



**United States Congress
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**

**Hearing
on
Worldwide Persecution of Jews**

**May 20, 2025 - 2:00 p.m.
2322 Rayburn HOB**

**Statement of Ted Deutch
Chief Executive Officer
American Jewish Committee
(Member of Congress 2010-2022)**

Opening

Congressman Smith, Congressman McGovern, Members of the Commission, it is a pleasure to be before you this afternoon to testify in front of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission for a hearing on the “Worldwide Persecution of Jews”. I want to thank you both for calling this incredibly important hearing today, and I am grateful for your leadership.

I am honored to be here alongside my other distinguished panelists, including Marina Rosenberg, Eric Fusfield, and Stacy Burdett.

Today, I am here in my capacity as CEO of American Jewish Committee (AJC), a global, non-partisan advocacy organization that stands up for Israel’s right to exist in peace and security; confronts antisemitism, no matter the source; and upholds the democratic values that unite Jews and our allies.

I am particularly honored to be here at the Lantos Commission, named after Tom Lantos, the only Holocaust survivor to serve in the United States Congress. Congressman Lantos endured the brutal Nazi occupation of Hungary during World War II until he escaped Nazi camps and eventually was a part of Raoul Wallenberg’s network to help Jews escape persecution. Through these experiences, Lantos saw firsthand unimaginable human rights abuses by the Nazis. It was this experience that would eventually shape his work in Congress, where his tenacity to fight against injustice and defend human rights changed the world and inspired us all. Although he passed away before I had the honor to serve alongside him in Congress, his story and efforts served as a guiding light for the good that Congress and the United States Government can do.

Global Antisemitism Today

Today, antisemitism remains a pervasive and escalating threat to Jewish communities in the United States and around the world. While this age-old hatred has been rising for years, it surged dramatically following the Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel on October 7, 2023, in which over 1,200 people were murdered and more than 250 were taken hostage, including 58 who are still held in captivity today, both alive and dead, but all deserving to return home now, after 592 days in captivity. If, before October 7, antisemitism was a slow-burning fire, it has now become a five-alarm emergency that requires all of us to douse its flames.

As Israel began to defend itself after the most deadly day for Jews since the Holocaust, antisemitic tropes began to surface as mobs took to the streets to march in support of Hamas and its brutal slaughter of more than 1,200 people. Dangerous anti-Israel rhetoric denied the Jewish people the right to their homeland. Jewish communities and their allies have watched in horror as scenes previously confined to history books have reemerged. Acts of violence, such as [fire](#)

[bombings](#) and [premeditated pogroms](#), have become increasingly common in places ranging from synagogues and schools to sporting venues and residential neighborhoods. The vitriol and hate directed at Jews is so intense that in some European countries, Jews have been instructed not to wear anything that would publicly identify them as Jews or Zionists.

The Jewish people's sense of dread has only risen as protests, which began even before Israel responded to Hamas' attack against Israel, have devolved into open celebrations of Jew-hatred. There have been signs celebrating Hamas and Hezbollah, artwork lauding the hang-gliders Hamas used to infiltrate Israel and butcher Jews, chants of "[burn the Jews](#)" echoing in the capitals of democracies, and signs glorifying terrorists, as we saw this [month](#) at Columbia University.

On our Global Forum stage last month, Jewish leaders from around the world - from Australia to Mexico to France - talked about the terrible antisemitism they have faced. They spoke powerfully about the alarming surge in antisemitism in their countries – fueled by misinformation, anti-Israel sentiment, political instability, and violence – and how unity is key to building resilience in the face of these growing threats.

But it is not just antisemitism on the streets, in protests, and in the darkest corners of the internet that are fueling this surging sense of fear that Jews worldwide are feeling. It is also coming from their elected officials, which is particularly dangerous, as it normalizes some of the most despicable stereotypes and hate.

During a Dublin City Council meeting, Councillor [Punam Rane](#) delved into one of the oldest and most sinister antisemitic tropes, saying that the reason the United States was supporting Israel's war against Hamas was because "the entire US economy today is ruled by the Jews, by Israel." In the days after the Hamas attacks, [Gustavo Petro](#), the President of Colombia – the third-largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid – never condemned Hamas and then compared Israel's policies towards the Palestinians to Nazi Germany's policies towards the Jews and other groups.

What previously seemed far-fetched and out of date, these tropes have found new life in contemporary discussions about the Israel-Hamas war. And when this antisemitism is perpetrated by elected leaders, it adds an even higher level of legitimacy to the all too commonplace acts of Jew-hatred, antisemitism and extremism that is overwhelming societies. All this does is leave Jewish communities caught in the crosshairs for a war they have no say in. Right now, Jewish communities across the world are feeling vulnerable, scared, and isolated. Their freedom and peace of mind have been chipped away.

Antisemitism in Europe

Although some of the antisemitic incidents that occur across the globe feel detached from those of us here in the United States today, it is important to know that for the Jewish community, it does not matter to Jews where the hate occurs. For us, the hatred and fear we experience are the same. Anytime a Jewish person is targeted, it affects every Jew because we are all interconnected. What happens to Jews in Amsterdam impacts Jews in Atlanta. In Berlin and Boston. And in Europe, home to [around 1.3 million Jews](#) – the largest Jewish population outside of the U.S. and Israel – this threat is becoming more pronounced.

Antisemitism is typically rooted in conspiracy theories about the Jewish people and is irrational in nature, unable to be explained by logic or sound reasoning. This hate flourishes when extremism is on the rise and democratic norms are being challenged.

In Europe, right-wing, extremist parties, which frequently downplay the Holocaust or promote revisionist history, antisemitism, including using the Jewish people as a scapegoat for society's ills, and [use](#) banned Nazi slogans, are gaining support and threatening the political hold of traditional, more centrist governments. We see this in the recent electoral victories of the Freedom Party in Austria, the National Rally in France, the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR), and the Alternative for Germany (AfD). They have achieved success without any need to disavow their antisemitic elements.

Nowhere is this more pronounced than in Germany, where the [AfD](#) has repeatedly called for an end to Germany's "guilt cult" over the Holocaust, with senior figures making statements that downplay or relativize Nazi crimes. Concerningly, their popularity has grown: they won 20.8% of the votes in the recent German elections, doubling their 10.4% from 2021. It is especially troubling that some of our own American elected officials have voiced support for them.

In late October 2023, we had a trip scheduled to Germany to commemorate the 85th anniversary of Kristallnacht. However, due to the intensity of antisemitism we were seeing on the ground, the trip had to be, for the most part, canceled, as security leaders could not guarantee the safety of our Jewish group.

This normalization of Jew-hatred, coupled with extremist perceptions of Israel's war against Hamas, which is fueled by radicals online, has real-world consequences. In the year since October 7, it was reported that there [were](#) an average of 32 antisemitic incidents a day in Germany. There has been graffiti on homes, synagogues have been forced to become so secure they look like military outposts, and many German Jews refrain from wearing kippahs in public. As chilling as this rise is in Germany, the climate for Jews is similar across Europe.

In a few weeks, AJC will be co-hosting, along with our partners at CRIF, the umbrella organization for Jewish communities in France, the French-American Forum on Antisemitism. This forum will strengthen transatlantic cooperation in combating antisemitism, with a special emphasis on youth engagement, and convene policymakers, civil society leaders, and emerging changemakers to confront the shifting landscape of antisemitism since October 7. Why are we hosting this conference now? Because France and the United States are home to the two largest Jewish communities in the world outside Israel, and because the antisemitism that French Jews have experienced in the aftermath of October 7 is particularly alarming. In our [Survey of Antisemitism in France 2024](#), AJC found that one in four French Jews say they have been the victim of an antisemitic act since October 7, with young French Jews more likely to be targets. Alarming, we also found that 64% of French Jews under 25 years old have been verbally assaulted because of their Jewish heritage. This increased antisemitic climate has ended in a much darker place, with the targeting of Jewish institutions and violent attacks on Jews.

Antoine Haguenauer bravely [told](#) our Global Forum about when he was attacked on the streets of Paris this past February while he was attending a peaceful, public memorial for Shiri, Kfir, and Ariel Bibas. He shared, “I was berated, told I supported genocide. I was threatened – they told me they would follow me home, leak my address, kill me and my family. I was assaulted – punched in the head from behind. When I reported the attack to a police officer, he told me: ‘You could press charges, but what would be the point?’”

In Amsterdam, on November 8, 2024, Israeli and Jewish fans of the Maccabi Tel Aviv soccer team were beaten and ambushed on the street in a modern-day pogrom, with extremists calling for a “Jew hunt.” These horrific attacks reflect the broader rise in antisemitic violence across Europe since October 7 – fueled not only by an anti-Israel political ideology and extremist interpretations of Islam, but also by the rhetoric and complacency of some European leaders. Symbolically, the attacks were a chilling reminder of Europe’s darkest chapters on the very eve of the anniversary of [Kristallnacht](#) on November 9. When we visited Amsterdam shortly after that horrific episode, we met with Jewish leaders and members of the Parliament from across the spectrum for an off-the-record lunch. There was one thing they could all agree on: the need to fight antisemitism.

Antisemitism is also pervasive in Ireland, posing serious risks for its 3,000 Jews, many of whom hold Israeli citizenship. Alongside physical harassment and attacks, widespread anti-Israel sentiment – including in parts of the government – affects daily life. Jewish school children face bullying, university students encounter hostility, and workplaces are increasingly unwelcoming. AJC intensified our diplomatic efforts with Ireland in the wake of October 7, which culminated with a meeting with the Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Micheál Martin, during his official visit to Washington this past March. Ireland has only paid lip service to combating antisemitism, and that is wholly unacceptable. The Prime Minister’s [antagonistic rhetoric](#) and actions toward

Israel have real, negative consequences for the safety and acceptance of Ireland's Jewish community, and, while it is unclear if Ireland will change course, AJC will continue to speak out.

And yet, despite all of this, Jewish people are showing resilience. In London, I met a young woman while convening with Jewish student leaders from across the UK. She told me that to deal with the challenges she faces, she leans into her Jewish identity and wants to wear an even bigger Magen David (Jewish star) necklace.

The resurgence of antisemitism in Europe is a painful echo of history—a reminder that even in places where the Holocaust is deeply etched into collective memory, old hatreds can resurface in new forms. But to fully understand the global dimensions of antisemitism today, we must also look to Asia.

Antisemitism in Asia

In Asia, where Jewish communities are small and often unfamiliar to the broader population, antisemitism manifests less through violence and more through ignorance and dangerous stereotypes that distort Jewish history and identity. The danger here is subtle but corrosive.

In [Indonesia](#), home to under 1,000 Jews in a population of over 280 million, antisemitism has intensified since October 7. While anti-Jewish stereotypes and conspiracy theories were prevalent before, they are now even stronger. Organizations and individuals who would meet with and host AJC now no longer feel safe doing so. Online harassment of anyone voicing positive sentiment about Jews or Israel is prevalent, including threats of violence. This has led Jews who reside in Indonesia, as well as Jewish tourists, to hide their identity or identify themselves as Christians if asked.

Other Muslim majority nations in Asia, and especially Malaysia, have long histories of government promoted antisemitism, with former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad for decades making statements about the Holocaust [being](#) exaggerated, [blaming](#) all conflicts in the Middle East solely on Israel, and [making](#) statements including “the Jews are not merely hook-nosed, but understand money instinctively.”

Since October 7, there has been a dramatic spike in antisemitic content on Chinese social media platforms, which are heavily [monitored](#) by the government. On October 7, 2023, Ziwu Xiashi, a commentator with one million followers on Weibo, China's equivalent of X, [posted](#): “[I]n the past, Germany persecuted you. Now, you persecute Palestinians.” [Comparing](#) Israel to the Nazis, engaging in Jewish money stereotypes, and other antisemitic comments have flourished on Chinese social media.

Even though Jews are not numerous in Asia, the prevalence of antisemitic tropes across societies threatens Jews and has a long-term impact on public perceptions and opinions and the welfare of Jewish communities and visitors.

Antisemitism in Latin America

In Latin America, where Jewish communities have deep roots, antisemitism, despite not being as pronounced as it is in other parts of the world, has skyrocketed since October 7. Jew-hatred, which in Latin America is often tied to views on Israel, has become normalized, especially from the highest echelons of government, through long-standing stereotypes that put Jewish communities at risk.

The president of Colombia, Gustavo Petro, is actively endangering his country's Jewish community. In the wake of the October 7 attack, unlike many world leaders, Colombian President Gustavo Petro did not condemn the Hamas massacre but instead used it as an opportunity to criticize Israel. On October 9, before Israel had even begun its ground operations in Gaza, he compared Israel's response to the attacks and its plan to defend itself to the actions of the Nazis during World War II. Claiming that the State of Israel, home to the largest number of living Holocaust survivors, behaves like the Nazis in its treatment of Palestinians is a personal attack on survivors and trivializes the meaning of the Holocaust. There is no legitimate comparison between defending the State of Israel and ensuring the safety of its citizens to the systematic destruction and liquidation of an entire people. And these statements from elected leaders lead to real-world consequences.

Just days after October 7 and Petro's antisemitic comments, the Israeli embassy in Bogotá, Colombia's capital, was the target of antisemitic hate when two hooded men spray-painted a swastika on the building. The embassy was again [targeted](#) with antisemitic graffiti, including slogans that equated Zionism with Nazism. This decision by Petro to descend into antisemitic characterizations of Israel undermined the longstanding warm relations between the government of Colombia and the Jewish community, which have been present in Colombia since the arrival of Europeans in South America at the end of the fifteenth century.

In Brazil, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has [compared](#) Israel's action in its war against Hamas to what the Nazis did. In fact, just last week, Lula [accused](#) Israel of "killing children and women deliberately." The Jewish communities in Brazil, which I visited in 2024, have recorded significant upticks in antisemitism since October 7. According to our partners at Confederação Israelita do Brasil (CONIB), the central organization of the Brazilian Jewish Community, in the aftermath of October 7, in the year after the attacks, [there](#) were nearly 1,800 antisemitic incidents reported, a record in Brazil.

When visiting Brazil in 2024, I heard from a Jewish leader who told me that while other countries might have antisemitism, their leaders try to fight it. But, in Brazil, there was no antisemitism; only a leader who tried to create it.

And rising antisemitic incidents leave the small, rooted Jewish populations of Latin America increasingly frightened. In Argentina, there were more than 100 reported antisemitic incidents in January 2024 alone, representing a 600 percent increase compared to the same period in 2023. Synagogues, kosher grocery stores and restaurants, and Jewish schools in Chile, Mexico, and Peru have been defaced, vandalized, received bomb threats, and targeted with gunfire. When visiting Chile in December 2023, I learned that their President, Gabriel Boric, refuses to meet with Jewish communal or global leaders.

We must remain vigilant and committed to the safety of Jewish communities across Latin America and prevent its escalation to the levels seen in the United States.

Antisemitism in the United States

Earlier this year, American Jewish Committee released our [*State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report*](#). The report is the first comprehensive data we have that captures the experiences with and perceptions of antisemitism for both Jewish and non-Jewish Americans, one full year after Hamas's attacks on October 7. This data shows that antisemitism has reached a tipping point in America, threatening the freedoms of American Jews and casting an ominous shadow across our society. The topline numbers are unsettling. 73% of American Jews feel less secure than they did a year ago. 56% of American Jews admit that they have changed their behavior over the last year because of the fear of antisemitism. Your constituents are deciding not to wear a Jewish star or a hostage pin like the one I have on because they fear they will be targeted with hate and violence. They aren't going to synagogues or visibly wearing kippahs because they think they may be targeted because of their identity as Jews. And they have reason to worry. We've seen attacks on Jewish [schools](#), [synagogues](#), [restaurants](#), and [visibly](#) Jewish people.

And just like in Europe, rising antisemitism is impacting young Jews especially hard. 41% of Jews, ages 18-29, say they've been the target of antisemitism at least once in the past year, and almost half of young American Jews (46%) say they avoided certain places, events, or situations out of concern for their safety or comfort as a Jew in the past year. 35% of American Jewish college students report experiencing antisemitism at least once during their time on campus, according to *AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report*.

And as we face tremendous challenges on the antisemitism front, we must remember that the world is looking at us. People are paying attention to America across Europe, Latin America,

Africa, and Asia. While travelling abroad, I have had people approach me asking if it is safe for them, as Jews, to visit or study in the United States. What does that say about us?

The bottom line is that the Jewish community around the world, young and old, is scared and rightfully so. And Congress cannot allow this to remain the case.

What Congress Can Do

This is an all-hands-on-deck moment we find ourselves in – for American Jews, for Jews across the world, and frankly, for people of all religious and political stripes alike. So what can Congress and the Lantos Commission do to reinforce U.S. leadership in the global effort to fight antisemitism?

Call out antisemitism publicly and in a non-partisan way

Our leaders must understand that the rising tide of antisemitism is not just a Jewish problem. It is a crisis for our world and the democracies we cherish across the globe. Whenever and wherever antisemitism surges, it leaves us divided and unable to deal with the problems facing our world. Addressing it is not only a defense of the Jewish community — it is a defense of the very fabric of the values we share.

As a former member of Congress, I urge you to condemn antisemitism unequivocally and publicly, in all its forms, whenever and wherever it occurs. Name it. Call it out. Be strong. When an incident occurs, it matters when elected officials speak out loudly and use their broad reach, raising awareness that antisemitism is not just a Jewish problem, but an assault on our shared values.

I spent 16 years in politics. I understand the political implications of every statement you make. I understand that it is often easier to call out antisemitism when perpetrated by someone in the opposing political camp, whether or not they are in the U.S. or in a foreign country. When you speak out against antisemitism with your principles, not your politics, guiding you, people will thank you. You will satisfy the enormous responsibility you have to your office and oath. We cannot allow antisemitism – the world’s oldest hatred – to become a partisan political issue and be used as a wedge to divide the Jewish community, because regardless of where it comes from, whether from the right or left or anywhere in between, antisemitism hurts Jews and our society. I urge every elected official on this Commission to be mindful of politicization and reach across party lines to address antisemitism. The House and Senate Bipartisan Task Forces for Combating Antisemitism serve as examples of how Members can responsibly reach across the aisle to collectively push back against antisemitism. I’m grateful that some of you already belong to the House Task Force, and I encourage every single member of the House of Representatives to join.

But don't just use the power of the bully pulpit to make a difference. Use the power of your office. We know that countries are hyper-focused on their relationship with the United States. But what about advocating for your own priorities? **Members of Congress should use their power to hold antisemitic leaders to account. Call them out. And elevate the issue of antisemitism to the top of the priority list when talking with foreign leaders.**

The importance of the Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism

The United States has exerted tremendous leadership in the fight against antisemitism through the work of Special Envoys to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism, and it is clear there is a continued need for action in the face of the dangerous antisemitism that is occurring across the globe. The existence of the Special Envoy makes clear the U.S. is serious about its commitment to stamping out this hate and ensuring communities can practice their religion freely.

The Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism plays a vital role in the fight against global antisemitism by developing and implementing policies and efforts focused on preventing discrimination, prejudice, or hatred toward the Jewish community around the world. The Office advises foreign governments on best practices to ensure the safety and security of their respective Jewish communities, including developing national action plans and appointing national coordinators.

It's imperative that Congress allocate no less than \$3 million in the fiscal year (FY) 2026 appropriations process for the Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism and ensure there are robust staffing levels, including adequate Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions in the Office so that they continue their essential work. To that end, Congress should swiftly confirm the nomination of Rabbi Yehuda Kaploun, President Trump's nominee to head the office. I've met Mr. Kaploun on several occasions, and I'm confident that his passion and dedication to the Jewish people will propel him to do great things in this office. By quickly confirming Mr. Kaploun to be Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt's successor, the U.S. will demonstrate that it is committed to continuing to counter antisemitism across the globe.

Ambassador Lipstadt helped lead notable initiatives to counter antisemitism globally, used the full force of the Office to shed light on online antisemitism, and engaged with diplomats on the fight against antisemitism. Ambassador Lipstadt played a central role in developing the National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, convened the first-ever Symposium to Combat Online Antisemitism in May 2023, and spearheaded the creation of the Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism, which are vitally important in this worldwide fight. The important work of this Office must continue.

Urge continued U.S. global leadership

In order to seriously and effectively fight global antisemitism, American leadership on the world's stage is critical. **I urge you to provide essential funding in the FY26 appropriations process to ensure U.S. embassies around the world have the necessary resources and are engaged in addressing antisemitism in their respective countries.** Additionally, our government must not abdicate its leadership mantle at the United Nations (UN) or other important global bodies, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), that have a critical role to play in the global fight against Jew-hatred. **It is essential that Congress provide funding for America to meet its financial obligations at the UN, as U.S. leadership is the cornerstone on which the current world order was built and rests.**

Earlier this year, the United Nations [announced](#) its “Action Plan to Monitor Antisemitism and Enhance a System-wide Response,” an initiative led by Under-Secretary-General Miguel Moratinos, the UN Focal Point for Monitoring Antisemitism and High Representative of the UN Alliance of Civilizations. This new Action Plan is the first-ever commitment by UN leadership to take action across the UN system to prevent and combat antisemitism within the organization and around the world. At AJC, we believe the United Nations has a responsibility to counter the global surge in antisemitism, including antisemitism within the UN itself, and this Action Plan is a first step in meeting that obligation. At a time when actions by bodies and actors associated with the United Nations have instilled in many Jews an acute sense of alienation and hostility, the U.S. mission to the UN must ensure this plan is implemented swiftly and effectively.

We must also remember that our close cooperation with allies and like-minded partners across the globe enhances our ability to effectuate meaningful change, especially on combating global antisemitism. Lasting progress, on any issue but especially on the world's oldest hatred, requires that we continue to nurture these partnerships and use our influence to empower our allies to best address the challenges before them.

The importance of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with 57 member states in Europe, Eurasia, and North America, is one of the most important international organizations to address the challenges of antisemitism in the 21st century. It held path breaking conferences in 2003 and 2004, and has been instrumental in helping European countries create practical, effective policies to stamp out antisemitism in their respective societies. Rabbi Andrew Baker, AJC's Director of International Jewish Affairs, also serves as the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Antisemitism, where he works with governments and Jewish communities across Europe on programs and policies to confront antisemitism. He

regularly visits European capitals to assess threats to Jewish communities and how to address them. He was intimately involved in getting the OSCE to hold a first conference on Jewish community security in Europe in 2013 and in the development of a practical guide for governments as well as the training of police and prosecutors.

As the White House reexamines its membership in international organizations as a whole, Congress must understand the value of the small investment the U.S. makes in the OSCE. The U.S. remains a consistent financial contributor to the OSCE, playing a vital role in sustaining the organization's operations and initiatives across Europe and Asia. According to FY2023 [receipts](#) from the State Department, the U.S. contributed just \$27.45 million to the organization. Of the funding the U.S. provides to the OSCE, more than half of it goes to its 12 field missions, where they work to promote the rule of law. Bolstering the rule of law in societies across the world fosters an environment where democracy and tolerance flourish and where extremism and antisemitism flounder. Furthermore, as the fight against antisemitism is a global one, the OSCE's [resources](#) on understanding antisemitism and how to protect Jewish communities against hate are essential. **I want to make sure Members of Congress understand the value the OSCE brings to the fight against global antisemitism and that Congress continues to fund its OSCE obligations through the annual appropriations process.**

Importance of Protecting Holocaust Memory through the UN and UNESCO

As we continue to educate about antisemitism and all of its manifestations, one of the best ways we can do that is to educate people, through first-hand experience, about the Holocaust. Every year that goes by, there are fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors who are left to tell their stories. Last month, I served as a witness before the Senate Special Committee on Aging. Chairman Rick Scott and Ranking Member Gillibrand invited my friend and Holocaust survivor, David Schaecter, to powerfully tell his story to the panel. His harrowing experience underscored the urgent need to continue sharing Holocaust stories and educating every new generation about the horrors of the Holocaust, especially as a recent Claims Conference [report](#) found that nearly half of Holocaust survivors will pass away within 6 years, and 90% will pass away within 15 years.

That is why U.S. engagement with leaders at United Nations headquarters and UNESCO, which has urged these global organizations to undertake important efforts to ensure the unimaginable stories of the Holocaust are not lost to time and are shared with diverse audiences around the world, is so vital.

It is an enduring achievement – made possible by concerted engagement by AJC and others with successive Secretaries-General – that for the past two decades, the UN has convened an annual high-level event commemorating International Holocaust Remembrance Day, providing a platform for survivors to address dignitaries directly and for UN leaders to affirm the need for

greater efforts to counter antisemitism and Holocaust denial. The UN's Holocaust Outreach Programme also facilitates programs by UN Country Teams around the world that raise popular awareness about the Holocaust in places where no Jews reside. In 2022, AJC's Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights partnered with the UN Office on the Prevention of Genocide to produce a UN Policy Paper on Combating Holocaust Denial and Genocide Denial, ensuring these pernicious narratives are a key focus of the UN efforts to recognize and counter hate speech. While other aspects of the UN's work reflect pernicious anti-Israel bias and are deeply concerning, the U.S. can only effectively counter them by deepening its engagement with UN leaders and rallying broader opposition from governments to activities and resolutions aimed at isolating and censoring Israel, rather than withdrawing or disengaging.

We see a particularly instructive example of how engagement with UN entities can deliver results in the case of UNESCO. Under the leadership of Director-General Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO has continued to play a key role in Holocaust education, ensuring that future generations learn from history to prevent further hatred and violence, and has made increased efforts to combat Holocaust denial and distortion. UNESCO has also undertaken significant reforms in recent years that increased its transparency, efficiency, and accountability, and addressed the anti-Israel bias previously reflected in resolutions adopted by that body. The reforms led to extensive bipartisan support in Congress for the U.S. to rejoin UNESCO in 2023 – as well as to Israeli support for this action. UNESCO is now a reformed institution that is of strategic value to the United States and our allies, and continued U.S. engagement will be necessary to ensure that this progress endures and UNESCO's important contribution to Holocaust education continues following the conclusion of Director-General Azoulay's term in office later this year.

Congress must support policies and funding, including by funding America's financial obligations to the UN, that enable the U.S. to participate in the UN and UNESCO, using its influence to promote fair, historically accurate, and balanced treatment of Israel. By remaining engaged, rather than withdrawing, Congress can help ensure that the UN and UNESCO address antisemitism and Holocaust denial with seriousness and credibility, and that Jewish historical and cultural narratives are respected and accurately represented.

The importance of the Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism

In July 2024, I was in Argentina when Ambassador Lipstadt announced the Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism—an especially powerful moment, as it came on the 30th anniversary of the AMIA Jewish Center bombing in Buenos Aires, the deadliest antisemitic attack outside Israel since the Holocaust, killing 85 people and injuring 300 others. The Guidelines were drafted by a cadre of international special envoys who had considerable practical experience in fighting antisemitism. At the time of this announcement, the guidelines

were already endorsed by more than 30 countries and international organizations. They provide a comprehensive framework outlining actionable steps for governments to combat antisemitism. Today, 42 countries and several international organizations have endorsed these guidelines, a testament to the power of the Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism, and reflect a broad commitment to addressing antisemitism. This is the first truly global effort to combat antisemitism, and notably, it is led by the U.S.

I am proud of the pivotal role AJC played in building support for the Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism. Many of the action items in these guidelines were shaped by AJC's own [Global Call to Action Against Antisemitism](#), which set a comprehensive agenda for governments worldwide, including in the United States. Any siloed approach to antisemitism will fall short. We helped bring together a broad coalition of Jewish leaders and organizations, emphasizing the need for an international, whole-of-society response to rising antisemitism. And that is what the Global Guidelines have provided.

Members of Congress can contribute to the exercise of U.S. global leadership by meeting with Ambassadors from across the globe to discuss the Global Guidelines. You should applaud those countries that have signed and discuss what is going well and any challenges, and encourage those who have not yet signed to do so.

Congress can also implement many of the action items laid out in the Global Guidelines here at home. **Congress should establish a national coordinator and should include all federal agencies in its Federal Task Force to Combat Antisemitism, ensuring a whole-of-government approach and providing accountability for federal efforts. Congress can also expand and reauthorize funding for Holocaust education initiatives, such as the *Holocaust Education and Lessons Act*, to ensure robust, nationwide education about the Holocaust and the dangers of antisemitism in schools. Furthermore, Congress should provide \$500 million in the FY26 appropriations process for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) to help secure Jewish institutions and support programs that empower Jewish communities to participate fully and safely in American life.**

Understanding Antisemitism

In order to rid the world of antisemitism, we must understand the roots of the Jew-hatred of the present. The best way we can do that is through the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism, which provides a clear and concise description of antisemitism and how it can appear in its various forms. It is an important educational tool to help individuals and entities understand how antisemitism manifests in modern times. As the most widely adopted and used definition of antisemitism in the world, employed by over 100 entities, including over 40 governments along with the U.S., the IHRA

Working Definition articulates the many ways that antisemitism can manifest, including as conspiracy theories, Holocaust denial and distortion, prejudices against Jews, and the rejection of Israel's right to exist. **That's why Congress should pass the *Antisemitism Awareness Act*, legislation with bipartisan support that would ensure the Department of Education continues to consider this useful tool when it seeks to protect students.**

Finding ways to reaffirm the U.S. commitment to the IHRA Working Definition would signal to the world that we are committed to leading by example, and we are acting in alignment with many of our allies: virtually all EU countries and many countries in Latin America have adopted the IHRA Working Definition, and law enforcement, hate crime monitors, nonprofit organizations, universities, and others have used the definition when considering antisemitic incidents and rhetoric. The impact of U.S. global leadership cannot be understated.

I also want to take a moment to address opposition to the IHRA Working Definition due to concern that it could be used to restrict free speech. Freedom of expression in general allows for legitimate criticism of policy: the IHRA Working Definition explicitly states both that criticism of Israeli policy is not antisemitic and that context is crucial for determining when something can be considered antisemitic. However, suppose someone is espousing antisemitic rhetoric and invoking age-old tropes about Jews (some of which are outlined in AJC's [Translate Hate Glossary](#)). In that case, our laws also make it clear that free speech does not prevent us from identifying antisemitism when we hear it. The IHRA Working Definition and the examples it provides are meant to serve as a flexible educational tool to help people recognize antisemitism, depending on the context, not to restrict or limit speech. Critiques of the IHRA Working Definition on the basis that it could limit speech misunderstand the working definition and its purpose, which is to help policymakers, civil society monitors, educators, and others understand what antisemitism can look like, in order to take proactive steps to address the issue and hold perpetrators of antisemitism accountable.

U.S. Leadership is Needed to Fight Global Antisemitism

At this critical moment, when Jewish communities are questioning whether they can live proudly, openly, and safely, American leadership in the global fight against antisemitism is more important than ever. Around the world, we see rising violence, harassment, and intimidation – from synagogues under threat to students silenced in classrooms. Across continents, age-old conspiracies have found new life, amplified by technology and legitimized by public figures. Antisemitism isn't confined to any one country or ideology. It's spreading in ways that demand a united and urgent response.

The persistence of antisemitism not only endangers Jewish communities but also threatens the broader fabric of pluralistic societies by fostering intolerance and eroding democratic values.

Addressing antisemitism is thus integral specifically to the Lantos Commission's mission to promote and defend internationally recognized human rights, as combating it helps safeguard the rights and freedoms of all. By confronting antisemitism, the Commission affirms its commitment to the foundational principles of human rights and the prevention of all forms of discrimination.

That's why it is so critical you are holding this hearing today and why I encourage you to continue speaking out, holding hearings, meeting with leaders and stakeholders, and making clear that this hate has no place in our world. That's why Congress must step up in the fight against global antisemitism and actualize the notion that our internal politics stop at the water's edge. This is a moral issue about the values of our country and the world we want for our children to live in – a world without antisemitism and hate. Congress must come together to prioritize these vital programs, to empower our incredible diplomats to fight antisemitism, and ensure U.S. global engagement. It is incumbent on Congress to use every tool we have to protect Jewish communities worldwide. The world is watching what we do. And when we lead, the world will follow.