



United States Mission to the OSCE

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Working Session 16: (specifically selected topic): Combating racism, xenophobia, intolerance, and discrimination

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At home and across the OSCE region and the world, the United States remains committed to working with government at all levels, businesses, faith communities, civil society groups, and international organizations to make clear that there can be no room for hate crimes against anyone, anywhere, for any reason. All states must meet such crimes with a strong law enforcement response.

In the United States, the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 has enabled the U.S. Department of Justice to bring hate crimes charges in close to 200 cases over the past decade. This includes 32 convictions for hate crimes offenses since January 2017 based on bias characteristics of race, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation.

In the past year, the United States has pursued justice for many hate crimes victims. Attorney General Jeff Sessions called the conviction in April of three men who plotted to bomb the mosque and homes of Somali immigrants in Garden City, Kansas, “a significant victory against domestic terrorism and hate crimes.”

In May, a Kansas man was sentenced to life in prison for shooting two Indian nationals and a third person who tried to intervene, killing one of the victims. As the U.S. Attorney’s office said at the time, “hate crimes are acts of evil, and the Department of Justice has prioritized their zealous prosecution.”

Last year, our nation was shocked when a neo-Nazi sympathizer drove his car into a crowd of protestors in Charlottesville, Virginia, resulting in the tragic death of activist Heather Heyer. We share the grief of those who mourned her death this year on the anniversary of her murder. On June 27, the perpetrator was charged with “a hate crime act, and racially motivated violent interference with a federally protected activity.” As Attorney General Sessions said, the indictment should send “a clear message to every would-be criminal in America that we aggressively prosecute violent crimes of hate that threaten the core principles of our nation.”

U.S. federal authorities continue to work closely with civil society and state and local law enforcement across the country to provide training, outreach, and other initiatives

to equip communities with tools to address hate crimes. This includes helping these organizations understand what constitutes a hate crime so that they can be investigated and prosecuted.

In the words of Attorney General Sessions, “No person should have to fear being violently attacked because of who they are, what they believe, or how they worship. The Department of Justice will continue to protect the civil rights of all Americans — and we will not tolerate the targeting of any community in our country. [...] Hate crimes are not only violent attacks on our fellow citizens, they are an attack on our country’s most fundamental principles. We have a duty to make sure that all Americans can live their lives without fear.”

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