

# REPORT FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

## High Level Forum on Global Anti-Semitism

Sponsored by Canada, Israel, USA and the delegation of the European Union  
September 7, 2016

Reported by Lucy Becker, Women's League UN NGO

The forum opened with a video greeting from Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the UN, followed by greetings, warnings and updates on governmental battles against anti-Semitism by ambassadors to the UN from Canada, Israel, the US, the EU and the president of the General Assembly, Mogens Lykketoft (Denmark).

### Canada:

Support of pluralism; the Canadian House of Commons unanimously passed legislation against anti-Semitism; convened parliamentarians from around the globe to combat anti-Semitism; governmental Office of Human Rights.

### Israel, Danny Danon:

A third of European Jews are fearful; related incident in Poland of the burning in effigy of a hasid; invoked the spirit of Elie Wiesel; the invidiousness of social media. Israel, France, UK are scapegoats. Rabbi Jonathan Sachs named anti-Semitism as a virus. The blood libel is back using harvesting of organs from Palestinians as its mode. Where is the moral majority? Their voices must be stronger so that we are not alone.

### United States, Samantha Power:

In the litany of current anti-Semitic offences is the use of the ECHO on the internet as code for JEW by putting parentheses around a name. We must learn to deal with the internet. How to discern between criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism. We need a definition of anti-Semitism. Role of academics, journalists. Rise of xenophobia. We want the engagement of the Moral Majority. Related the return of Hungarian government rewards by awardees because of the government's rewarding a known racist, anti-Semite.

### Panel 1: Government Responses

1. EU, Katharina von Schnurbein
  - a. Need to assess the scale of the problem
  - b. Find the root causes; proper recording of events
  - c. Take comprehensive action
    - i. ban calls to violence
    - ii. outlaw hate crimes and denial of holocaust
    - iii. Hate speech on internet to be taken down within 24 hours
  - d. Education in schools and society in general. A GLOBAL, COLLECTIVE EFFORT.
  - e. The fight against anti-Semitism must be fought not just by Jews.
2. General Assembly President Lykketoft
  - a. Responsibility of UN; support for end to settlements and occupation (**GAG**)

3. Israel, Akiva Tor  
Concerned for physical safety of Jews in Europe. The internet provides speech that kills. States need definition so they can move to educate, train law enforcement. Jewish life cannot exist behind barricades.
4. Germany, Klein  
31 members of the EU states accepted a definition. The next step is to do the same with the OSCE.
5. EU, Von Schnurbein  
The capacity of the internet not yet digested by society.
6. Question from audience: What about boycott of Israeli scholars? Not addressed.

## **Panel 2: Solutions for the Digital Age**

1. France, CRIF, Cukierman  
We have Jews vs. barbarians, a third world war against modern civilization. Most jihadists are educated by the internet. 30% of those recruited are girls! Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft, Google must join the battle to limit hate and become de facto partners. How can we take actions against hate mongers on the internet? Pressure them through taxes, lawsuits, legal restrictions.
2. ADL, Wolf  
We need an online code of conduct. Direct link between online hate and violence. There is an anti-Semitic post every 2 minutes. Facebook (300 pages worth) features the holocaust as a hoax. The posters are usually from the US.
3. Canada, Arbeiter  
Only 10% of incidents are reported in Canada. We need transparent data. Partnerships with police, civil society, training and outreach.
4. US, Special Envoy, Ira Forman  
Coalitions of NGOs, civil society are crucial.
5. Germany, Klein  
Political education, Holocaust education, zero tolerance, Prevention
6. Microsoft, Jacqueline Beauchere  
Hate speech and the case for digital civility. Content and conduct. It's all risk management. Click on Microsoft.com/safeonline. Hate speech prohibition adheres to EU guidelines. Feb. 7, 2017 is Safer Internet Day.
7. Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Michael Sandberg
  - a. Increase human and technological resources
  - b. Industry expertise to move quickly
  - c. Who is responsible for what
  - d. Users must complain
  - e. Train staff
  - f. Is the industry doing all it should?
  - g. Keep statistics

## **Keynote Address, Deborah Lipstadt**

The UN seems to be the heart of anti-Semitism. Remember Moynihan and the fight against

Zionism is Racism. Durban concentrated on Israel instead of human rights. Anti-Semitism is a direct challenge to human rights.

Isaiah Berlin said, "An anti-Semite is someone who hates Jews more than is necessary."

Racial prejudice differs from anti-Semitism. That prejudice makes the hated seem lesser. Anti-Semites fear Jews because Jews are more powerful.

Dr. Lipstadt delineated her life struggles against anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial culminating in her trial in the UK. She had confronted David Irving, Holocaust denier and citizen of the UK several times. He sued her for libel. The process was long and demanding. But Lipstadt emerged vindicated and victorious. A film, DENIAL, starring Rachel Weisz, is opening very shortly. Weisz portrays Lipstadt.

### **Panel 3: Civil Society Coalitions**

1. ADL, Burdett

The alienation caused by anti-Semitism shatters one's sense of belonging. The repudiation of apartheid turned into an onslaught against Jews.

2. ADL, Jacobson

The erosion of shame – younger people don't know or care much about the fairly recent past. The assault on Israel presumes a moral equivalence between Israel and Nazism. Catholic/Jewish relations have improved enormously – 'Bearing Witness' program.

3. AJC, Silverman

Jews vs. Moslems: Islamic schools portray Jews in all manner of horror. In Indonesia, Jews are the third most disliked group. This in a country with next to no Jewish population, a product of Moslem education. The most diverse Moslem community in the world is in NYC. We want to promote dialogue and reduce fear of the 'other'. We want govt/civil society to push back. The heritage of the Lutheran church is being somewhat mitigated here in the US but strongly anti-Semitic elsewhere.