Committee: Special Conference on Protection of Minorities

Topic: The question of Anti-Semitism

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Summary

Anti-Semitism is often considered the 'oldest hatred' and has existed and flourished for centuries across the world, even in communities where Jews have never lived. Jews have been expelled and attacked, from the pogroms of the late 19th century to the bombing on Synagogues even today. The Holocaust was the epitome of the evil that is anti-Semitism. The United Nations was formed to ensure that such a barbarous regime as Nazi Germany could never again bring about the destruction it did. Learning of the true yet incomprehensible horrors that occurred in concentration and extermination camps forged a human rights agenda that the UN peruses to this day. However, as said by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his 2004 Call to Action on Anti-Semitism:

> "The United Nations emerged from the ashes of the Holocaust.
> And a human rights agenda that fails to address anti-Semitism denies its own history …
> we look to our friends in civil society to keep us up to the mark. "

It is evident that the UN has failed to address Anti-Semitism in recent years. Despite the publication of numerous reports, there has been no concrete action committed to tackling anti-semitism. This is worrying as Anti-semitism is on the rise in many parts of the world. Legitimate criticism of the Israeli state and its actions has also enabled a manifestation of anti-semitism from those of varying political factions. Regardless of the different origins and common forms of anti-semitism in the political left and right, there continues to be an acceptance of anti-Semitic conspiracies, tropes and stereotypes. Some States have even imposed formal barriers to the enjoyment of freedom of religion or belief by Jewish persons, including measures that prohibit the donning of religious attire or impose, though not necessarily out of anti-Semitic motivations, limits on the religious rite of male circumcision and restrictions on kosher slaughter practices.

Perhaps the most worrying is the increased form of extreme anti-semitism such as Holocaust Denial or violent and often deadly attacks on Jewish communities. Often motivated by far right and neo-Nazi beliefs.

Ahmed Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief stated in his landmark 2019 UN reported that anti-semitism is 'toxic to democracy' and countries must invest more in education, enforce laws and empower citizens.

Definition of Key Terms

Anti-Semitism

Hatred or strong dislike or cruel and unfair treatment of Jewish people

Pogroms

An act of organized cruel behaviour or killing that is done to a large group of people because of their race or religion.

Zionism

The term "Zionism" was coined in 1890 by Nathan Birnbaum. Its general definition means the national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel.

De Jure- Based in Law

De Facto- In practice or reality.

Background Information

Anti-Semitism is most commonly manifested in the following ways:

- Violent attacks or pro-genocide antisemitism or outright Holocaust denial.
- Engaging in antisemitic conspiracies and tropes. Significantly, many engage in the conspiracy that Jewish people have a secret agenda and the ability to influence world politics or the claims that Jews dominate the banking industry. The most common 'undue influence' trope is about the 'Zionist or Israel lobby'. For some this is conscious antisemitism but for many it is unconscious and they do not believe it to be racist. The coronavirus has also led to conspiracies by extremists that the Jewish controlled government are exploiting the virus to serve Jewish interests.
- Those who use anti-Semitic language when talking about the Israeli state. This includes drawing equivalencies between the actions of Israel and the Nazis and blaming the Jews as a group rather than the Israeli state, even if they are not citizens of Israel. Most common is the misuse of the term 'Zionism' as an offensive term against Jews rather than a term used to describe and a political, social, cultural and religious ideology.
- Finally, dismissal of anti-Semitism being an issue is a significant problem and a manifestation of anti-Semitism. Notably those on Left-wing may use their reputations of being more tolerant and holding rights at the forefront of their agenda to claim that they are 'anti-racist' and therefore cannot be anti-Semitic. Moreover, many on the Left have created an extremely narrow definition of anti-semitism which means that they do not address the impact of their anti-semitism on communities or the fact that what they have done is wrong.

A report by the EU agency on Fundamental Rights found that anti-Semitic statements Jews come across most regularly are:

1. "Israelis behave like Nazis toward Palestinians"
2. "Jews have too much power"
3. "Jews exploit Holocaust victimhood for their own purposes"

The survey within the report revealed some disturbing statistics:

- 4 out of 10 Europeans actually do not consider it to be an issue in their country
- Only 3% of Europeans feel 'very well informed' about Jewish history, customs and practices
- 68% say they are 'not informed' at all.

Attacks and Fear

The same report ^ found that of the Jews in Europe who responded:

- 40% were worried about an anti-Semitic physical attack
- 34% avoided visiting Jewish events or sites because they do not feel safe as Jews when there or on their way there
- 38% considered emigrating in the five years preceding the survey because they did not feel safe as Jews in the country where they live.
- 28 % experienced anti-Semitic harassment at least once
- 47% subjected to anti-Semitic verbal insults or harassment

Although this is just the EU, reports from across the world suggest an increase in anti-Semitic sentiments and attacks, online and in person.

An annual report released by the Anti-Defamation League (based in the USA) in April found that 2,024 anti-Semitic incidents were reported in 2020, dropping 4% from an all-time high in 2019. However in their 2014 global survey, they found that in the Middle East, 74% of adults agreed with a majority of the survey's eleven anti-Semitic propositions

There has been a huge rise in the number of violent attacks in recent years. Often fuelled by far-right extremism and neo-Nazi ideas or by supporters of Palestine who use their criticism of Israel to justify attacks against innocent Jews.

In May 2021 following fighting in Israel and Gaza, attacks in New York City jumped from 127 incidents in the two weeks prior to fighting to 222.

On 27th October 2018 a white extremist killed 11 people and wounded six, including several Holocaust survivors at a Synagogue in Pittsburgh. Six months later, on 27 April 2019, a gunman similarly motivated by white supremacist ideology killed one congregant and wounded three others at a synagogue in the Poway community in California. In 2019 an armed gunman attempted to enter a synagogue in Germany using explosives, he fatally shot two people nearby and later injured two others.

Such attacks combined with the abundance of online abuse and institutionalised anti-Semitism within many societies, it is perhaps unsurprising why many Jews are fearful of expressing their religion or being themselves.

Criticism of Israel

In recent years, there has been an increase in the manifestation of anti-Semitism when criticising Israel's actions as a state. Whilst legitimate criticism of the Israeli government is acceptable provided the state is held accountable in the same ways as other states, UN racism expert Doudou Diène has determined the following criteria for assessing when extreme criticism of Israel crosses over anti-Semitism:

- "When the language, images and character traits attributed to Israel are imbued with recognizable anti-Semitic stereotypes";
- "When Israelis and Jews are represented as cosmic devils, blamed for global disasters and compared with Nazis, diabolical figures par excellence";
- "When Israelis and Jews who support the State of Israel are singled out and attacked and are treated in a manner that is out of proportion to the issue at hand and in comparison, with the actions of other countries"; or
- "When the legitimate right of Israel as a Jewish State to exist is questioned."

As tensions between Israel and Palestine rose in recent years, the actions of the Israeli state and its condemnation has been used to justify anti-Semitic attacks online and in person. In May 2021 the Anti-Defamation League (based in the USA) reported a 75% increase in the number of reports of anti-Semitism to the agency's 25 regional offices after Israeli-Palestinian fighting began.

Holocaust Denial

It is a well-known fact that Holocaust Denial is a form of anti-Semitism because the Holocaust is the best documented genocide in history and there is overwhelming evidence of its occurrence. Therefore, for someone to deny its existence as Deborah Lipstadt says 'they must come to it with some form of pre-conceived notion'.
There are two main forms of Holocaust denial.

1) There was no systematic or planned programme for killing the Jews. They may also believe that the Holocaust 'myth' was created by Jews for financial gain and to get the sympathy of the world to get a state (anti-Semitic stereotypes)

2) There are some who say that the Holocaust happened and that there was a system of programmed killing but believe that it was over-exaggerated and 6 million Jews did not really die. This suggested they are uncomfortable with Jews being victims and thus are anti-Semitic.

 Media Regulation

In recent years there has been increased recognition that a lack of regulation by Social Media platforms has enabled many extremist views to spread, gain traction and radicalise users. The internet and social media has long been used to spread anti-Semitic hatred.

June 2019	YouTube bans Holocaust denial and supremacist content
August 2020	Facebook and Instagram ban antisemitic conspiracy theories
October 2020	Facebook bans Holocaust denial posts
	Twitter CEO says Holocaust denial is still allowed
December 2020	Twitter expands hate speech rules to include race and ethnicity
	Facebook to change hate speech policy to better protect Jews, Blacks, and other minorities

However, online abuse persists, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok failed to act on 84% of posts spreading anti-Jewish hatred and propaganda reported via the platforms' official complaints system over a 6 week period and fewer than one in six were removed or had the associated accounts deleted after being pointed out to moderators.

One of the most notable cases is that of current Iranian President, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who used twitter to cast doubts on the reality of the Holocaust, yet his comments were not removed from the social media platform.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

UN Human Rights Council

This is a UN body made up of 47 States responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination which was first adopted in 1965 and is signed by most member nations. It is under the authority of the UN Human Rights Council.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

This IGO monitors and investigates socio-economic and security problems in Europe including racism like anti-Semitism and the rise of far right extremism

Israel

Israel is the only state with a majority Jewish population and seen as located in part of the historic Jewish homeland. Due to the Israeli-Palestine conflict and allegations of human rights violations there is global criticism of many of the state's actions, however this can lead to unacceptable anti-Semitism against the Jewish people as a whole are treated with resentment due to religious and historical links within the conflict.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description
Ancient Europe Middle East	Jews were criticized and persecuted for trying to remain a separate cultural group rather than adopting the religious and social customs of their conquerors. Christians vilified Judaism to gain converts and accused them of outlandish acts.
Medieval Europe.	Some Jews became prominent in banking and moneylending. Early Christianity didn't permit moneylending for interest so this resulted in economic resentment which forced the expulsion of Jews from several European countries including France, Germany, Portugal and Spain during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Jews were denied citizenship and civil liberties, including religious freedom.
19th Century. Europe	Throughout Europe, particularly the Russian Empire, Jews experienced pogroms perpetrated by local non-Jewish population and encouraged/ ignored by the authorities. Beginning a mass Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe to Western Europe and the USA.
1879	German journalist Wilhelm Marr popularises the term anti-Semitism to describe hatred or hostility toward Jews.
1905	First Russian public edition of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion appears.
1915	The KKK is re-established in the USA.
1917–1921	Retreating Red Army troops commit pogroms in Ukraine. An estimated 70,000 - 250,000 Jews are murdered in pogroms in the Russian Civil War.

1925	Mein Kampf is published outlining Hitler's blueprint for the Third Reich and his beliefs on racial superiority.
1933	Nuremburg Laws – forbidding a Jew marrying a non-Jew and removing their citizenship and other restrictions.
1938	Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) a pogrom in Germany and Austria against Jewish businesses and Synagogues. Anti-Semitic legislation introduced in Italy and Hungary.
1939	Outbreak of World War II, Poland is overrun by the German blitzkrieg and pogroms begin.
1940	Ghettos are formed in Poland. Auschwitz is established. Germany invades France.
1941	Germany invades Russia and the Baltic states. Pogroms and massacres are carried out by the Einsatzgruppen in the Baltic States and the part of Russia occupied by Germany. Expulsion of Jews from the German Reich to Poland. Beginning of deportation and murder of Jews in France.
1942	Conference in Wannsee, Berlin, to carry out the "Final Solution" Mass transport of Jews from ghettos and conquered territory to death camps
1943	Liquidation of most European ghettos and transportation to death camps
1945	Germany Surrenders**.** Estimated Jewish victims in the Holocaust 5,820,960.
1948 – 1970	'Jewish Exodus from Arab and Muslim countries' – an estimated 850,000 Jews migrated from the Arab world, primarily to Israel.
1951-53	Stalin organises an anti-Semitic campaign falsely accusing Jews (primarily Jewish doctors) of planning to assassinate Soviet leadership, sparking a new wave of anti- Semitism in the USSR.
1956	Jews expelled from Egypt

1965	The Catholic Church disavowed the belief that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus
1968-71	State-sponsored anti-Semitism sweeps across Poland, half of Poland's Jews left.
1970-1990	Spread of Neo-Nazi publications in the USA and other parts of the world denying the Holocaust (a form of anti-Semitism)
1975	The UN passes a resolution determining that "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination." (Revoked in 1991)
1980s	A number of attacks on Synagogues in Europe.
1999	Shooting attack on Jewish Community Centre in Los Angeles, CA
2001	The UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban becomes a platform for anti-Israel and anti-Semitic demonstrations by thousands.
	In the aftermath of 9/11, a conspiracy blaming the Jews for the attacks emerged.
2003	Attacks on Jewish targets in Europe, including bombing of a Jewish school in Paris and simultaneous bombings of two synagogues in Istanbul.
	University of Berlin report showing rise of anti-Semitism in Europe released after being suppressed by EU.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

The United Nations' record on anti-Semitism has at times fallen short of our ideals. The General Assembly resolution of 1975, equating Zionism with racism is one such example. This was used by many to justify anti-Semitism against all Jews, even if they did not believe in the Zionist cause.

At the UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban in 2001, designed to be a landmark event and a breakthrough of the UN into tackling international anti-Semitism descended into a platform for anti-Israel and anti-Semitic attacks by protestors and representatives. Many nations boycotted the following conferences.

In 2004, the UN's annual resolution on religious intolerance finally condemned anti-Semitism. Originally Ireland, the main supporter of this annual resolution eased pressure to do so due to concerns that this may jeopardize consensus on the resolution.

Instead, they promised a separate, stand-alone resolution on the subject, but this failed to come to fruition due to Arab and Islamic opposition. Despite Arab opposition to the main resolution, it passed and the delegate for Israel commented that their opposition was "the strongest evidence of the need for strong condemnation of anti-Semitism". In 2004 the UN also committed to tackling the 'scourge of anti-Semitism"

The UN Outreach Programme on the Holocaust - this was established 15 years ago with the aim of educating the world's population about the horrors of the Holocaust in the hope of fostering equality between the races and preventing future genocides. A key event in this programme's calendar is The International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Across the globe, educational and commemorative events. The programme also encourages the analysis of anti-Semitism and other forms of racial hatred within member nations and the actions that can be taken to tackle this.

In 2019 a new landmark UN report on anti-Semitism was published by Ahmed Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The report emphasised three main things:

- Education, particularly of the younger generation

- Placing anti-Semitism within the wider human rights framework, the report suggested that this would empower the 'critical thinking, empathy and literacy' that is needed for people to reject extremist ideologies and anti-Semitic propaganda

- Discrimination against Jews MUST be made illegal, with such laws enforced

- Inter-faith networks aimed at advancing social cohesion

- Deal with the problem of online hate and a lack of tight regulation of anti-semitism on social media where propaganda and anti-Semitic ideas are able to take root.

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Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

In 2004 the OSCE 'Berlin Declaration' set out specific measures to tackle anti-Semitism. They examined the rise in anti-Semitic attacks and behaviour and looked at the way the internet serves as fertile soil for new intolerance by failing to challenge underlying prejudices. It advocated education and Holocaust remembrance and provides resources for these to this day.

Holocaust education has been one of the greatest successes of the worldwide movement to tackle anti-semitism, the 27th January marks the International Holocaust Memorial Day and many NGOs, charities as well as governments take the opportunity to inform, educate and reflect on the horrors of the Holocaust.

Holocaust denial is also illegal in several European countries, including Germany, Poland, France and Russia.

Possible Solutions

Seeking to implement the recommendations highlighted in the 2019 UN report on anti-Semitism would legitimise any solutions as there is concrete and UN certified evidence that the problems being addressed exist and need resolution.

De facto Anti-Semitism cannot be tackled until there is de jure change, this make involve the codification of anti-Holocaust denial laws or enshrining anti-Semitism not just as a crime but within the wider human rights framework.

Moreover, given the institutionalised prejudices against Jews as a result of stereotypes, tropes and history, education is a crucial element of any solution to this issue namely about the Holocaust and the ways anti-Semitism are consciously and unconsciously manifested, allowing people to identify and report racist behaviour or to correct possible unintentional but discriminatory behaviour. Importantly, people must be informed and educated on the fine line between legitimate criticism of the state of Israel and anti-Semitic behaviour given the recent anti-Semitism as a result of in increased tension between Palestine and Israel.

Finally, online abuse must be tackled with greater regulation of hate speech regardless of an individual's status by reminding social media platforms of their social responsibility, particularly given the use of the internet as a breeding ground for hate and extremism.

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