

As Prepared
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Remarks at U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
Commission Hearing on Anti-Semitism
325 Russell Senate Office Building
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Senator Rosen, Commissioner Perkins, and members of Congress and of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom:

Good afternoon. Thank you for your important efforts focused on international religious freedom, for your interest in combating anti-Semitism, and for holding this hearing today. I am honored to be with you and I greatly value the opportunity to discuss our work combating anti-Semitism. In light of recent attacks in Monsey; Jersey City; Halle, Germany; and too many other locations throughout the world, the timing could not be more significant.

Only 75 years since the Nazi crematoria have cooled, anti-Semitism continues its global rise, mutating into new forms and spreading with unprecedented speed via new technologies. We are seeing Jews vilified, demonized, and physically attacked, both overseas and right here at home. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) recently released a survey of anti-Semitic attitudes that included 14 European countries. One of the survey's key findings was that roughly one out of every four residents of the European countries polled by the ADL fall into the "most anti-Semitic" category, meaning that they subscribe to a majority of the anti-Semitic stereotypes tested in the index.

We are also seeing a disturbing erosion of Holocaust understanding. A 2018 CNN poll on European attitudes toward Jews found that 34 percent of those surveyed said they knew just a little or had never heard of the Holocaust.

In last year's State of the Union Address, President Donald Trump declared: "We must never ignore the vile poison of anti-Semitism, or those who spread its venomous creed. With one voice, we must confront this hatred anywhere and everywhere it occurs."

There are three primary sources for the rise in anti-Semitism: (1) The far right white supremacists; (2) The left-wing anti-Zionists; and, (3) militant Islamists. In our work, we do not rank nor minimize these sources. All three are dangerous and all must be combatted. If one-third of a tumor is left untreated, the patient remains in danger. We fight all forms of Jew-hatred regardless of the ideological clothing it wears.

We are all familiar with the all-too-real dangers of anti-Semitism from the far-right. The anti-Semitic gunmen in Pittsburgh and Poway both wrote white supremacist manifestos before the shootings. And I recently met with the Jewish community in Strasbourg, France, where neo-Nazis have been perpetrating anti-Semitism weekly basis.

We are also observing a rise in the so-called "new" anti-Semitism that clothes itself in the language of anti-Zionism. But there is nothing new about this. It is the very same hatred, this time targeted at the Jew among the countries instead of the Jew in the community. The same kinds of medieval blood libels that were leveled against Jews in the past are now targeting Israel, claiming that Israel is perpetrating genocide, that Israel is an apartheid regime, and that Israel is infecting Palestinian children with diseases.

When Israel is demonized, delegitimized, or held to a standard not applied to any other country in the world, that is anti-Semitic. Secretary of State Pompeo has clearly stated: "This bigotry is taking on an insidious new form in the guise of 'anti-Zionism.' . . . Now, don't get me wrong, criticizing Israel's policies is an acceptable thing to do in a democracy. It's what we do. But criticizing the very

right to exist of Israel is not acceptable. Anti-Zionism denies the very legitimacy of the Israeli state and of the Jewish people.”

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of anti-Semitism has been a game-changer. Many European countries have adopted it. The working definition identifies both traditional and contemporary forms of anti-Semitism. The Department of State uses this working definition as well and we encourage other governments to apply it.

With regard to Israel, the working definition equates the following with anti-Semitism:

- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

In addition to encouraging countries around the world to adopt and implement the IHRA definition, please allow me to share some of my priorities:

1. Urging governments to provide adequate security for their Jewish populations and Jewish community assets. Security must be a top priority, because when people do not feel safe, and when they do not feel that their children are safe, there is no quality of life.
2. Ensuring that countries properly investigate, prosecute, and appropriately punish hate crimes. Even misdemeanor crimes must be addressed, because these are often the best opportunities to intervene in the life of an angry and alienated youth before he turns to violence.

3. Demanding that countries remove anti-Semitic content from textbooks used in their schools. Teaching innocent children to hate other children creates deep damage that is very difficult to repair.
4. Confronting and condemning hate speech, particularly on social media. Let me be clear: We are not speaking of restrictions on the First Amendment. Even despicable hatred can be protected speech. But we must understand that the Internet has been the chief vector of this disease. And we must continue to urge leaders around the world to swiftly speak out against hate speech.

Anti-Semitism is on the rise and the stakes are high, but I want to stress that there is much good news to be celebrated.

First, there are many leaders around the world who are genuinely appalled by rising anti-Semitism and are committed to this fight. Some are heads of government, some are ministers, some parliamentarians, some appointed anti-Semitism coordinators. I am inspired by their dedication and am convinced that, through our collective and coordinated efforts, we can move the needle on combating anti-Semitism. Since my appointment nearly one year ago, I have visited 10 countries, and engaged both bilaterally and multilaterally with foreign governments, and met with Jewish communities and civil society organizations.

Finally, a second piece of good news is that the United States is both the most powerful country and the most philo-Semitic country in the history of the world. And now it is led by the most philo-Semitic Administration we have ever had. President Trump and his team are committed in unprecedented fashion to combating anti-Semitism, to protecting the Jewish people throughout the world, and to supporting the State of Israel.

With committed friends and allies, working together shoulder to shoulder and arm in arm, we can turn the tide of anti-Semitism and bequeath to our children and grandchildren the just and decent world that they so richly deserve.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.