



United States Mission to the OSCE

Working Session 12 **Specifically selected topic: Combating hate crimes and** **ensuring effective protection against discrimination**

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Today's special sessions on combating hate crimes and ensuring effective protection against discrimination are especially timely. In recent months, our nation has mourned the reportedly racially motivated murders of nine African-Americans during a church service in South Carolina. In August, a state jury convicted a man of murder for killing three people, who it turned out were Christian, outside Jewish centers in Kansas last year. We have also witnessed an increase in hate crimes against Muslims and others mistaken to be Muslim, such as Sikhs, in recent years. In response to these appalling crimes, our President, opinion leaders, and Americans of many faiths, races, and backgrounds in communities across our country joined together to reaffirm that our diverse nation stands as one against hatred and intolerance.

Our Department of Justice (DOJ) continues to investigate hate crimes, provide support to families and communities affected by hate crimes, and collect and publically report hate crimes data. DOJ has expended considerable resources in its investigation and review of more than 100 cold-case homicides from the civil rights era of the 1960's. Several of those investigations are still ongoing. DOJ has vowed to pursue them for as long as it takes to serve justice.

It is painfully apparent that my country continues to wrestle with the heavy legacy of racism and discrimination, the ugly reality of hate, and the terrible human cost of hate crimes. We have drawn some lessons from our national experiences, both historical and more current, and we continue to participate in numerous international exchanges of views and discussions of lessons learned. The U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism visited Paris and Copenhagen earlier this year, following the tragedies in those locations. The U.S. Special Representative to Muslim Communities visited France, the United Kingdom, Austria, the Netherlands, and Germany, where he met with Muslim and other minority community leaders on their respective efforts to counter discrimination, promote civic integration, and build civil society institutions. We also welcomed **French** government officials to our country seeking collaborative efforts. In **Greece**, DOJ officials and U.S. civil rights leaders met with government officials and civil society representatives on the legal and other tools to monitor and combat hate crimes. In **Brussels**, the United States supports the *Transatlantic Inclusion Leaders Network* focused on empowering diverse young political leaders to combat intolerance and advance inclusive policies.

Participants from that program have worked to build bridges between Jewish and Muslim communities, to draft legislation to counter racial profiling, and to create a **Swedish** knowledge center on racism in response to the high rate of hate crimes against Afro-Swedes.

As many speakers today will attest, troubling trends of intolerance, discrimination, and hate crimes continue across the OSCE region. We applaud French Prime Minister Valls' strong denunciation of anti-Semitism in **France** following the attacks earlier this year. Notwithstanding that denunciation, anti-Semitic attacks continue, including the assault on a Rabbi, numerous attacks on

Jewish school children, and the vandalizing of Jewish graves and other property. Similar incidents have been observed in other countries in the region. The establishment of an anti-Semitism Commission in **Germany**, and increased security assurances in the **United Kingdom, France, and Belgium**, as well as efforts to engage civil society leaders in speaking out against anti-Semitism, can assist in the protection of Jewish communities. In **Hungary**, OSCE officials have noted concern about the rehabilitation of controversial historical anti-Semites.

Acts of anti-Muslim bigotry have spiked in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Paris and elsewhere. In **France**, mosques have been defaced, workplace discrimination has been widely reported, and three-quarters of anti-Muslim hate crimes are attacks on veiled women. Thirty Muslim girls in **Belgium** were not allowed to attend school for wearing long skirts as an expression of their faith. We commend the French Education Minister's public rebuke of efforts to remove school lunch choices for Muslim and Jewish students in some parts of **France** and the Interior Ministry's engagement with the Muslim community on hate crimes. Similarly helpful is **German** Chancellor Merkel's statement that "Islam belongs to Germany" when she joined hundreds of thousands of Germans in counter protests against anti-Islamic marches through German streets.

We look forward to the Annual Colloquium of the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency conference: "*Tolerance and respect: preventing and combating anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hatred in Europe.*" It will be held on October 1 and 2, 2015, in Brussels and ODIHR will participate. We also welcome the sentencing of **Russian** ultranationalists, such as Ilya Goryachev, who was involved in the deaths of human rights defenders and four Russian citizens from the Caucasus, including former Thai boxing world champion Muslim Abdullayev. The strengthening of hate crimes laws in **Germany and Sweden** is also welcome and timely, given the alarming rise in attacks on migrants and persons of African descent, respectively.

In the OSCE region, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex persons are subjected to discriminatory laws and practices, and are frequently the targets of violent hate crimes. We are troubled by the **Turkish** authorities' decision this June to disperse by force, with water cannons, rubber bullets, and tear gas, a peaceful rally in support of the human rights of LGBTI persons. In previous years this assembly had been permitted. In contrast, in **Serbia** last Sunday, we were pleased to see that law enforcement officers provided protection so that the LGBTI Pride parade could safely take place.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, societal violence against LGBTI persons and organizations has increased over the past year, and a draft so-called anti-LGBTI propaganda law threatens to criminalize messages that propagate "a positive attitude towards non-traditional sexual relations." In **Tajikistan**, harassment, arbitrary detention, extortion, and exploitation by police of LGBTI persons continue. And in **Russia**, a so-called anti-LGBTI propaganda law has created an environment conducive to discrimination and abuse against LGBTI persons. In July, the founder of the online forum "Children 404," which had long suffered invasive inspections and harassment by the authorities for its efforts to provide essential support to vulnerable LGBTI teenagers, was convicted under the law and fined, and in September, the online forum was blocked along with those of four other LGBTI organizations. In a positive development, in **Kazakhstan**, a Constitutional Council ruling found an anti-LGBTI propaganda provision in a Child Protection law unconstitutional.

The United States strongly condemns all hate-motivated crimes against our fellow human beings and supports efforts to combat them. Such abhorrent crimes are an assault on the dignity and integrity of the human person that we pledged under the Helsinki Final Act to respect.