti-Semitism related to criticism of Israel.*

In Latin America over the past few years, there has been a region-wide increase in anti-Semitic expressions and attacks directed at Jewish individuals and institutions, primarily via the internet and social media. Venezuela continues to be a country where state-endorsed anti-Semitism is systematic and affects government policies everyday life for Jews. Argentina, where the Jewish community has been target of infamous anti-Jewish terrorist attacks, continues to be the country with the greatest number of reported anti-Semitic incidents in the region. Smaller countries like Costa Rica and Uruguay, where anti-Semitism was practically negligible, are now facing new challenges. In [Uruguay](#), for example, in March 2016, a Jewish businessman was stabbed to death by a man who said that “he killed a Jew following Allah’s order.”

Across the Middle East, anti-Semitic themes and conspiracy theories populate the print and broadcast media. For example, following the 2016 US presidential elections, [editorial cartoons featured “Jews” as the real victor](#). In Iran, state-sponsored anti-Semitism continues to be a reality. The Islamic Republic’s top officials espouse anti-Jewish and anti-Israel conspiracy theories, including Supreme Leader Khamenei who has [referred](#) to Israel as a “cancerous tumor” and expressed support for Palestinian violence to fight Israel’s existence. And, in the spring of 2016 a [“Holocaust Cartoon” contest](#) was held, with the official sponsorship and support of the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

Violent expressions of anti-Semitism, including encouragement of attacks against Jews and Jewish or Israeli institutions, have been at the core of propaganda distributed by Al Qaeda, ISIS, and other Islamic extremist terrorist groups for decades. In 2015, ADL's report, "Anti-Semitism: A Pillar of Islamic Extremist Ideology," describes the way in which terrorist organizations rely on depictions of a Jewish enemy to recruit followers, motivate adherents and draw attention to their cause.

### **Tackling Anti-Semitism Online**

Online hate speech is global by nature. A call to kill Jews can be uploaded in the Middle East and watched around the world at any time. Proponents of hate inject anti-Semitic content, inferences and narratives into every platform from @killjews on Twitter, to a *Jewish Ritual Murder* page on Facebook, to a *Jews Did 9/11* video on YouTube to anti-Semitic memes to Stormfront.org, a multilingual racist website which has existed since the dawn of the Internet.

During the 2016 campaign, [ADL documented](#) a shocking level of anti-Semitic harassment targeting Jewish journalists on Twitter. ADL found a total of 2.6 million tweets containing anti-Semitic language shared on Twitter between August 2015 and July 2016. Those tweets had an estimated 10 billion impressions (reach), which helps reinforce and normalize previously taboo anti-Semitic language— on a massive scale.

ADL engages international organizations on the issue of cyberbullying in for a like UNESCO's conference in Seoul, South Korea on cyberbullying, or by reporting the online harassment of refugees and migrants to stakeholders in the UN's Alliance of Civilizations. ADL is involved in several NGO global networks to combat cyberhate and cyberbullying. Governments should be banding together in their multilateral bodies to do the same.

The ADL Cyber-Safety Action Guide, available at [www.adl.org/cybersafetyguide](http://www.adl.org/cybersafetyguide), features tabs where visitors may access information on submitting complaints and reporting hate speech to the major online companies, including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. The ADL resource links users to each company's cyber-bullying and harassment policies and terms of service, as well as links directly to online complaint forms.

For each Internet company, the ADL resource identifies:

- The company's general hate speech policy, if one exists;
- Information on the company's cyber-bullying and harassment policy;
- Links to pages and/or an e-mail address where users may lodge a formal complaint.

Because of the enormous volume of uploaded content, companies typically rely on users to bring offensive speech to their attention. This tool enables internet users to better use their voices. Companies such as Amazon, AT&T, Comcast, eBay, Facebook, Google, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr., Twitter, Vimeo, and YouTube are represented and many have spoken in support of this effort. To address the growing problem of online hate in Latin America, ADL released the *Cyber Safety Action Guide* in Spanish.

In 2014, ADL published “Best Practices for Responding to Cyberhate,” the outcome of months of discussions and deliberations by an industry Working Group on Cyberhate convened by ADL. ADL shared the guide with the European Commission to serve as a guide for its cyberhate discussions with industry. Those EC negotiations culminated in a Code of Conduct agreement between the Commission and industry. ADL has also been invited to present the Best Practices document in France at a meeting organized by the French Jewish community organization, CRIF, with representatives from the French government, law enforcement, the leadership of companies like Google, Facebook, Twitter, and key NGOs.

*Sample Best Practice:*

*Next month, ADL will convene a forum to bring together senior global policy leaders from Google, Facebook, Microsoft and other technology companies and Jewish community leaders from around the world. Over a dozen Jewish leaders from Europe, Latin America, Canada, and South Africa will hear from industry policymakers and ADL experts about advances in combating cyberhate, remaining challenges, and they will have an important opportunity to pose questions directly to decision makers in the industry.*

**Anti-Semitism Doesn’t Exist, or Grow, in a Vacuum**

Anti-Semitism flourishes in the context of, and often in conjunction with, persecution of other groups on the basis of religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, or ethnicity. In order to effectively fight anti-Semitism and bigotry, no one group should fight hatred in isolation.

This year in particular xenophobic and hateful rhetoric dominated political discourse in several European and Eurasian countries, and this rhetoric was often matched with hate-inspired violence. For example, in some countries, the rise of far-right groups, who may use the refugee crisis or economic distress to foment fear, scapegoating and bigotry, contributed to a wave of xenophobic violence. Perhaps most stunning is the case of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party in Greece, which polled third in national elections in September 2015 even though its entire leadership is on trial for its role in dozens of violent attacks—including murders—targeting migrants and others<sup>1</sup>.

*Sample Best Practice*

*Through ADL’s Partners Against Anti-Semitism (PAAS) program, diverse members of civil society in Hungary & Greece, from Jewish, LGBT, Roma, migrant, and other targeted communities launched advocacy efforts against anti-Semitism and hate. In each country, activists worked together in the first coalition of its kind to directly address anti-Semitism and bigotry in Europe where the problem is severe and efforts to counteract it are oft-met with public indifference or resistance. ADL equipped participants with concrete strategies for confronting anti-Semitism at all levels of politics, civil society, and community life and funded projects to expand public awareness and engagement by a broader range of stakeholders to reject anti-Semitism expressed in the public discourse and fomented by political parties.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Scorecard on Hate Crime Response in the OSCE Region, Anti-Defamation League and Human Rights First (2016). See appendix II. Also available at: [http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/ADL-HRF-HateCrimes-Scorecard-11.28.16.final\\_.pdf](http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/ADL-HRF-HateCrimes-Scorecard-11.28.16.final_.pdf)

Governments bear the primary responsibility to ensure that Jews are afforded the same rights as others to live in security and with dignity in their communities. Whether it is espoused by hate groups on the margins or political parties garnering support in elections, governments and civic leaders can mobilize political will to reject anti-Semitism and its messengers and to use human rights and anti-discrimination instruments related to anti-Semitism and intolerance.

### Recommendations for Action

Below are recommendations for Congress to institutionalize a systemic, comprehensive strategy against anti-Semitism and other forms of violent bigotry.

1. **Start by using our government's own bully pulpit to speak out.** Political leaders have the most immediate and significant opportunity to set the tone of a national response to an anti-Semitic incident, an anti-Semitic party or an anti-Semitic parliamentarian. Nothing gives a greater sense of security than seeing anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry publicly rejected. This signals that the government takes seriously the impact of this climate on the community.
2. **Prioritize combating anti-Semitism and hate crimes on bilateral and multilateral organization agendas.** The U.S. should let our allies know that addressing anti-Semitism and hate crime is a core part of our bilateral agenda and within multilateral institutions, including the United Nations. Congress has a central role to play in promoting this emphasis both within the State Department and in your own bilateral contacts and outreach to foreign officials.
3. **Monitor and Spotlight the Problem:** Sunlight is the best disinfectant. U.S. reporting on anti-Semitism as a human rights and religious freedom issue is an indispensable tool in spotlighting the problem and a tool for U.S. diplomacy. Congress has been a vital driver of expanding and improving U.S. reporting on anti-Semitism and other human rights violations and your support for the State Department's annual country reports on human rights and on international religious freedom matters.
4. Members of the Subcommittee can **join the 115th House Bi-Partisan Taskforce for Combating Anti-Semitism**, a forum to collectively denounce anti-Semitic incidents and to support enforcement and prevention efforts. The Taskforce also provides a legislative platform to promote Holocaust remembrance and to mobilize leadership against hatred at home and around the world.
5. **Urge the swift appointment of a strong Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism** and support robust work of the Special Envoy's Office. This will ensure that the U.S. maintains a specialized focus on anti-Semitism and a dedicated effort to mobilize the arsenal of U.S. diplomatic tools to respond.
6. **Equip U.S. Diplomats with Training** to Sustain Improvement in U.S. Reporting and Response. Anti-Semitism is a continuously mutating phenomenon that is not always easy to discern. The Special Envoy expanded training on anti-Semitism in the State Department's Foreign Service Institute to give diplomats the understanding and tools to recognize anti-Semitism and the contemporary forms it takes. The Foreign Service Institute course on "Promoting Human Rights and Democracy" should consistently include such training.

7. **Congress and the Administration should have visible contact with Jewish communities that feel under siege.** Every trip is an opportunity to elevate the fight against anti-Semitism. Let your counterparts abroad know that addressing anti-Semitism and hate crime is a core concern. Members can emphasize this in own bilateral contacts and outreach to foreign officials.
8. **Combating anti-Semitism and hate crimes should be part of the full array of human rights and democracy programming.** Training and assistance programs should include a focus on improving the policing and prosecution of anti-Semitic and other hate crimes. Much more can be done to leverage the international visitor program as well as trainings geared toward law enforcement such as the Department of Justice OPDAT and ICITAP programs or training delivered through U.S. International Law Enforcement Academies (ILEA), that reach governmental and law enforcement audiences around the world.
9. **Support a robust foreign affairs budget** to make U.S. efforts against global anti-Semitism, hate crime, and terror possible. Our ability to fight global anti-Semitism and extremism hinges on having the resources to successfully engage in the world, and to help prevent unstable areas from becoming breeding grounds for violent extremism.
10. **Lead by Example:** Strengthen the fight against anti-Semitism and intolerance at home. Congress has been instrumental in calling on countries to monitor and combat anti-Semitism on the international stage. Legislators also have the ability to strengthen America's efforts to address and prevent anti-Semitism and hate crime here at home. Leading by example requires helping law enforcement, communities, and schools implement effective hate crimes prevention programs and activities. Learn about what law enforcement agencies in your Congressional district are doing to report hate crime and whether any of the 3,441 police agencies that don't participate in this reporting are in your district.

Appendix I.

## Bomb Threats Against Jewish Institutions, 2017

Source: Anti-Defamation League



 Other Jewish Institution    JCC    School    ADLADL Office

Highcharts.com  Natural Earth