

Statement by the Delegation of CANADA

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Human Dimension
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Yves Beaulieu
Deputy Head of Delegation

HATE CRIME AND DISCRIMINATION

Thank you.

Canada takes the issue of hate crime very seriously. It is important that all Canadians and indeed, citizens across the OSCE region are safe within their respective communities.

The *Criminal Code* of Canada has specific legislation to address crimes motivated by hate, which we wish to highlight to other OSCE participating States for reference. The *Criminal Code* provides that evidence that an offence was motivated by hate, bias or prejudice based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar factor shall be considered as an aggravating factor in sentencing an offender. The *Code* also creates a specific crime of mischief in relation to a building that is primarily used for religious worship, where the mischief is motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate based on religion, race, colour or national or ethnic origin. Additionally, the *Criminal Code* also has the following crimes of hate propaganda: advocating or promoting genocide against an identifiable group; inciting hatred against an identifiable group in a public place which is likely to lead to a breach of the peace”, and wilfully promoting hatred, other than in private conversation, against an identifiable group.

The Government of Canada has undertaken a number of initiatives in combating hate crime. A key crime prevention project is the Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Pilot Program, to help enhance the security infrastructure of communities targeted by hate-motivated crime. This program provides funding to help defray the costs of security infrastructure for places of worship, educational institutions, and community centres.

Canada’s national police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has engaged through initiatives such as:

- the adoption of a Bias-Free Policing Strategy that makes clear that national police force members provide equitable policing services to all people, while respecting diversity;
- development of a presentation for youth on preventing hate crime, which explains what hate crimes are, how these crimes impact the victims and the community, and what Canadian students can do to prevent them;

- establishing a RCMP Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Visible Minorities, which provides the RCMP with advice on policies related to recruiting, training, advancement and promotion of visible minority RCMP employees.

Mr. Chairperson,

Canada's policy of multiculturalism is focused on creating intercultural understanding. Nevertheless, Canada is not immune to racism and discrimination, including Antisemitism. Research demonstrates the sad reality of prejudice against and hatred of Jews in Canada. Data gathered under the Government of Canada's Nationally Standardized Hate Crime Data Initiative indicates that Jews are the most likely religious group to be targeted for hate crimes, comprising 16% of all such crimes recorded in Canada in 2008, even though Jews constitute less than 1% of the Canadian population.

Our government condemns Antisemitism whether it occurs in Canada or throughout the world. As Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said, "most people...recognize Anti-Semitism for what it is, a pernicious evil that must be exposed, confronted and repudiated whenever and where ever it appears, an evil so profound that it is ultimately a threat to us all."

Canada is combating Antisemitism in different ways: we have joined the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research. We are funding projects to educate Canadians about immigration restrictions imposed on Jews before and during the Second World War, which were in part motivated by Antisemitic sentiments. We have created a Security Infrastructure Project to help protect vulnerable institutions like synagogues and Hebrew schools from violent threats.

Canadian parliamentarians have also been active in combating Antisemitism. They created an all-party Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism and will be hosting the 2nd annual Inter-parliamentary Coalition on Combating Antisemitism (ICCA) Conference in November 2010. These initiatives build upon progress made by the ICCA, as well as the OSCE, the European Union, national parliaments, and individual parliamentarians who have acknowledged that Antisemitism constitutes a real danger to society.

While continuing the general focus on combating all forms of hatred, the Government of Canada also recognizes that hatred can manifest itself in specific ways and may require specific responses, as in the case of Antisemitism. We also recognize that Anti-Semitism constitutes a uniquely durable and pernicious form of hatred.

Canada would like to thank the OSCE Personal Representative, Rabbi Baker, for his excellent work in the fight against Antisemitism and in promoting tolerance in the OSCE.

Mr. Chairperson,

My Delegation would like to offer the following recommendations to the OSCE:

- Canada encourages OSCE participating States to collaborate in working on a list of biases for hate-motivated crimes, including sexual orientation, in future OSCE commitments made in combating hate crimes.
- Canada encourages participating States to further develop data collection systems on hate-crime, which will contribute to identifying the groups being targeted and assist authorities to address violence against identifiable groups,
- We encourage all governments to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to Antisemitism.
- We recommend that all participating States support the London Declaration on Combating Antisemitism;
- We invite parliamentarians from OSCE countries to attend the Inter-parliamentary Coalition on Combating Antisemitism Conference November 7-9 in Ottawa, Canada;
- We urge all participating States to uphold the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust (2000) and participate in or cooperate with the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research.

Merci, Monsieur le Président.