

Developing an Action Plan for Monitoring and Combating Global Antisemitism

Report of an Expert Consultation Organized by AJC's Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights in Cooperation with the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief

I. Introduction and Summary of Recommendations

This report summarizes observations and conclusions made by participants in a virtual stakeholder consultation entitled “Developing an Action Plan for Monitoring and Combating Global Antisemitism,” convened on November 15 and 16, 2021 by AJC’s Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights (JBI)¹ at the request of and together with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Ahmed Shaheed.

The event, held under the Chatham House Rule, provided the Special Rapporteur with an opportunity to discuss trends in antisemitism and efforts to combat it that took place from 2019 to 2021 with representatives of intergovernmental organizations, governmental envoys on antisemitism, and representatives of antisemitism monitoring organizations and Jewish communities from around the world. Participants joined the consultation from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, France, Italy, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They included the European Commission’s Coordinator on Combatting Antisemitism; the Commissioner to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism for the Organization of American States; Canada’s Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism; and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Antisemitism for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

During the two-day consultation, participants reflected on the significance and impact of the Special Rapporteur’s groundbreaking 2019 report to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) identifying antisemitism as a serious human rights concern with a global scope and an increasingly serious negative impact on the ability of Jews to enjoy the right to freedom of religion or belief and other human rights without discrimination. The Special Rapporteur’s report also concluded that antisemitism “threatens the rights of all people in societies in which this insidious hatred is unaddressed” and is “toxic to democracies,” underscoring the urgent need for governments and other stakeholders to combat it using a human rights framework.¹

Participants in the consultation discussed and welcomed the many meaningful actions to counter antisemitism that have been taken since 2019 by several international and regional organizations, governments, political leaders, social media and technology companies, and other stakeholders, many of which were in line with the recommendations that the Special Rapporteur set out in his 2019 report.

However, participants also observed that antisemitic incidents and attitudes have not abated since 2019. To the contrary, antisemitism is a persistent and growing problem that has flourished as societal tensions in many countries have deepened. Participants reflected with alarm that, since 2019, antisemitic hate crimes have continued to occur at historically high levels in several countries with significant Jewish populations and, in 2021, appear to have been committed at unprecedented levels in several countries. They also observed that antisemitic hate speech is proliferating online, including in countries where no Jews reside. The resulting insecurity remains a significant problem for many Jewish communities, causing many Jews to modify their behavior and obscure their Jewish identity and requiring that Jewish communities adopt extensive security measures to mitigate the significant risks that individuals and

¹ For more information about AJC’s Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights, see <https://www.jbi-humanrights.org/> and @JBI_HumanRights or email jbi@ajc.org.

religious, educational, and cultural sites face of being targeted with antisemitic hostility, discrimination, and violence.

Participants welcomed the Special Rapporteur's repeated recognition since 2019 that antisemitism remains an urgent global challenge and his proposal to prepare an annex to his 2022 report to the UN Human Rights Council setting out an action plan to facilitate more effective responses to rising antisemitism by all relevant stakeholders. A summary of conclusions and recommendations proposed for the Special Rapporteur's consideration as he develops this action plan appears below; a more detailed summary of the consultation follows.

I. Key Conclusions and Recommendations for a UN Action Plan to Combat Antisemitismⁱⁱ

1. As in 2019, Jews in many countries around the world continue to face the threat of experiencing antisemitic violence, discrimination, or hostility when they exercise their right to freedom of religion or belief or carry out myriad other activities essential to participation in public life. Since 2019, antisemitic incidents have been reported at persistently high levels in those countries where governmental or non-governmental monitors are attempting to collect this data. In some countries, violent attacks decreased slightly in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic spread, but levels of other acts including vandalism remained high and antisemitic harassment and hate speech increased substantially online. In an alarming trend, early reports suggest that an unprecedented number of antisemitic incidents were reported in 2021 in several countries. This occurred despite the many efforts that governments in several countries have taken since 2019 to combat it more effectively and commitments that several governments have made at recent multi-stakeholder convenings that have been made at the regional level, most notably in the new EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life. In particular, since 2019, several countries have taken measures including appointing national coordinators and enacting action plans to combat antisemitism. Many more have pledged to take such actions in the future, and the EU strategy will encourage Member States to do so by the end of 2022. Participants welcomed these developments but noted that consistent efforts will be needed to ensure that they result in more effective government responses to antisemitic incidents and attitudes in practice.

Recommendations: Participants stressed the ongoing need for all governments to take more concerted efforts to combat antisemitism, within their own countries and globally. They welcomed initiatives that will encourage governments that have not already done so to adopt national action plans to combat antisemitism and establish high-level focal points or envoys on combating antisemitism with responsibility for ensuring regular consultation with representatives of Jewish communities on these efforts. They also stressed the need for ongoing monitoring and assessment of governments' implementation of the commitments they have made to improve their responses to antisemitism and of the results of these efforts, noting that the fundamental test of their effectiveness is whether they create an environment in which Jewish individuals and communities encounter less antisemitic violence, discrimination, and hostility and experience greater security in practice.

2. In 2021, surveys indicated that many Jews in many countries around the world frequently refrain from engaging in activities that would reveal their Jewish identity because of their perception that they face a substantial risk of experiencing antisemitic violence, discrimination, or hostility. Reports from some countries suggest that this is particularly common among Jewish youths, including in university settings. This has a substantial negative impact on Jews' ability to enjoy the right to freedom of religion or belief and to engage in public life as Jews. Further, many Jews who are victims of antisemitic violence, discrimination, or hostility, online and offline, did not report it to law enforcement, responsible authorities in educational settings, or social media or internet technology companies, reflecting a widespread perception that officials, educators, employers, and the public more broadly does not

comprehensively understand antisemitism or consider it reprehensible. Non-reporting of antisemitic incidents by victims and ineffective responses to antisemitic incidents by authorities has resulted in many Jews who are victims of antisemitism being denied redress and perpetrators of antisemitic acts facing no accountability for their actions.

Recommendations: Participants stressed the importance of efforts by governmental and other authorities to engage with Jewish communities to understand their concerns and the situations in which they are encountering antisemitism and the impact on their lives. They also stressed the importance of States enacting and enforcing hate crimes legislation that includes antisemitism among the prohibited bias motivations. They commended actions taken by some governments to enhance authorities’ effectiveness at responding to reports of antisemitism and to strengthen the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms for hate crimes and hate speech. They also stressed the importance of swift and vocal condemnation of antisemitic incidents by political leaders, public officials, and others in a position of influence in society, as such statements send important signals that antisemitism will not be tolerated.

3. Since 2019, many previously observed trends in manifestations of antisemitism continued. For example, a substantial proportion of antisemitic incidents are perpetrated by individuals espousing extremist ideologies, particularly neo-Nazi and right-wing extremist ideologies. However, new varieties of manifestations of antisemitism have also emerged and expressions of contemporary antisemitism have become more prevalent since 2019. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 was accompanied by a dramatic increase in antisemitic conspiracy theories. Protests against restrictions enacted by governments to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 have been accompanied by disturbingly frequent incidents in which participants distort the facts of and misuse symbols of the Holocaust to equate their suffering to that experienced by the Jews at the hands of the Nazis. In some countries, governments and officials seeking to promote national pride have advanced narratives about the country’s role in the Second World War that deny any culpability for the suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust and have sought to enforce these narratives through law, denying Jewish victims the right to truth and redress and threatening historians and others with legal consequences. Particularly in the context of protests and other forms of expression of opposition to Israel during the May 2021 hostilities with Hamas, commentary treating all Jews as proxies for the State of Israel, denying Jews’ right to self-determination, and suggesting that the vast majority of Jews who support the existence of the State of Israel are presumptively racist became prevalent to an unprecedented extent in popular discourse, including online. Participants expressed alarm that antisemitic attitudes have also seemingly grown more prevalent among people who do not hold extremist views, and that antisemitic discourse of several varieties has become increasingly “normalized.”

Recommendations: Participants expressed alarm about the diversity of sources and forms of antisemitism. They noted the importance of all segments of society responding effectively to this phenomenon, stressing the importance of individuals in positions of influence condemning the antisemitic incidents and narratives that are espoused by members of their communities or audiences and expressing solidarity with Jewish communities. Participants from several countries noted that the increasing normalization of contemporary antisemitic discourse is deeply isolating to Jews and stressed the need for State and non-State actors to recognize it as problematic.

4. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of antisemitism is a non-legal tool that had been adopted for use in awareness raising and education by 33 countries at the time of the consultation. Several participants expressed that the IHRA Working Definition is a critical component of many efforts that have been undertaken to assist officials, policymakers, and the broader public since 2019 in reaching a comprehensive understanding of antisemitism in several countries.

Participants noted that the IHRA Working Definition has been adopted for use in training and awareness-raising by a significant number of subsidiary governments at the state, provincial, and local levels in many countries since 2019, as well as by non-State actors including educational institutions, sports leagues and teams, and businesses. Participants also noted actions to recognize the IHRA Working Definition by regional actors, including the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which welcomed the IHRA Working Definition and the European Commission, which incorporates the IHRA Working Definition throughout the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and in other initiatives. However, participants expressed concern that adoption of the IHRA Working Definition has not translated to consistent use and awareness of its contents by stakeholders in many countries and institutions.

Recommendations: Participants recalled and commended the Special Rapporteur’s 2019 call for all States to adopt the IHRA Working Definition as a non-legal tool for education and awareness raising purposes. They stressed the need for those States and non-State actors that have not done so to adopt it, and for those States and others that have adopted it to make further efforts to incorporate it into training and educational programs for civil servants, including in law enforcement and the judiciary, and within academic institutions and educational settings.

5. Regrettably, although the quality of national practices in this area vary significantly, in no country are authorities presently monitoring and publicly reporting on antisemitic incidents in a manner that accurately reflects the extent of the problem of antisemitism. The absence of accurate data on antisemitic incidents is a significant barrier to developing targeted strategies to combat antisemitism and to protect Jewish individuals and communities from harm. Participants recognized that many efforts have been taken to encourage more comprehensive monitoring and reporting, including recent initiatives by several governments, institutions such as the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, regional entities including the European Commission, and by non-governmental organizations. However, participants stressed that concerted efforts to press national authorities to improve their performance in this area remained critical.

Recommendations: Participants emphasized the need for States to strengthen their efforts to monitor, collect data, and report on antisemitic incidents and antisemitic hate crimes, including through ensuring more robust and comprehensive training for law enforcement and other officials at the national and sub-national levels and developing arrangements to facilitate greater cooperation between authorities and Jewish communities and non-governmental organizations.

6. Antisemitic content remains very prevalent online. Participants described online antisemitism as having been especially widespread during the May 2021 escalation in hostilities between Israel and Hamas, during which calls for violence against Jews as proxies for Israel and using antisemitic tropes in criticizing Israel became frequent, with antisemitic hashtags ‘trending’ on Twitter in some countries and antisemitic content being promoted by other platforms. Participants, including from countries where antisemitic violence rarely occur, reported patterns of persistently harmful antisemitic conduct online, such as targeted harassment of Jewish community advocates and of public figures who had disclosed their Jewish identity or heritage, as well as other conduct like online calls for boycotts of Jewish-owned businesses and individual practitioners. Participants stressed that Jewish individuals have refrained from engaging on social media as a consequence of having repeatedly encountered antisemitic hostility, resulting in their being effectively excluded from public discourse. Participants also noted a significant increase in online content since 2019 that distorts the facts of or misuses symbols of the Holocaust.

These patterns occurred despite efforts to reduce online antisemitism made by several platforms through self-regulation and co-regulation, as well as measures regulating companies’ behavior undertaken at the national and regional levels. Participants expressed appreciation for efforts made by some companies to

involve Jewish organizations in identifying harmful content and in initiatives that direct users to accurate information about the Holocaust. Participants also noted the recent pledges and proposals made by national authorities in several countries and by regional authorities in Europe to more closely regulate companies' responses to hate speech, including those that would compel companies to ensure that their community guidelines prohibiting antisemitic hate speech are comprehensive, disclose greater information about how they address antisemitic hate speech, and ensure that their algorithms both desist from actively promoting antisemitic content and assist in reducing the transmission of antisemitic content on their platforms. However, participants noted that for the most part, the more exacting measures have yet to be implemented and it is not certain whether they will be effective; they also expressed concern that the promotion of antisemitic content online has a significant transnational dimension and noted that negative consequences could result from differing national approaches to regulation of online hate speech.

Recommendations: Participants noted that social media and internet technology companies should take further actions on their own initiative to ensure that their definitions of antisemitic hate speech are comprehensive and that their staff, content moderators, and programs are trained to recognize antisemitism with reference to the IHRA Working Definition of antisemitism. Participants also recalled the affirmative responsibility of governments to take action to mitigate the prevalence and spread of harmful antisemitic content, particularly content that incites to hostility, discrimination, or violence against Jews. They stressed the need to ensure that social media and internet companies' algorithms no longer actively promote and increase the visibility of antisemitic content. Participants called for social media companies' self-regulatory and governmental regulatory efforts to be designed and reviewed in consultation with representatives of Jewish communities and organizations.

7. Significant concern was expressed by several participants at developments in several European countries since 2019 reflecting increasing popular support for measures that would significantly curtail the ability of Jews to live in accordance with their religious beliefs, particularly by limiting the practices of ritual slaughter and male circumcision. Participants noted and welcomed efforts by authorities at the regional level in Europe acknowledging that these practices are of vital importance to significant proportions of Jewish communities in many countries and their pledge to carry out activities to deepen understanding and awareness of Jewish life and its importance among the public. However, participants noted that it is too early to know whether these measures will lead to a change in Jewish communities' ability to act in accordance with their beliefs in practice. Participants also expressed concern about the need for greater State support to ensure that Jewish historical sites and Holocaust memorials and monuments are maintained and that Jewish communities receive necessary funding to ensure the physical security of Jewish religious, educational and cultural sites. Participants again expressed support for recent commitments made at the regional level in Europe and at the national level in many countries to provide additional resources to support Jewish communities' needs but cautioned that their implementation must be monitored to ensure that Jewish communities' security is improved in practice.

Recommendations: Participants stressed that political leaders in countries that have enacted or are contemplating enacting restrictions that would substantially impede the ability of Jews to abide by religious dietary or other obligations, particularly the practices of kosher slaughter and male circumcision, should engage in further consultation with Jewish communities and ensure that any such measures safeguard the right to freedom of religion or belief. Participants also reaffirmed the need for States to provide adequate financial resources to assist Jewish communities in meeting their security needs, including protection of religious, educational, and cultural sites, as well as Holocaust memorials and Jewish museums, and to assess the adequacy of existing arrangements in consultation with Jewish communities.

8. Ignorance of the facts and lessons of the Holocaust and about antisemitism remains troublingly common in many countries, and appears to be growing more prevalent, including among youths. Participants expressed concern about these and other trends that have fueled popular receptivity to disinformation including but not limited to Holocaust distortion and antisemitic conspiracy theories. They stressed that these trends not only raise concerns for Jewish communities but are also extremely troubling indicators of broader societal fragility in many democratic countries. Participants welcomed recent commitments made by several governments and by regional actors in Europe to make greater investments in research and the development and transmission of educational content about the Holocaust and antisemitism but raised concerns that these initiatives are largely aspirational and their future impact uncertain. Participants also noted that education about and awareness of the Holocaust and antisemitism are particularly lacking in many countries where few or no Jewish populations reside, although efforts to promote interreligious understanding and Holocaust remembrance in some countries have inspired hope for the possibility of future progress.

Recommendations: Participants stressed the need for national authorities, non-state actors like social media companies, and international and regional organizations to make substantially greater efforts to convey accurate information about the Holocaust, as well as about antisemitism, to the broader public, including through all levels of the educational and in training programs for all public servants. Participants stressed the need to monitor implementation of commitments to enhance Holocaust remembrance and other educational programs made by governments and other actors, including in the context of the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism, Remember – ReAct, convened in October 2021, as well as the implementation of relevant aspects of the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life, to ensure that these welcome commitments lead to practical improvements. Participants also stressed the importance of further efforts by international organizations, national governments and regional entities to promote accurate education about the Holocaust and its lessons, as well as about antisemitism, including in countries where no Jews reside.

9. Participants recognized that several important efforts have been made to combat antisemitism at the United Nations since 2019, including the UN Secretary-General’s appointment of a senior focal point on antisemitism, statements by senior UN leaders and independent experts denouncing antisemitic hate speech and Holocaust denial and distortion, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as initiatives on addressing antisemitism through education undertaken by UNESCO. However, some participants also expressed concern that that the UN and many of its mechanisms have not adequately responded to or acknowledged current trends in antisemitism and that efforts by some States and stakeholders to promote antisemitic narratives in UN proceedings have not been adequately challenged.

Recommendations: Participants expressed appreciation to the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief for his concerted effort to raise attention to antisemitism as a human rights concern and stressed the importance of further action by UN experts and officials to raise awareness about and encourage stakeholders to take further actions to combat antisemitism worldwide in the future. They stressed that all efforts to address global antisemitism should be undertaken in consultation with Jewish communities and organizations and commended the Special Rapporteur for consistently taking a victim-centered approach to this issue.

II. Summary of Discussion

Trends in Reported Antisemitic Incidents from 2019-2021

Many participants noted that antisemitism continues to be a serious problem worldwide. Several discussed trends during the period 2019-2021 documented by organizations that attempt to monitor antisemitic incidents comprehensively at the national level in several countries with large Jewish

communities. Jewish community representatives from other countries presented case studies and observations reflecting their recent experiences.

Participants recalled that antisemitic incidents had been recorded at unprecedented levels in 2019 in many countries including US, the UK, and France. In 2020, in countries that included the US, the UK, and South Africa, reports of violent antisemitic acts had decreased slightly due to restrictions on movement and public gatherings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, violent antisemitic acts still occurred at historically high levels during this time. For example, monitors in the United States received the third-highest number of reports of antisemitic acts in 2020 in their organization's 30-year history. Similarly, reports of antisemitic threats and online hate speech rose dramatically in Ukraine, France, Italy, Lithuania, the United States, and other countries during 2020. While formal reports of comprehensive statistics for the year 2021 were not yet available, participants indicated that preliminary reports in the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, and Canada suggested that reported antisemitic incidents in 2021 once again have reached record-high levels. Annual reported antisemitic incidents in the United Kingdom were poised to surpass 2,000 for the first time.

During 2021, monitors in many countries documented a surge of antisemitic incidents during and after the hostilities between Israel and Gaza from May 11-21, 2021. These ranged from violent attacks on Jewish people to burning of synagogues, desecration of Jewish cemeteries, and vandalism of Jewish institutions and Holocaust memorials. Experts reported that in the United States, Jews were attacked in restaurants and on the streets in states including New York, California, and Florida, and over 250 antisemitic incidents were recorded across the country in May alone. In the United Kingdom, reports of 658 antisemitic incidents were recorded between May 8 and June 7. In Germany, monitors recorded an average of 16 antisemitic incidents per day during the period of the conflict, including physical attacks against Jews, incitement to violence and protests targeting synagogues, and vandalism of Jewish sites.

In several Eastern European countries, participants remarked that although violent attacks on Jewish people remained exceedingly rare, antisemitic hate speech was a serious concern, particularly online. Jewish community representatives from Ukraine and Lithuania discussed online harassment of Jewish individuals, particularly on Facebook. Similarly, in Chile, where antisemitic incidents are not tracked systematically by authorities or non-governmental representatives, Jewish community representatives nevertheless observed a significant increase in antisemitic rhetoric, particularly by younger Chileans on university campuses.

Representatives of leading monitoring organizations noted that many violent antisemitic attacks in the United States were carried out by individuals ascribing to extremist ideologies. They also expressed concern that the vast majority (84%) of antisemitic acts documented in the U.S. in 2020 were not carried out by individuals clearly affiliated with an extremist group or ideology. Participants expressed concern that the rise reports in antisemitic hate speech during 2020 and 2021 reflected that antisemitic rhetoric is becoming normalized, that antisemitic statements are increasingly seen as legitimate opinions, and that in countries such as Poland, antisemitism has "become part of mainstream discourse."

Participants also recalled that antisemitism is a global phenomenon and that antisemitic attitudes as well as ignorance of the facts of the Holocaust remain prevalent in many countries where few Jews reside. Participants expressed concern at recent instances in which diplomatic social media accounts and state media organizations in a UN Member State in Asia had increasingly promoted antisemitic content, including cartoons and articles. These advanced tropes such as that Jews control U.S. foreign policy. When such actions are taken by state-sponsored entities, this signals to the broader public that antisemitic views are acceptable in public discourse. Similarly, a participant described recent instances in which senior and elected officials in some Muslim-majority countries had openly expressed antisemitic views, including by a serving foreign minister and a former prime minister. It was noted that in these and other

countries, Israel, Jews, and Judaism are frequently conflated in political, religious, and popular discourse and viewed interchangeably and negatively. Concern was raised that commentary on the situation in the Middle East was sometimes also accompanied by antisemitic expression condemning Jews, Israel, and Zionism. Positive initiatives to promote dialogue and understanding between Muslim and Jewish religious actors had been undertaken to begin addressing this challenge in some countries. However, a participant noted that in one such case, State officials had sought to discourage the initiative, citing antisemitic stereotypes in questioning the motives of the Jewish organization involved. Participants stressed that these trends were very concerning given the global, transnational nature of antisemitism, particularly online.

Impact of Antisemitic Incidents and Impunity on Jews' Ability to Exercise and Enjoy their Rights to Freedom of Religion or Belief and Redress

Participants recounted examples and described surveys demonstrating that the persistent threat of antisemitic violence, discrimination and hostility has continued to have a significant impact on the ability of Jews in many countries to exercise the right to freedom of religion or belief.

In the United States, a survey carried out by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) in September 2021 revealed that 24% of American Jews reported that they had been a victim of online or in person antisemitism in the past year; 72% of Jews felt increasingly less safe as a Jewish person in America; and 39% had altered their behavior in a significant way because of fears of antisemitism, including avoiding certain places, events, or situations; avoiding making themselves visually identifiable as a Jew; and refraining from posting Jewish-related content online. The AJC survey also found that young American Jews were the most likely age group to report feeling unsafe and being likely to change their behavior and hide their Jewish identity out of fear of antisemitic harassment and attacks.ⁱⁱⁱ A participant reported similar sentiments among young Jews in the United Kingdom, citing an example of a Jewish university student in London who refrained from wearing a Star of David necklace because she assumed that she would be immediately insulted and attacked if she did so. A participant noted that in Chile, Jewish university students also reported feeling increasingly unsafe during the May 2021 conflict. Similarly, a participant recounted the testimony of a Canadian university student who had reported feeling increasingly maligned, bullied, and marginalized and forced to choose between asserting Jewish identity and accepting campus culture.

Several participants raised concerns about the overall deficit of accountability for antisemitic acts in many countries. In France, for example, participants recalled that many members of the Jewish community were outraged by the manner in which officials and institutions addressed the 2017 murder of Sarah Halimi, a retired Jewish doctor who was brutally killed by a neighbor who yelled antisemitic slurs during the attack. Participants noted that the Jewish community considered that the authorities' response to the case, which culminated in a court finding that the perpetrator of the murder was mentally incapacitated as a result of having consumed cannabis and therefore not capable of harboring criminal intent, reflected a systemic failure on the part of many government officials to recognize antisemitism, appreciate it as a serious threat, and ensure accountability for perpetrators. Participants noted that President Macron had acknowledged the Jewish community's concerns and had proposed changes to prevent a similar legal outcome from occurring future cases; however, they cautioned that this was not sufficient to address the broader problem that the case had illuminated.

More broadly, participants expressed growing concern about the "normalization" of antisemitic discourse of several varieties in many countries and the demonstrated willingness of many political figures to disregard antisemitic statements and incidents by individuals within their political parties or allied with them. In one Eastern European country, the political leadership has openly promoted a narrative that its national identity is under assault by outside forces, and that Jews inside and outside the country are

leading these efforts and conspiring to this end. Participants suggested that these trends had contributed significantly to the “normalization” of antisemitic discourse in the country, which is no longer seen as taboo or illegitimate speech. In the United Kingdom, it was noted that many Jewish community members are deeply concerned about the prevalence of antisemitic attitudes on the political left, seeing as emblematic of a broader problem the 2020 finding of its Equality and Human Rights Commission that many complaints of antisemitic behavior were raised within the Labour Party but inappropriately dismissed as a result of interference by its leadership. While welcoming the subsequent action taken by the new party leadership to suspend the party’s former leader for refusing to accept the commission’s findings, representatives suggested that far more action would be required to address the broader, ongoing failure of the political left to appreciate contemporary antisemitism and why it is threatening to Jews. Participants from other countries also pointed to the rise in antisemitic rhetoric in the context of criticism of Israel’s conduct by actors on the political left and in academia as having had a particularly significant negative impact on Jews.

New Developments in Manifestations of Antisemitism Since 2019

Participants provided extensive detail on new trends in how antisemitism has been manifested in several countries that have emerged since 2019, including the following:

Antisemitism During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Participants recounted that the COVID-19 pandemic had been accompanied by a sharp increase in antisemitic hate speech and conspiracy theories accusing either Jews or the State of Israel of manufacturing the pandemic for political or financial gain. For example, in France, a widely shared conspiracy theory pairing accusations that Jews manufactured the virus with the classic antisemitic trope that Jews are “poisoners of wells” was explicitly directed against a former Minister of Health and other government officials who are Jewish. Similar concerns about antisemitic conspiracy theories alleging that Jews created the COVID-19 pandemic were expressed widely in Italy. In the United States, online content suggesting that Jews had engineered the pandemic in order to profit from vaccine sales was widespread. In both the U.S. and Russia, white supremacists had also advanced conspiracy theories alleging that Jews created the COVID-19 virus as part of a conspiracy to kill non-Jews, particularly white people, to facilitate their control over world events and government policies for their own benefit.

As noted above, beginning in 2020, individuals expressing opposition to government-opposed vaccine mandates and other COVID-19 mitigation measures in several countries began evoking symbols and terminology associated with the Holocaust in an effort to characterize their governments’ actions as being oppressive and similar to what Jews experienced at the hands of the Nazis. In Germany, for example, protestors against vaccine and mask mandates wore yellow stars inscribed with the word “unvaccinated.” They also displayed signs reading “Anne Frank would be with us,” and “Maske Macht Frei,” appropriating “arbeit macht frei,” the words written at the entrance to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Similarly, in Italy, protestors suggested that unvaccinated people were suffering in the same manner as Jews during the Holocaust.

Participants recounted that in several countries, including the United States, figures on the political right had defended as legitimate expressions of dissent the misuse of symbols of the Holocaust in protests against government-mandated COVID-19 mitigation measures. Participants reiterated that the misuse of these symbols is deeply hurtful to Holocaust survivors, as it minimizes their suffering. They also noted that when Holocaust distortion is not condemned, it also encourages the spread of other forms of disinformation and conspiracy theories and undermines trust within societies.

Holocaust Denial and Distortion outside the Context of COVID

In addition to the concerns noted above, participants also pointed to the increasing prevalence since 2019 of Holocaust distortion as a component and consequence of government-led initiatives in several Eastern European countries that promote historical narratives concerning World War II that deny the responsibility of their countries or complicity of their citizens in atrocities including the Holocaust and that attempt to rehabilitate the legacies of perpetrators of such atrocities. For example, in one Eastern European country, politicians who made openly antisemitic statements denying the facts of Holocaust-era atrocities were appointed to high level positions, as exemplified by the 2020 appointment of a politician who had previously openly criticized a Holocaust memorial for Jews killed in that country as unpatriotic to serve as Minister of Education. Participants also noted the creation of monuments in the country glorifying Nazi collaborators in Lithuania and noted the absence of monuments for the “righteous among nations” or the victims of Nazis.

Antisemitism in the context of opposition to Israel’s conduct and/or existence

Many participants indicated that since 2019, a sharp increase in the frequency of antisemitic incidents targeting Jews with violence, discrimination and hostility as proxies for the State of Israel had been observed in several countries. Jews were also increasingly confronted with antisemitic rhetoric denying their right to self-determination and claiming that Israel is a “settler-colonial” enterprise founded to enshrine Jewish supremacy or even white supremacy. Such antisemitic rhetoric claimed that Israel is inherently racist, and that Jews who support “Zionism,” understood as the self-determination movement of the Jewish people, are presumptively racist. These trends were observed in many countries, with a particularly pronounced spike in incidents observed during and immediately following the outbreak of violence in May 2021 between Israel and Hamas, during which physical and verbal attacks against Jews, numerous incidents of vandalism, and attacks targeting synagogues and other Jewish sites were reported.

Among the most shocking incidents recounted by participants was a notorious incident in the United Kingdom in May 2021 in which a convoy of cars displaying Palestinian flags drove 200 miles from Blackburn to London through predominantly Jewish neighborhoods in England, yelling violent threats against Jewish residents from a megaphone, including “F*** the Jews,” “F*** their mothers and rape their daughters.” In the United States, Jewish patrons were attacked outside a restaurant by individuals accosting them about Israel’s actions. Jewish businesses were also targeted and vandalized, and participants in anti-Israel protests displayed signs equating Zionism and Israel with Nazism. In Canada, synagogues were torched, Holocaust memorials were defaced, Jewish cemeteries were desecrated, institutions were vandalized, and Jews were targeted on university campuses and in their communities solely based on their religious identity and perceived ties to Israel. In South Africa, anti-Israel protesters used Hitler salutes at rallies, calls were made for residents to boycott Jewish-owned businesses and Jewish practitioners, and two Jewish candidates for judicial positions faced discriminatory questions about their views about Israel during their interviews. Anti-Israel protesters in countries in Latin America including Brazil, Chile, and Mexico also displayed signs equating Israel with Nazism.

Participants also noted that antisemitic rhetoric flourished on social media during the May 2021 conflict. Participants recalled that in Germany, Jews and Jewish organizations were targeted with death threats on social media. In South Africa, increased cyberbullying of Jewish children in secular schools on WhatsApp was reported, as was harassment of Jewish professionals online. Participants from several countries noted that Jewish individuals had reported that they ceased engaging on social media during and directly following the ten-day period of conflict in May 2021 because of the significant risk they perceived of being targeted and harassed by antisemitic actions.

Some participants expressed concerns about the deliberate attempts by some actors to incite antisemitic hostility transnationally, particularly during the May 2021 conflict. It was noted that organizations inside and outside Germany affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim-Brotherhood had organized campaigns at

German mosques to generate support for anti-Israel protests on dates of particular significance such as the so-called ‘Naqba Day’ and ‘Al-Quds Day.’ Some of these demonstrations had targeted Jewish institutions, including synagogues, and featured numerous protesters engaging in antisemitic chants and displays. Similarly, participants noted that in South Africa, anti-Israel protesters flying the flags of Hamas, Hezbollah, and al-Qaida had demonstrated in front of Jewish businesses.

Several participants stressed, however, that the surge in Israel-related antisemitic incidents that occurred in their countries in May 2021 reflected an amplification of preexisting antisemitic attitudes which had been revealed in antisemitic episodes that predated the conflict. For example, a participant noted that some individuals associated with the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) organization in South Africa frequently harassed Jewish students at schools and universities online, as well as Jewish business and health professionals, treated as presumptively “racist” because of their Zionist beliefs. A participant noted that in Chile, participants in left-wing protests in 2020 had displayed signs equating Zionism with colonialism and had threatened Jewish institutions, causing Jews to fear for their safety. The left-wing presumptive future president had reportedly told Chilean Jewish community leaders that they had a responsibility to denounce Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians.

More broadly, participants expressed serious concern about the increasing visibility and prevalence of anti-Israel antisemitism espoused by sources on the political left and by figures associated with anti-racist movements and organizations in which Jews once played a critical and leading role. Participants urged the Special Rapporteur to reflect in his forthcoming report on this phenomenon and the importance of recognizing the right of Jews to self-determination.

High-Level Government Responses to Antisemitism

Participants recalled that since 2019, a number of governments, individually and collectively, had taken important steps to recognize the serious threat of antisemitism to Jewish communities and to societies more broadly and had committed to take action to combat it.

For example, in 2020, Canada created and reappointed a Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism, and in 2021 the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS) appointed a new Commissioner for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism, joining the several national governments and European Commission in having appointed a coordinator to engage with Jewish communities and ensure effective governmental and institutional action to address antisemitism.

These high-level officials played a significant role in focusing government attention on the need to address disturbing trends in antisemitism in several countries. For example, Canada’s Special Envoy had encouraged the government to convene its first-ever National Summit to Combat Antisemitism in July 2021 together with Jewish communal leaders. Following the Summit, Canada committed to take acts including engaging with Jewish communities in the development of its next national action plan against racism and dedicating greater resources to combating antisemitism, including online. The Special Envoy had proposed a 10-point action plan to combat antisemitism at the National Summit, which the Canadian Prime Minister had reflected in the pledges he presented at the Malmö International Forum in October 2021 and which called for action to promote Holocaust education and to combat Holocaust distortion; to mainstream the implementation of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism; to prevent hate crimes through protection of Jewish sites, prosecution of perpetrators, and enhanced partnerships between law enforcement and civil society; to address online hate speech through legislation; to prioritize combating antisemitism in foreign as well as domestic policy; to insist on zero-tolerance of antisemitism by political leaders; and to encourage all components of society to ally with Jews.

Similarly, since 2019, several countries, including Estonia, Austria, and Romania, had adopted national action plans on combating antisemitism, and many other countries had declared their intention to do so, either as stand-alone initiatives against antisemitism or as explicit components of broader national plans to combat discrimination.

At the regional level, several initiatives had been undertaken since 2019 with the purpose of encouraging governments to address antisemitism more effectively. For example, ECRI revised its General Policy Recommendation No. 9 (GPR No. 9) on the fight against antisemitism in 2021 and articulated numerous recommendations to Council of Europe member states on strengthening national efforts to combat antisemitism. Similarly, the European Commission in October 2021 published the new EU Strategy for Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2022-2030). It sets out many proposed actions and pledges to dedicate funding for programs aimed at assisting Member States in combating antisemitism, including online, fostering Jewish life, and promoting education and research on antisemitism and Holocaust remembrance.^{iv}

Participants expressed support for the EU Strategy, noting in particular that it calls on EU Member states to implement their existing commitments to adopt national strategies to combat antisemitism or incorporate antisemitism in anti-racism strategies by the end of 2022, and indicates that the European Commission will assess Member States' action plans by the end of 2023; the EU Strategy also calls on Member States to appoint high-level envoys to combat antisemitism that will coordinate with and build trust between governments and Jewish communities; to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and to encourage local authorities, regions, cities and other organizations to do so; and to strengthen their efforts to prosecute antisemitic hate speech and hate crimes in line with EU standards. It further commits to create a European research hub on contemporary antisemitism and a network of sites to memorialize 'where the Holocaust happened,' and facilitate greater awareness and appreciation of the history and contribution of Jewish life in European societies.

At the international level, participants also welcomed the initiative taken by the Prime Minister of Sweden to convene the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism, "Remember – ReAct Malmö Forum" in October 2021, in which 74 stakeholders representing governments, regional institutions, and business corporations participated and were urged to make concrete, action-oriented pledges to promote Holocaust remembrance and combat antisemitism.

Participants expressed support for these initiatives, while regretting the lack of action by many governments that had made them necessary. Participants stressed that there is an ongoing need for external actors to monitor and scrutinize governments' responses and actions in the coming years to ascertain whether they take meaningful action to fulfill their commitments at Malmö and implement the EU Plan of Action's and ECRI's recommendations in practice. Participants stressed that this ongoing engagement would be necessary to ensure compliance in the years ahead.

The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism

Many participants spoke positively about the critical role played by the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism in efforts since 2019 to raise awareness of antisemitism and its harmful impact. Several participants expressed appreciation to the Special Rapporteur for having called on States to adopt the IHRA Working Definition for use in awareness-raising and education in his report to the UNGA.

Participants recalled that the IHRA Working Definition is a particularly significant tool for promoting a comprehensive understanding of antisemitism. Noting its unique legitimacy resulting from the involvement of key Jewish advocates in elaborating it as well as its subsequent approval by an intergovernmental organization, the IHRA, in plenary, participants reiterated its value in providing a common standard for Jewish communities and organizations to recommend for use by monitors and

educators in different countries. Participants stressed, with regard to the illustrative examples in the IHRA Working Definition concerning so-called “contemporary” antisemitism, that particularly at a time when many Jewish communities and individual communities around the world are being attacked and harmed by individuals whose antisemitic intentions are expressed as anti-Zionism or as demonization of the State of Israel, it was enormously helpful for Jewish communities to have the IHRA Working Definition as a resource to assist officials and the public in appreciating how and when this expression is harmful.

Participants noted that the IHRA Working Definition had been explicitly incorporated into several regional initiatives to combat antisemitism since 2019. The OAS Commissioner for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism had been tasked with promoting adoption and implementation of the IHRA Working Definition by all countries in the region. Similarly, the ECRI had welcomed the Working Definition in 2020 and referred to it in its revised GPR No. 9. The EU Strategy on Combatting Antisemitism was underpinned by the IHRA Working Definition, which was referenced throughout the document. Participants recalled that several additional States in Europe, Latin America, and Asia had adopted the IHRA Working Definition since 2019. So too had state, municipal, and provincial governments in the US, France, and Canada, as had local councils in the United Kingdom. Non-state entities had adopted the IHRA Working Definition, including over 100 universities across the United Kingdom and universities in the United States; the English Premier League, the German and Italian Football Associations, and 19 major football clubs; and many other private organizations.

Participants who were involved in training law enforcement officials and prosecutors on monitoring and reporting antisemitism, including in Germany and the United Kingdom, stressed the importance of the Working Definition to their efforts. Other participants also stressed its importance for judges, educators, and the general public as well.

Noting that the IHRA Working Definition had been criticized by some actors, participants stressed that they perceived these criticisms to be unjustified, as the Working Definition is a non-legal tool that does not characterize all criticism of Israel as antisemitic, and stresses that determinations about antisemitic intentions should always be made with reference to the particular context. Noting also that alternatives and supplements to the Working Definition had been proposed, one participant explained that these were unnecessary and lack the Working Definition’s utility as a tool that can be easily understood by a wide variety of audiences. Another participant expressed concern that the promotion of alternatives to the Working Definition was undermining existing efforts to carry out trainings at the national level about antisemitism which had commonly used the IHRA Definition. Participants urged the Special Rapporteur to reiterate his support for the IHRA Working Definition and to continue to encourage its adoption at the national, regional, and even international levels for use in trainings for law enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges, and the general public. A participant suggested that the United Nations should incorporate training about antisemitism, with reference to the IHRA Working Definition, into training programs for UN staff on understanding and addressing forms of discrimination and bias.

Monitoring and Reporting on Antisemitic Incidents

Several participants stressed that in almost every State, authorities were not effectively nor comprehensively monitoring documentation of antisemitic incidents, a problem that has remained persistent since 2019. This shortcoming was exemplified in the annual report of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) on antisemitism, which reflected that 13 of the 28 EU countries either failed to report any data on recorded antisemitic incidents in 2020 to the FRA or reported that no incidents had occurred during the year.^v The FRA report for 2020 concluded that, as a result, the available official data on antisemitism is “a gross underestimate of the extent, nature and characteristics of antisemitism in the EU.” Participants from countries that reported data on antisemitism to the FRA, including Germany, where authorities’ monitoring efforts are most extensive, indicated that they also considered the statistics

from their countries to understate the real extent of antisemitic incidents. Inadequate monitoring and reporting of antisemitic hate crimes also remain serious problems in the United States, where over 70 cities with more than 100,000 residents either reported zero incidents or did not report hate crimes data at all to federal authorities for inclusion in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's 2020 hate crimes report. Participants stressed that authorities' failure to record antisemitic incidents not only denies victims of antisemitism redress and accountability, but also significantly impairs governments' capacity to understand the extent and characteristics of antisemitism in their countries and to devise effective strategies to combat it.

Participants reflected on reasons for the inadequacy of official monitoring. Among the most important reasons cited were the ongoing failure by government entities to require monitoring and reporting on antisemitic activities in a standardized manner, as well as a widespread failure by law enforcement officers and higher-level officials to recognize and understand antisemitism. A related concern was that this perception of official disinterest in recording and acting on complaints of antisemitic incidents or a broader distrust of authorities fuels widespread under-reporting of antisemitic incidents by Jewish victims of such incidents. Participants noted that this was an issue in the US, where American Jews have for many years reported that they consider the authorities to be effective in responding to antisemitism, but where the proportion expressing that view had declined significantly (from 81% to 66%) from 2018 to 2020.

Participants welcomed the efforts of the EU FRA to draw attention to the problem of the widespread failure by authorities to monitor and report adequately on antisemitic incidents in Europe and highlighted several initiatives that have been undertaken to attempt to remedy it. In Germany, where official data collection efforts were strongest, the government-funded Federal Association for Research and Information on Antisemitism (RIAS) had continued after 2019 to expand its monitoring capacity across the country from one to four regions, and by January 2022 its methodology for reporting and categorization of antisemitic incidents would be employed by monitors in every region of the country. Participants noted that RIAS's methodology is victim-oriented and encourages victims and witnesses of antisemitic acts across Germany to report antisemitic incidents whether they met the threshold of criminal law or not. RIAS was also engaged in training law enforcement and state prosecution services on identification of antisemitic acts, together with Jewish communities.

Participants praised the "Words into Action" project being carried out in countries in the OSCE region by the OSCE ODHIR and European Commission as an important initiative to train law enforcement officials and agency leaders across Europe on how to recognize, monitor, and report antisemitism.^{vi} Participants noted that these training programs are carried out in cooperation with local Jewish communities and encourage officials to cooperate more closely with them to build confidence in the authorities and address the challenge of under-reporting of incidents. Other positive initiatives highlighted included the FRA's publication of guidance for law enforcement on how to take a victim-centered approach to hate crime reporting. Participants noted that the new EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism will provide additional funding and support for the Words into Action program as well as for other trainings on recognizing and responding to antisemitism for judicial and law enforcement officials. A participant noted recent efforts in the US to address this problem, noting Congress's adoption in 2021 of the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act, which attempts to incentivize accurate reporting by state and local law enforcement officials by providing them resources for trainings, reporting hotlines, public education about hate crimes, and efforts to coordinate official responses to hate crimes with impacted communities.

Online Antisemitism

Several participants raised concerns about the increasing prevalence since 2019 of online antisemitic harassment; incitement to hostility, discrimination, and violence; and other hate speech. This had become particularly prominent at the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, as illuminated by a study published by

the European Commission finding that antisemitic rhetoric increased by a factor of seven on French and German language social media accounts and channels during the first months of 2020.^{vii} Participants described increased harassment of Jews during online religious services and community events in the form of “Zoombombing.” In 2021, these trends had increased. AJC’s September 2021 survey found that in the US, one in five Jews had reported feeling physically threatened online in the past 12 months.^{viii} Participants also reported that antisemitic hate speech was prevalent in countries where antisemitic attacks were less frequent. Participants cited online antisemitism as a concern in countries ranging from Austria to Lithuania to Ukraine, particularly on Facebook but also on other platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok.

Participants expressed serious concern that social media companies had not taken adequate measures to combat online antisemitism. In the US, AJC’s September 2021 survey revealed that 42% of Jews who had experienced online antisemitism had reported the content to the social media provider, but the providers had not removed the problematic content in 64% of the cases. Many Jews who had experienced antisemitism online had not reported it at all, reflecting doubt that social media companies would act in response to their complaints.

Participants reflected on some of the factors that have allowed antisemitism to remain widely accessible online, notwithstanding efforts made by several social media companies to explicitly prohibit it. One participant noted that social media companies have differing standards concerning antisemitic content and it is unclear to what extent content moderators are trained to recognize and understand antisemitism. Another serious problem raised by participants was that several companies’ algorithms continued to promote and actively disseminate antisemitic content – including Instagram and TikTok – including during the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Hamas.

Participants noted that some companies had designated Jewish organizations as “trusted flaggers,” providing them with expedited reporting channels; however, concern was expressed by several participants that these changes, like others made as a result of ‘self-regulation’ by social media companies since 2019, would be insufficient to bring about necessary changes that would meaningfully reduce the prevalence of antisemitic content online or the harmful impact that social media companies were having in many countries where they were actively facilitating the spread of antisemitic conspiracy theories, Holocaust denial and distortion, and other disinformation.

Participants suggested that greater government action to combat online antisemitism was necessary in several areas. First, participants in several countries expressed serious concern that perpetrators of online antisemitic harassment were rarely held accountable for their actions. In some countries, like Lithuania and Ukraine, it was noted that legal remedies were not available for Jewish victims of online antisemitic harassment. Similar concerns were expressed about the legal immunity of internet service providers for third-party content in the United States. Participants noted positive examples as well, citing recent legal changes in France that had led to the prosecution of several individuals who directed antisemitic insults against a beauty pageant contestant on Twitter after she revealed that her father was Jewish. Participants pointed to this case as sending an important and needed signal to the public about the government’s commitment to combat antisemitism.

Participants flagged the importance of government action to compel social media companies to disclose more information about the operation of their algorithms and to discourage them from maintaining algorithms that actively promote antisemitic content to users. In this regard, a participant endorsed a bipartisan legislative proposal in the United States to amend the Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act to allow internet service providers to incur liability in case where their algorithms actively promote harmful content to users and lead to offline harm.

Participants also noted initiatives that have been undertaken at the regional level in Europe to address online antisemitic content. The EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism proposes several practical and regulatory measures to address online hate speech, among them, creating a network of “trusted flaggers” to assist in identifying and facilitating the removal of illegal antisemitic hate speech and encouraging the development of counter-narratives to combat antisemitism. The European Commission has also introduced a proposed Digital Services Act which would require social media companies to respond more effectively to illegal hate speech and publish greater information about their efforts to moderate online content and about their algorithms.

Addressing Antisemitism Through Education

Several participants stressed the importance of enhanced efforts to educate students, educators, civil servants and the general public about the facts of the Holocaust. Participants stressed that antisemitism in schools is a particularly serious problem in some countries, including but not limited to France, where many Jewish students do not attend public schools because of safety concerns. Participants called for efforts to educate children about recognizing and preventing antisemitism. The importance of Holocaust education was also affirmed, with the example of Brazil’s incorporation of Holocaust education into the national curriculum for ninth grade students highlighted as an encouraging development.

Participants noted that many national governments and regional entities had recently pledged to enhance efforts to ensure comprehensive education about antisemitism and the Holocaust at all levels of society, for example in the context of the Malmö International Forum. Participants noted that the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism, commits substantial funding to enhance valuable programs being undertaken by the OSCE ODIHR and UNESCO to develop and promote the use of curricula and teacher training materials on antisemitism. As in other areas, participants noted that it will be important for external monitors to evaluate whether governments follow through on these pledges and whether programs put in place are effective at reducing the prevalence of antisemitic attitudes in society.

Participants also stressed the importance of developing programs to teach policymakers, leaders, and youths to better recognize Holocaust distortion and other forms of propaganda, to appreciate the relevance of the Holocaust today, and to greater appreciate the danger of democratic decline, demagoguery, and bias through a historical lens. Participants referenced the detailed guidance and materials produced by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance for this purpose and suggested that governments and intergovernmental organizations enhance their cooperation with major Holocaust institutions to benefit from multilingual resources that they have developed for this purpose.

State Action Concerning Jewish Religious Practices and the Security and Preservation of Jewish Sites

Several participants expressed concern that, since 2019, legislative restrictions on the practice of kosher slaughter had been proposed and adopted by several European countries, including Greece, and legislative proposals to prohibit the ritual circumcision of boys had been discussed in others. Participants noted with concern a 2020 decision of the European Court of Human Rights finding that a prohibition on kosher slaughter adopted by regional governments in Belgium constituted a permissible restriction on the right to freedom of religion or belief, notwithstanding the profound importance of these religious practices to some Jews, and a subsequent decision by an administrative court to uphold Greece’s ban on the practice. Several participants stressed that for many Jewish communities, access to kosher meat and the ability to practice circumcision are core religious practices that are essential to maintaining Jewish life and that have been part of Jewish practice for millennia. It was stressed that even if proponents of these measures did not express explicitly antisemitic intent in advocating for their adoption, these types of legislative

constraints on Jewish religious practice were “almost an existential threat to the future of Jewish life” in those countries that had adopted or were considering adopting them.

Participants also noted that the European Union Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life, adopted in October 2021, recognizes the importance of these practices to Jewish communities and urges states to strike a fair balance between respect for the freedom to manifest religion and protection of animal welfare, and that monitoring entities like ECRI have alerted governments that have adopted such restrictions that they are seriously problematic and could have the effect of causing members of these communities to feel they have no choice but to leave the country. Participants expressed concern, however, that none of these initiatives require countries that have put such restrictions in place to repeal them or prohibit additional countries from imposing them. Participants stressed that it remains crucial for independent monitors to continue to draw government officials’ attention to the serious impact of these measures and proposals, including by encouraging them to engage in regular consultation with members of affected Jewish communities.

Similarly, several participants flagged the need for governments to provide adequate funding to Jewish communities to secure religious, educational, and cultural sites. Several participants also discussed concerns among Jewish communities, particularly in Eastern European countries such as Lithuania, that governments have not made sufficient efforts to preserve Jewish sites with cultural and historical significance. Participants noted that several governments had recently pledged to increase funding provided for Jewish communities for security purposes. For example, the government of Canada had pledged to enhance security for Jewish sites following its National Summit in 2021, and the EU Strategy for Combating Antisemitism similarly dedicated substantial funding to enhance security for Jewish sites.

Addressing Antisemitism at the United Nations

Several participants shared the view that the Special Rapporteur’s 2019 report to the UN General Assembly on global antisemitism as a human rights concern had made a singularly important contribution to efforts to promote awareness of the seriousness of this issue, and the threat that antisemitism poses to democracy, at the United Nations and beyond. Participants also recognized the Special Rapporteur’s substantial engagement in other initiatives to combat antisemitism since 2019, at the UN and beyond, as being extraordinary. Participants also noted other welcome developments at the UN since 2019, including the appointment by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres of the High Representative of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, Ambassador Miguel Moratinos, as his senior focal point to monitor the response of the United Nations to antisemitism, an action recommended in the Special Rapporteur’s 2019 report.

Nevertheless, a participant expressed concern that since 2019, some States have used the United Nations as a forum to advance antisemitic narratives targeting Israel and denying its legitimacy, and these efforts had often gone largely unchallenged. Participants expressed hope that further efforts would be made by senior UN leaders to ensure greater awareness of antisemitism, including by incorporating material on antisemitism into training for UN staff and using the IHRA Working Definition. Participants noted the importance of the Special Rapporteur’s endorsement of the IHRA Working Definition and expressed hope that further efforts would be made to promote its use at the international level. Participants also commended the Special Rapporteur for his ongoing efforts to encourage those States that had pledged to do more to combat antisemitism to follow through on their commitments. They also urged him to continue to scrutinize practices in countries where governments have not made such commitments. They encouraged further efforts at the UN to scrutinize States’ responses to antisemitism but stressed that it is essential that these be undertaken in consultation with Jewish communities and organizations and using the victim-centered human rights-based approach that the Special Rapporteur had so consistently and effectively employed.

ⁱ UN General Assembly, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, U.N. Doc. A/74/358 (Sep. 20, 2019). Available at <https://undocs.org/A/74/358>.

ⁱⁱ This section reflects the Jacob Blaustein Institute’s analysis of key conclusions and recommendations emerging from the two-day expert discussion.

ⁱⁱⁱ American Jewish Committee (AJC), The State of Antisemitism in America, https://www.ajc.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2021-12/AJC2021StateofAntisemitisminAmericaReport_Reader-12.21.pdf.

^{iv} https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/factsheet-eu-strategy-on-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life_october2021_en.pdf

^v https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-antisemitism-overview-2010-2020_en.pdf table 49-50

^{vi} <https://www.osce.org/project/words-into-action>

^{vii} The Rise of Antisemitism Online During the Pandemic, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d73c833f-c34c-11eb-a925-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

^{viii} European Commission, M., Gerster, L., The rise of antisemitism online during the pandemic: a study of French and German content, Publications Office, 2021, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2838/408086>