

Anti-Defamation League, United States
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In 2011 Anti-Semitism remains relatively unchanged warranting a renewed call for action on commitments previously made. An annual audit by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) shows the number of anti-Semitic incidents in the United States remained constant in 2010, with a total of 1,239 incidents of assaults, vandalism and harassment reported during the calendar year. Data reported by American law enforcement consistently shows that Jews continue to be the number one target of hate crimes in the United States.

Of course we know that the United States is not unique in this respect. We were deeply disturbed to learn that fans of the Warsaw Legia football team unfurled a “Jihad Legia” banner over one side of the stadium in a recent match against Hapoel Tel Aviv. We hope that the local authorities will ensure that those responsible for this anti-Jewish incitement are prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Some may argue that use of the word “jihad” is not intrinsically incitement to violence or hatred. However, in the context of a football match against an Israeli team, the connotation is clear. Anti-Israel radical Islamic terror groups, including Hezbollah, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, invoke “jihad” to call for the killing of Jews and the destruction of the State of Israel. The Legia fans responsible for the banner aligned themselves with those violent and anti-Semitic goals.

As anti-Semitic behaviour and calls to incitement of violence increase, it is critical that the fight against anti-Semitism be vigorously maintained throughout the region. Political events are increasingly leading to antisemitic messages being disseminated and accepted into mainstream society, and amateur and professional sports is increasingly being a platform for hate speech. The soccer game here in Warsaw is one such example. These messages often translate into the violent targeting of individuals and it must stop.

As the targeting of Jews increases the voices speaking up against antisemitism are

becoming softer. The countries in this room have made commitments to enact hate crime laws, provide training and report data, yet on the ground people continue to be the target of hate motivated violence. We recommend that in 2012 experts on anti-semitism again convene to examine ways to combat how anti-Semitism in the mainstream is increasingly leading to the violent attacks against Jews. Governments must be the leaders in the fight against anti-Semitism and bigotry and this means making it a priority by turning commitments in action. We should draw on our collective expertise and resolve to accomplish this.