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Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Written statement* submitted by European Centre for Law and Justice, The / Centre Européen pour le droit, les Justice et les droits de l'homme, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[19 August 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

Request that the U.N. Address Increasing Incidents of Racism Against Jews

1. Introduction

Antisemitism—racial prejudice against Jewish people—has become rampant across the world since October 7, 2023. Hamas’s terrorism against Israel resulted in the murders of over 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians, and the taking of over 250 hostages. Unfortunately, since the October 7 attacks, the world has only become more hostile to Jewish people.

2. Background

While the Jewish people have faced hate and persecution through history, following the October 7 Hamas attack, antisemitic incidents have been on the rise. In fact, in just the two weeks following October 7, antisemitic incidents rose by almost 400% worldwide.(1) Even officials expected to be impartial are making antisemitic statements claiming that Israel is in the wrong. For example, Francesca Albanese, U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Palestinian Territories, stated that Israel wants to “destroy Gaza and the Palestinians as a people,” and that “[t]his is genocidal intent turned into action.”(2) Albanese also stated that the October 7 attacks were merely a “reaction to Israeli oppression.”(3) The notion that Hamas attacked Israel as a “reaction to oppression” is blatantly false, as Hamas has stated in its own Charter that Israel must be destroyed.(4)

3. Violations

The following violations are just a small sample of the widespread persecution that Jewish people face daily.

In the United States, antisemitic incidents rose from 3,697 in 2022 to 7,523 in 2023.(5) Bomb threats towards synagogues skyrocketed in 2023, up to 962 from 94 in 2022.(6)

On December 9, 2023, a 75-year-old man and his wife were attacked while on their way to observe Shabbat in Los Angeles, California.(7) The attacker ran up to the couple, hit the man over the head with a belt, and attempted to rob his wife.(8) This attack occurred during a rise of antisemitism in Los Angeles.(9)

On October 18, 2023, a man attacked a Jewish victim, who was wearing a yarmulke, while he was with his four friends in Times Square, New York City.(10) The attacker punched the Jewish man in the head and shouted “ Hamas should kill more of you” and “all Jews should die.”(11)

In Argentina, in 2023, there were 598 antisemitic incidents, a significant rise from 427 in the prior year.(12) In October 2023, U.S. and Israeli embassies in Argentina were subject to bomb threats by email.(13) One such email read “Jews we are going to kill you all.”(14)

In Australia, 662 antisemitic incidents were reported between October and November 2023 compared to 79 in October and November 2022.(15)

In April 2024, four teenagers were caught plotting to buy guns to attack Jewish people in Australia.(16) One of them said, “I wanna die and I wanna kill . . . I’m just excited”(17) A fifteen-year-old said, “I really want to target [Jews].”(18)

In March 2024, two anti-Israel activists kidnapped, tortured, and robbed an Australian man merely because he was employed by a Jew.(19) He was beaten with a hammer and they stomped on his head.(20) This all happened in the wake of a 700% increase in antisemitic incidents since the October 7 Hamas attacks.(21)

In Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spoke of a scary rise of antisemitism in Canada.⁽²²⁾ A report from B'nai Brith Canada found there were 5,791 incidents of antisemitism in 2023, more than doubling the previous record of 2,799 in 2021.⁽²³⁾

In June 2024, there was a significant uptick in antisemitic vandalism in Canada.⁽²⁴⁾ These attacks included setting fire to a synagogue and protesters yelling “Hitler was right!” at Jewish congregants.⁽²⁵⁾ It also included pelting a synagogue with stones, smashing glass panes, and firing guns at a school.⁽²⁶⁾

In June 2024, Armed men in black shirts opened fire on one synagogue in the Dagestan region of Russia and subsequently lit it on fire, destroying it entirely.⁽²⁷⁾ One estimate provided that nineteen people were killed in the attack.⁽²⁸⁾

In France, the Council of Jewish Institutions in France stated that there were 1,676 antisemitic acts in 2023, compared to 436 in 2022.⁽²⁹⁾

In June 2024, a French Jewish girl was raped by three boys because she is Jewish.⁽³⁰⁾

In March 2024, a 62-year-old French man was sitting on a sidewalk when an unsuspecting attacker accused him of killing people in Gaza.⁽³¹⁾ The assailant then beat him unconscious, leaving him battered with a broken nose.⁽³²⁾

In the Netherlands, there were 154 incidents of antisemitism in 2023 compared to 69 in 2022.⁽³³⁾ 107 of these incidents occurred in October, the same month as the Hamas attacks.⁽³⁴⁾

In April 2024, an elderly Dutch rabbi was attacked after being asked “[w]hy are you dressed like a Jew?”⁽³⁵⁾ He was then hit over the head by his attacker.⁽³⁶⁾

In March 2024, a Jew living in Amsterdam was harassed at her apartment by pro-Palestinian activists about her daughter’s service in the Israel Defense Forces.⁽³⁷⁾ The activists came to her door, calling her a “child murderer.”⁽³⁸⁾

In 2023, the United Kingdom reported 4,103 antisemitic incidents, a 147% increase compared to 2022.⁽³⁹⁾ London accounts for 52% of those incidents.⁽⁴⁰⁾ “66% of incidents were recorded after October 7, up 589% increase compared to the previous year.”⁽⁴¹⁾

In January 2024, three victims were beaten by a mob of about twenty men in London while the mob chanted “Free Palestine” and “F*** the Jews.”⁽⁴²⁾ Police took at least half an hour to respond, although one source claimed the police did not arrive at all.⁽⁴³⁾

4. Request

The above examples are just a sample of the antisemitic attacks being carried out around the world. The international community must finally stand up to racism and antisemitism. Racism has no place in any nation, but physical violence as a result of racism is evil and criminal. Therefore, the HRC must take proactive measures to prevent antisemitic attacks. The HRC must keep a watchful eye on pro-Hamas groups known for terrorism and antisemitism. This is not a matter of politics. This is a serious and ongoing problem of discrimination against a targeted group.

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