

15 September 2017

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I want to draw your attention to a new phenomenon, which so far has been especially pronounced in Ukraine (at the state level), but it poses a danger to the Jews of many countries of Eastern Europe. It is about the so-called indirect anti-Semitism - a practice not formally directed against Jews, but in fact insulting their dignity. It is about the glorification of the executioners of the Jewish people. In April 2015, Ukraine passed a law "On the legal status and respect for the memory of the fighters for the independence of Ukraine in the 20th century"

In this law, Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevych, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and others were all equated with defenders of Ukrainian independence, all those who either inspired the executioners of the Jewish people during the Second World War or directly participated in the murders.

According to Art. 6 of this Law any negative statement about these characters, made publicly, is a criminal offense. All this is perceived by the Jews as mockery of the memory of their ancestors, whom the newly-minted heroes killed.

Given that the policy of glorification of the executioners of the Jewish people since April 2015 is officially supported by Ukraine, we can talk about the revival of state anti-Semitism in this country.

Unfortunately, this fact remains beyond the attention of the anti-Semitism commissioner, Rabbi Andrew Baker, who insists on the adoption by the OSCE of a working definition of anti-Semitism proposed by the international task force on perpetuating the memory of the Holocaust (IHRA) in Bucharest. This definition is good to everyone except one. It clearly does not take into account the new reality, which is exciting today not only for the Jews of Ukraine, but also for the Jews of Russia, where there are also attempts to glorify by individual radicals Cossacks who collaborated with Nazi Germany, the Jews of Hungary, where Horti, Romania and many others are still popular in some quarters countries. It was just in Ukraine that it first came to the state level.

If we do not take urgent measures today, in a few years we will witness an unprecedented growth of already direct manifestations of anti-Semitism, primarily in Ukraine.