



Resolution on Anti-Semitism
Adopted October 2015

In 2014 and the first part of 2015, there were three deadly terrorist attacks on European Jewish institutions: the Jewish museum in Brussels, a kosher grocery store in Paris, and a synagogue in Copenhagen. In the United States, while the total number of anti-Semitic incidents remains at historically low levels, there were some particularly violent ones in 2014, most notably the shootings at the JCC in Overland Park, Kansas. In that incident, a gunman killed three people while firing on two Jewish facilities.

These fatal attacks took place against a backdrop of aggression against Jews and Jewish institutions, including vandalism and graffiti, verbal and physical harassment of individuals, and anti-Semitic rhetoric as part of public discourse. Sometimes, attempts are made to justify such behavior by referring to Israel's ongoing conflict with the Palestinians.

While anti-Semitism exists throughout the world, a number of factors have made the situation in Europe increasingly volatile:

Right-wing, left-wing, and Islamic extremists all engage in anti-Semitic speech, which can incite violence against Jews and Jewish institutions. In Central and Eastern Europe in particular, ultra-nationalist political parties have used anti-Semitic rhetoric.

There are also instances where discourse goes beyond legitimate criticism of Israeli policies. This type of delegitimization of Israel is also finding greater expression in the United States, particularly on college campuses and in progressive enclaves, such as mainline Protestant churches.

Hostility to Jewish rituals such as circumcision or kosher slaughter, can have a chilling effect on Jewish religious practice and fan anti-Semitism. Holocaust denial has gained greater exposure through the Internet.

Given the wide diversity of contemporary expressions of "anti-Semitism," it is both difficult to define and challenging to combat. One of the most contentious issues in trying to create a standard definition of anti-Semitism is how to differentiate between legitimate criticism of Israel and delegitimization, which often uses anti-Semitic tropes, imagery, and rhetoric.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs believes:

- Anti-Semitism is a continuing problem in communities all over the world, and we must oppose it wherever and whenever it occurs.
- To truly understand anti-Semitism and to fight it effectively, we must recognize that criticism of Israel can be anti-Semitic in certain circumstances. At the same time, we must recognize that not all criticism of Israel or its government's policies constitutes anti-Semitism.
- Anti-Semitism is never justified, whether by international developments or political issues, including events in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, as stated unambiguously in the OSCE Berlin Declaration in 2004 and reaffirmed in 2014. This applies to both anti-Semitic rhetoric and actions.
- To be effective, we must employ targeted strategies to specific problems rather than attempting a single-factor solution.
- Democratic and open societies that protect freedom of expression and basic human rights are the best way to ensure a high quality of life for Jews and non-Jews alike.
- Operating under the core principle of devotion to *Klal Yisrael*—the totality of the Jewish people—American Jews have a mandate not only to care for the health and welfare of those in our own communities, but also to work to ensure the safety and security of Jewish communities around the world.
- Just as the Jewish community has allied with oppressed peoples against racism, against xenophobia, and for basic human rights, it is essential that other peoples ally with the Jewish community to oppose Anti-Semitism.
- The U.S. State Department's 2010 Fact Sheet on Anti-Semitism is a useful resource for identifying the problem.

The community relations field should:

- Work with legislators on the local, state, and national level to support carefully crafted legislative initiatives condemning domestic and international anti-Semitism.
- Ask interfaith and intergroup partners to condemn anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic incidents in state and local communities and on the national and international level.
- Support government officials in their efforts to identify and confront domestic and international extremist groups. Remind them to emphasize that political events in the Middle East or elsewhere never justify anti-Semitism.
- Consult with national agencies and NGOs about anti-Semitic incidents in Europe and other parts of the world, including violence, vandalism, and expressions of anti-Semitic sentiment in the media and government.
- Work with U.S. governmental officials to persuade the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency either to reaffirm the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia's (EUMC) working definition of anti-Semitism or to formulate a new one that recognizes both traditional forms of anti-Semitism and new forms that cross the line between legitimate criticism and anti-Semitism by demonizing and delegitimizing the State of Israel. The EUMC definition reads in part as follows: "Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." The full definition can be found [here](#).
- The JCPA Task Force on Israel, World Jewry, and International Human Rights and the JCPA Task Force on Jewish Security and the Bill of Rights should work with the community relations field to develop guidelines regarding the line between criticism of Israel's policies

and anti-Semitism, and when that line is crossed—strongly informed by the EUMC definition of anti-Semitism—for adoption by the community relations field.

- Work with European agencies and governments toward shared goals (e.g., making clear the need for special envoys or representatives on anti-Semitism for European governments and the EU, as well as parliamentary working groups on anti-Semitism), in cooperation with European Jewish communities.
- Urge European officials both to reassess their legislation, law enforcement, and education approaches to anti-Semitism and to consistently and publicly speak out and denounce anti-Semitism at every turn to better address these serious and troubling issues. In countries with laws against anti-Semitism and hate speech and where constitutionally permissible, encourage governments to enforce these laws.
- Provide a vehicle for Jewish and other advocacy organizations to come together with campus groups to develop well-coordinated strategies for protecting Jewish students from hostile campus environments, and to support initiatives that promote Israel and the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Jewish and other advocacy organizations should be a resource and support to students, respecting and advancing their consensus strategies. Outside groups should give high priority to de-escalating conflict while promoting a climate in which Jewish students are physically secure and able to participate fully in campus life and express political views without harassment.
- Work with faculty, administrators, students, alumni, and appropriate campus organizations to respond to anti-Jewish bigotry through education, programming, study of campus climate, investigation of complaints, and vigorous application of appropriate campus codes of conduct where necessary.
- Help campus leaders to understand as well as educate others about the spectrum from mere speech—including criticism of Israeli policies—to anti-Israel or anti-Jewish conduct that creates an atmosphere that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it deprives a student of access to the benefits or opportunities provided by the school.
- Help foster Jewish life on campus that is inclusive and diverse in opinions and activities related to the Jewish community.