



Appeal for the Fight Against Anti-Semitism

NGO Statement, OSCE Anti-Semitism Conference, Berlin 2004

I. Combating All Manifestations of Anti-Semitism

We, representatives of the below listed non-government organizations, hereby appeal for active resistance to the increasing anti-Semitism, in all of its guises, currently to be witnessed in Europe and its neighboring regions. The fight against anti-Semitism is an essential part of the global struggle for human rights and democracy.

In the past few years in Europe and other parts of the globe, synagogues have been attacked, schools destroyed, cemeteries desecrated, and Jews physically assaulted in public. Today, incitement to hate Jews has insinuated itself into broad segments of society, be they political, religious or secular. Anti-Semitism – hostility towards Jews for racist, social, political or religious reasons – is, first and foremost, a real threat to Jews everywhere. As a manifestation of prejudice, it includes fundamental elements inherently at odds with both democracy and civilization. As such, it strikes at both democracy's foundations and civilization's core values.

In light of almost two millennia of persecution and shoah, anti-Semitism cannot be seen as a mere sub-form of "racism." Such a viewpoint would be a wholesale underestimation of a delusional, expressly murderous concept and would ignore the particularities of a negative cultural inclination that has persisted over generations. Europe's Christian anti-Judaism has yet to disappear. Secondary anti-Semitism as a post-Auschwitz defense mechanism against past events plays a significant role in many European countries, and not just among radical right-wing groups. This secondary anti-Semitism often expresses itself as a denial of the Holocaust or anti-Zionist agitation aimed at Jews world-wide.

On February 2, 2004 at the Global Forum Against Anti-Semitism in Jerusalem, representatives of numerous Jewish communities formulated it concisely: "When criticism of Israeli politics avails itself of coarse political and diplomatic double standards or includes a demonization of Israel or Zionism, even denies Israel's fundamental right to exist, then that criticism cannot be considered legitimate; rather it is at heart anti-Semitic and must be designated as such."

Anti-Semitic hatred is promulgated by diverse Arab media and not only in the Islamic world, but is aimed at Muslim minorities in Europe as well. The Hizballah-owned television station "Al Manar" reaches European living rooms via satellite, broadcasting the ancient anti-Semitic legend of ritual murder. The "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," which originated in czarist Russia, has been reprinted and widely distributed in the Arab and Islamic world. It also serves as the basis for "Horse Without a Horseman," a television series produced in Egypt and broadcast in a number of countries.

Efforts originating in the Arab and Islamic world to delegitimize Jewish political sovereignty have now arrived in Europe through venues that go beyond mass media and the Internet. Neo-Nazi groups are not alone in spreading anti-Semitism in Europe; "leftist" grass roots movements do so as well in the guise of opposition to Israel, which uses Israel for the purposes of projection. Not rarely do such groups seek out ties to Islamist organizations and are themselves in part anti-Semitic – the organization attac, for example. At the European Social Forum, its French affiliate recently published an anti-Semitic pamphlet by the Geneva-based Islamist Tariq Ramadan, directed against French Jewish intellectuals. (Purported "anti-racism" often serves European grass roots movements as a platform for anti-Semitism directed against Israel. Internet sites are, in this regard, of growing importance.)

Anti-Israel prejudice exists in large segments of the European population and in the European media. Over 50% of all Europeans consider "Israel the largest threat to world peace," as an EU survey recently documented. Objective criticism of Israel is of course entirely legitimate. Yet anti-Semitic ideology becomes visible at the latest when special discriminatory standards are applied to Israel, when it is compared with Nazi Germany or its right to exist as a Jewish state is questioned. If anti-Semitic hatred of Israel is not overcome, lasting peace between Arab countries and Israel will not be possible.



II. Necessary Initial Measures

European acquiescence or appeasement vis à vis anti-Semitic agitation, state-supported or otherwise, in Europe, the Middle East and other Asian or African countries must be taken as a sign of or acceptance or approval. We are aware of tendencies toward such agitation in, for example, Saudi Arabian school books or the Palestinian National Authority, which is financed to a considerable degree by the EU, as well as in statements made by the former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir and statements by terrorist organizations such as Hamas or Hizballah, which are supported by Iran, Syria and Lebanon, among others. Effective measures for combating anti-Semitism must be judged, both at home and abroad, by the same set of standards. They must apply to national and supranational agencies and authorities, politics, society at large, as well as educational institutions.

As a result, the following measures are of key importance:

1. European countries should introduce, with as much unanimity as possible, a resolution to the United Nations that condemns anti-Semitism clearly and without reservation.
2. a) No cultural relations should be maintained with countries or organizations that promote or acquiesce to anti-Semitism, nor should such parties be engaged in any political "dialogue." Economic cooperation and development assistance should only ensue when countries receiving such assistance make a credible and ongoing effort to combat anti-Semitism.
b) Agencies or organizations established by the OSCE or working in partnership with it should, in conjunction with NGOs, monitor the behavior of countries receiving assistance and provide recommendations for state-sponsored action on a regular basis.
c) Standards and guidelines pertaining to a) und b) should apply to EU organizations as well as organizations in OSCE member countries receiving public support.
3. Anti-Semitic statements, including those disseminated through the Internet or by satellite, should be punishable by law in OSCE member states.
4. Organizations and agencies that promote anti-Semitic ideology should be outlawed. This applies in particular to terrorist organizations such as Hizballah or Hamas, as well as their affiliate organizations and media in all OSCE member states.
5. OSCE member states should collect all domestic information on anti-Semitism and evaluate all sources of information including official venues, media and reports by NGOs. This information should be supplied to the OSCE organization ODIHR in Warsaw in order to make it available through regularly published ODIHR reports to the public, the parliamentary assembly of OSCE member states as well as national parliaments and governments.
6. OSCE member states should supply the necessary means for promoting educational programs in schools and other institutions for fighting anti-Semitism. Such educational programs should furnish information on the causes and progression of the Holocaust and commemorate the Holocaust as an unprecedented crime against mankind and humanity. The history of the state of Israel should be portrayed without prejudice. Jewish history, tradition and culture should be taught as part of school curricula and in higher education, in which NGOs can also play a role.
7. In conjunction with ODIHR and NGO reports, OSCE member states should monitor the effectiveness of their own efforts in fighting anti-Semitism. Such monitoring should be carried out in accordance with the guidelines listed here.
8. In order to better coordinate their efforts in the fight against anti-Semitism and for monitoring corrective measures, NGOs will establish a European coordinating office.