

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OSCE HIGH-LEVEL COMMEMORATIVE EVENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

as of November 12, 2014

The continuing resurgence of antisemitism in the OSCE region has prompted a High-Level Commemorative Event marking the 10th Anniversary of the OSCE's Berlin Conference on Antisemitism, recalling the 2004 Berlin high-level conference, to review and renew government commitments to fighting antisemitism.

These government efforts are augmented and strengthened by the participation of civil society groups. At a Civil Society Forum on Antisemitism in Berlin on Nov. 12, 2014, the following suggestions to the OSCE for intensifying the fight against antisemitism were discussed and passed as recommendations:

1. Recognize the EUMC Working Definition on Antisemitism as an important guiding definition to monitor and record acts of antisemitism, incorporating the language therein where appropriate to national penal codes on antisemitism or discrimination. OSCE participating states should fully adopt and enact the 2005 EUMC Working Definition of Antisemitism; law enforcement officials and public institutions in OSCE participating states should use this definition to register and monitor cases of antisemitism.
2. Promote a more comprehensive approach toward fighting antisemitism through annual summit meetings amongst government officials, justice and law enforcement agencies, Jewish communities, and other community stakeholders, to demonstrate visible support and solicit recommendations on improving security and support of victims.
3. Work in partnership with civil society to create a comprehensive OSCE wide system for tracking hate crimes, prosecutions, and convictions; publicly disclose the data and share it with ODIHR and civil society groups. ODIHR should include civil society participation in their annual meeting and working consultations.
4. Institute educational programs at all educational levels to combat antisemitism, covering anti-Semitic stereotypes and conspiracy theories, information on Jewish life, religion, and history, as well as balanced information on modern-day Israel and the Mideast region. Programs should be targeted to young people, civil servants, law enforcement officials, and other sectors of society.
5. Place a greater focus on preventative work, especially among young people, through workshops and other youth-focused programming.

Strengthening Political Leadership in the Fight against Antisemitism

Governments are bound by a range of commitments designed to combat antisemitism in particular and hate crimes in general.

However, compliance by all states with these obligations remains problematic.

Accordingly, we call on governments and parliamentarians to renew their efforts at compliance and to take a lead in combating antisemitism in all of its manifestations in public venues and forums.

In particular, we call on OSCE Participating States to:

1. Ensure full compliance with their international obligations, including proper recognition of anti-Semitic and other hate crimes, through comprehensive monitoring, registration and prosecution of all such crimes, using data collected both by police and law enforcement agencies that incorporates as well research results from NGO monitoring units. Provide detailed statistical information about acts of antisemitism that fully reflect the sources and nature of the incidents, publicizing the results.
2. Demand that government leaders speak out strongly and respond quickly when anti-Semitic incidents and other hate crimes occur to send a signal to the embattled communities and general public that this shall not be tolerated.
3. Appoint a person or coordinating body to ensure that monitoring, prosecution, public awareness and education against antisemitism is dealt with on a consistent basis, reaching as large of an audience as possible.
4. Review legal codes to ensure incorporation of antisemitism along with other hate crimes, where appropriate. Train law enforcement authorities and criminal justice agencies to identify, investigate and prosecute more readily all forms of Holocaust denial and hate crimes, including antisemitism.
5. Encourage all European agencies concerned with combating antisemitism, including the European Commission, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the Council of Europe and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), and the OSCE parliamentary assembly to eliminate overlapping and competing roles and enhance strategic and practical cooperation amongst them.
6. Enforce reporting mechanisms to strengthen the impact of ODIHR's monitoring capabilities to create a more comprehensive database of information on anti-Semitic incidents. States should implement, support and use ODIHR tools to fight antisemitism and hate crime, expanding their use of the ODIHR tool kit, working together with ODIHR to share their expertise and conduct training.

Challenges to the Security of Jews and Jewish Communities

More than 450 terror plots have been recorded against Jewish communities since 1968. Since 2012 alone, terror attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions in Toulouse, Burgas and Brussels left 14 dead, demonstrating the ongoing threat to Jewish communities emanating in particular from globally active terrorist groups. However, threats come from all sides of the political spectrum, with anti-Semitic agitation and Holocaust denial becoming ever more frequent in the public arena.

Accordingly, we call on OSCE Participating States to:

1. Provide adequate police protection and funding for Jewish institutions to ensure the safety and security of all who gather at such places.
2. Engage with Jewish communities to gain a fuller understanding of the nature and volume of anti-Semitic attacks, which are often underreported, and to record and publish them in accordance with the obligations they have entered into.
3. Train police and law enforcement authorities to identify and more easily recognize the anti-Semitic element of criminal acts of antisemitism.
4. Make every effort to identify and address the particular sources of anti-Semitic attacks in their respective countries, if they are to devise successful programs to combat them.

Countering Antisemitism on the Internet

Intelligence officials warn that Internet and related social media have become the primary medium for promoting anti-Semitic stereotypes and myths. This poses a particular danger to young people, who are at high risk of being influenced by radicalized groups using the Internet as their propaganda and recruiting instrument. Furthermore the internet provides the ideal platform to spread anti-Semitic conspiracy theories targeting Jews as the evil in the world.

Accordingly, we call on OSCE Participating States to:

1. Ensure adequate training for police and criminal justice agencies in investigating and prosecuting online criminal incitement and Holocaust denial.
2. Require education systems to address issues of antisemitism in all forms in which it appears, addressing as well the larger issue of also hate speech in the media.
3. Commission expert studies on linkages between online incitement to hatred and violence and acts of antisemitism and hate crimes.
4. Support financially civil society initiatives that promoted educational methods to curb online antisemitism and Holocaust denial.
5. Promote the September 2014 commitment by the major social networks to a list of best practices for responding to Cyberhate.

Responding to Holocaust Denial and Distortion

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance notes that "Holocaust denial in its various forms is an expression of antisemitism," remarking that it is an effort to exonerate National Socialism from guilt or responsibility in the genocide of the Jewish people. In some European countries, there are legal repercussions for Holocaust denial. Legislative efforts are important but critical to prevention efforts is the institution of universal Holocaust education, differentiating it from other genocides and recognising its uniqueness in history.

Accordingly, we call on OSCE Participating States to:

1. Condemn all expressions of Holocaust denial and efforts to distort its meaning, including for political and propaganda purposes, and legislate against such cases, where appropriate. A helpful reference for this is the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) "Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion."
2. Promote Holocaust education, with corresponding teacher training that includes an examination of theories and impact of Holocaust denial and trivialization, with material that is targeted to an increasingly diverse student body.
3. Express concern about the trivialization of the Holocaust through historical revisionism that equates the Nazi and Stalinist regimes, for instance, through official commemorations of the Stalin-Hitler pact.

Addressing Antisemitism against the Background of the Conflict in the Middle East

Conflicts in the Mideast at times prompt violent counter-reactions in other countries, including protests that on occasion spill over into antisemitism. The demonization of Israel is spreading, including amongst some government officials at national and international levels propagating boycott measures against Israel.

Accordingly, we call upon OSCE participating states to:

1. Denounce expressions of anti-Zionism and anti-Israel hatred that single out and delegitimize the relationship to Israel.
2. Refrain from engaging in boycott movements that single out Israel amongst all nations for its policy decisions.
3. Promote a deeper understanding of modern Israel and of the Mideast conflict through Israel study programs, development of curricula, and intensification of academic and cultural exchange programs.
4. Censure issues of antisemitism when dealing with countries that promote it as part of the public agenda.

The Impact of Recent Challenges to Religious Ritual Practices

There has been a disturbing trend in a growing number of OSCE countries to challenge religious practices of shechita (kosher slaughter) and circumcision. However, such bans would challenge the continued existence of Jewish community life, due to the fundamental importance of both practices.

Accordingly, we call upon OSCE participating states to:

1. Recognise and protect the rights of Jews to these religious practices
2. Pass legislation where appropriate to guarantee that Jewish and Muslim religious rights are fully protected under the law of the country involved.
3. Counteract stereotypes and prejudices regarding circumcision, which at times are used as platform to express anti-Semitic prejudices.

The Relationship between Nationalism and Antisemitism

With the rise in popularity of populist and nationalist parties throughout Europe, there has been a surge in incidents of antisemitism related to the racist and anti-Semitic ideology of these parties. Such incidents have taken place on the streets, during election campaigns, in the media, in parliaments, and at other public arenas. Furthermore, charges of antisemitism have been hurled in inter-governmental disputes.

Accordingly, we call upon OSCE participating states to:

1. Refrain from using anti-Semitic charges against other governments.
2. Denounce and investigate with immediacy all anti-Semitic comments and incidents made by nationalist groups.
3. Launch public awareness campaigns to counteract anti-Semitic propaganda, particularly in the political arena.

Fostering Civil Society Network to Combat Antisemitism

Protests and public awareness campaigns organized by civil society actors are an important means to counteract antisemitism. The greater the diversity of groups engaged in such actions, the more cohesive and effective of a network that emerges. A strong public-private partnership sends the signal that antisemitism is inimical to democratic values.

Accordingly, we call upon OSCE participating states to:

1. Consult closely with civil society actors working to counteract antisemitism.
2. Create standard monitoring methods that allow input from civil society groups.
3. Encourage and support, among NGOs and civil society organizations that presently work to combat antisemitism, a greater degree of training on monitoring and registering incidents of antisemitism.
4. Strengthen intergroup networks to promote interfaith leadership to combat antisemitism.