



United States Mission to the OSCE
Statement on Tolerance and Non-discrimination
at HDIM Session 7

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Michael Kozak, Head of Delegation
September 14, 2017

My delegation condemns all forms of hate. Today, religiously motivated manifestations of hate are persisting, evolving, and erupting in unprecedented ways across the OSCE region, giving new urgency for participating States to respond with immediate, definitive action.

Both age-old and contemporary forms of anti-Semitism are given unprecedented reach by the use of mass media, including online technologies. Anti-Semitic violence continues to rise across the OSCE region. There is no justification for anti-Semitism. Opposition to Israeli government policies is a legitimate form of freedom of expression. But attacking Jewish communities and individuals in the name of protesting Israeli government policy is a clear form of anti-Semitism. Physically assaulting Jews, destroying Jewish schools, or desecrating synagogues and cemeteries, or otherwise holding all Jews responsible for the policies of Israel is anti-Semitic.

We urge all governments to denounce and combat anti-Semitism and to work with Jewish communities to best protect them. In my country, threats to Jewish community centers earlier this year elicited condemnation across the political spectrum and led to prompt Federal investigations, resulting in the identification and prosecution of perpetrators. Swift response sends the signal that such violence will not be tolerated.

In the OSCE region, some extremist groups have espoused messages and agendas that are frighteningly reminiscent of the Holocaust era and target religious, ethnic and racial minorities, migrants, and other vulnerable populations. Educating our youth to recognize and condemn such hatred in all of its ugly forms is critical. As Holocaust survivors and rescuers age, opportunities dwindle for youth to hear first-hand accounts of how hatred turned into mass murder, genocide, and destruction on an unprecedented scale.

My delegation strongly supports the September 14 OSCE side-event on combating anti-Semitism through education, featuring the "Turning Words into Action" Project initiated under the German OSCE Chairmanship. We welcome the Project's new guide to "Understanding anti-Semitic hate crime and addressing the security needs of Jewish communities." The guide identifies tools that governments and communities can use to combat anti-Semitism, including the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of anti-Semitism. We commend ODIHR for using this definition. We also applaud the European Parliament for its June resolution calling on member states and their institutions to adopt and apply the working definition. The United States applies the working definition, as do a number of OSCE participating States, and we urge all those who have not done so to put it to practical use at all levels of government.

We are also deeply concerned about intolerance and violence toward Muslims. There is a growing trend of governments across the OSCE region and elsewhere imposing restrictions on

the ability of Muslims to freely practice their faith, including limitations on religious practices and attire. In the aftermath of high profile terrorist attacks, false perceptions equating all Muslims with terrorists have contributed to steep increases in anti-Muslim rhetoric and violence. In the United Kingdom, for example, reports indicated a 500% increase in anti-Muslim societal attacks the month after the May 2017 suicide bombing in Manchester. Online and in-person attacks, especially targeting Muslim women in religious attire, increased after the Brexit referendum vote. We commend the United Kingdom for taking action against this scourge.

The United States is not immune from these problems. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's most recent report of hate crimes statistics showed a 23% rise in religion-based hate crimes from 2014 to 2015, including a rise in anti-Muslim hate crimes from 154 incidents to 257 incidents, and a rise in anti-Jewish incidents from 609 incidents to 664 incidents.

Our Attorney General has made combating hate crimes a high priority. The Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety that he established this year includes a subcommittee dedicated to combating hate crimes. In June, that subcommittee hosted a summit in which U.S. Department of Justice leaders met with subject-matter experts from 60 civil society organizations. Educating the public and building bridges of understanding between communities improves societal cohesion and must be an integral part of combatting intolerance. At the summit, the community leaders identified and shared suggestions for improving collaboration between law enforcement and affected communities to build trust and to improve training, enforcement, and data collection.

Good data is essential to developing good policy. The United States supports the work of ODIHR's Hate Crimes Unit and its efforts to collect comprehensive data. Absent disaggregated information on specific motive and impacted populations, we cannot tell whether policy efforts are helping, hurting, or having no effect whatsoever. Participating States can make efforts to combat hate crimes more effective by: disaggregating data, by both type of crime committed and type of bias involved, and by using common criteria for identifying hate crimes. We also encourage participating States to work with civil society to develop strategies for addressing the multi-faceted problem of underreporting, including barriers that impede survivors from reporting the crimes committed against them.

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