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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.

[03 June 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 brutal attack against Israel (the most horrific antisemitic attack since the Holocaust), which included murdering over 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians, and taking over 250 hostages, has “helped spread a fire that was already out of control.”⁽¹⁾ However, antisemitism not only threatens Israel, but also threatens Jews around the world.

2. Background

Antisemitism is not a recent phenomenon. For much of human history, the Jewish people have been plagued with antisemitism. This very fact was noted in an address by President Biden in May of 2024.⁽²⁾ When speaking at the United States Holocaust Museum, President Biden stated:

This ancient hatred of Jews didn’t begin with the Holocaust – it didn’t end with the Holocaust, either, or even after our victory in World War II. This hatred continues to lie deep in the hearts of too many people in the world and requires our continued vigilance and outspokenness.⁽³⁾

Antisemitism has been further exacerbated by the horrifying attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023. In fact, in just the two weeks following the October 7 attacks, antisemitic incidents rose by almost 400%.⁽⁴⁾ The sharp rise in antisemitism around the world is alarming. As we will demonstrate below, there have been tens of thousands of antisemitic incidents involving assaults, harassment, and vandalism.

3. Violations

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⁾ In Australia, 662 antisemitic incidents were reported between October and November 2023 compared to 79 in October and November 2022.⁽⁷⁾ Antisemitic incidents in France have nearly quadrupled in 2023 compared to 2022.⁽⁸⁾ “Of the 4,103 [antisemitic] incidents in 2023” in the U.K., “2,699 occurred on or after October 7.”⁽⁹⁾ The following violations are just a small sample of the widespread rampant racial persecution that Jewish people are facing around the world.

In Argentina, a Jewish school in Buenos Aires has told its students not to wear their school uniforms out of concern for the safety of the students.⁽¹⁰⁾ Also, an Argentinean man was arrested after he called for attacks on Jewish school children online.⁽¹¹⁾

In Canada, “Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spoke . . . of a “scary rise” of antisemitism in Canada.”⁽¹²⁾ In particular, he cited incidents being directed toward a Jewish high school as well as inflammatory language being used against Jews online.⁽¹³⁾

In Russia, “an angry crowd stormed an airport in the Dagestan region” looking to attack Jews who just arrived on a flight from Tel Aviv.⁽¹⁴⁾

In the Netherlands, Jewish children have been harassed, and people have yelled at them saying things like “Hamas were right” and “they should have done it earlier.”⁽¹⁵⁾

In April 2024, a pro-Hamas protest glorifying the October 7 attack was staged in Canada.⁽¹⁶⁾ The protesters shouted antisemitic phrases such as, “long live the resistance,” “long live the intifada,” and “long live every form of resistance.”⁽¹⁷⁾ Canadian MP

Anthony Housefather wrote in response, “[t]he last 6 months were the worst in 300 yrs. of Canadian Jewish history.”(18)

In April 2024, four teenagers were caught plotting to buy guns to violently attack Jewish people just days after a bishop was stabbed in a church in Sydney, Australia.(19) One of them said, “I wanna die and I wanna kill . . . I’m just excited . . .”(20) A fifteen-year-old allegedly said, “I really want to target [Jewish people].”(21)

As of March 22, 2024, the U.K. is reportedly within the top 10 worst countries for online antisemitic discourse.(22) “In 2023, 4,103 antisemitic incidents were recorded in the U.K., a 147% increase compared to 2022.”(23) London accounts for 52% of those incidents.(24) “66% of incidents were recorded after October 7, up 589% increase compared to the previous year.”(25)

In January 2024, a high school student in the U.K. was verbally abused on his walks home from school because of his kippah.(26) The abuse turned into threats, and he had to report the incident to the police.(27)

On February 2, 2024, a Columbia University student was walking from class to his dorm.(28) As he was walking, he was stopped by a group of protestors and shoved into a wall.(29) He barely managed to escape and ran away.(30) The protestors responded with, “[k]eep f—ing running.”(31)

In January 2024, London residents defended a family-owned kosher supermarket from a knife-wielding attacker who demanded to know, “Do you support Israel or Palestine?”(32)

“In January [2024], three Jewish students in Strasbourg[, France,] were assaulted . . . for putting up posters raising awareness of the hostages in Gaza.”(33)

On October 25, 2023, a man broke into the home of a Jewish family in the United States and shouted, “Free Palestine” and “Kill Jews.”(34) In response to the attack, the local mayor continued increasing police patrols to combat the rise in antiemitic attacks.(35)

In October 2023, an Israeli student began recording a violent protest at Harvard and was physically assaulted and harassed.(36) The attackers blocked the student’s path and repeatedly shouted, “[s]hame!”(37)

On December 21, 2023, “[a] group of Israelis hanging posters on the streets of London of hostages being held by Hamas in Gaza was attacked twice.”(38) As seen on camera, a man hit and kicked a woman as she screamed.(39)

In France, during October 2023 alone, about twenty Jewish schools faced bomb threats with a number of them evacuating because of the threats.(40)

In 2023, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) reported a 120% increase in assaults and a 100% increase in vandalism against Jews.(41) On October 9, 2023, a mob gathered outside the Sydney Opera House in Australia and chanted vile rhetoric such as “F— the Jews,” “[w]here are the Jews,” and “[g]as the Jews.”(42)

4. Request

It is time for the international community to stand against racism and address the ceaseless antisemitic incidents that have increasingly plagued our world since the October 7 Hamas terrorist attacks. Racism has no place in any nation, especially when coupled with harmful actions, therefore the HRC must not only speak out, but actively take measures to prevent racism and racist attacks. The HRC must keep a watchful eye on pro-Hamas groups known for terrorism and hatred against Jews. This is not a matter of politics, but rather a serious

problem of discrimination against a vulnerable group. The HRC must act to stomp out racial discrimination and persecution of Jews.

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