



HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Testimony :: Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton

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Commissioner - Helsinki Commission

Mr. Chairman, I commend you for holding a hearing on “The Rise of Anti-Semitic Violence in Europe.” As you know, this hearing is quite timely. Over the last several months, there has been an alarming increase in the amount of anti-Semitic violence in Europe.

In France alone, authorities reported nearly 360 crimes against Jews and Jewish institutions in the just the first two weeks of April. Some of the most notorious attacks include an assault on a Jewish teen soccer team in Bondy, France in April and the brutal beating of two Jewish students from the United States in Berlin, Germany and the burning of Jewish schools in Creteil and Marseille. Further, a mob attacked Jewish worshipers in a Ukraine synagogue, vandals denigrated several synagogues in Russia and synagogues elsewhere in the OSCE region have suffered firebomb attacks.

President Bush’s trip to Europe beginning today provides an opportunity for him to raise this alarming issue with European leaders. At the NATO-Russia summit in Italy and during visits to France, Germany and Russia -- where some of the worst outbreaks of anti-Semitic violence have occurred – President Bush has the opportunity to give voice to American concerns over the recent increase of anti-Semitic violence with European leaders. I urge President Bush to call on European leaders to acknowledge publicly and without reservation the anti-Semitic character of the attacks as violations of human rights and to utilize the full power of their law enforcement tools to investigate the crimes and punish the perpetrators.

Anti-Semitism was one of the most destructive forces unleashed during the last century. Given the horrors that Jews experienced in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, this recent increase in anti-Semitic violence in Europe requires a vigorous response by all OSCE countries. As we all know, freedom of religion is guaranteed by all Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) participating states and over the years, the OSCE has continuously condemned anti-Semitism. The 1990 Copenhagen Concluding Document of the OSCE declares all participating OSCE States will “unequivocally condemn’ anti-Semitism and take effective measures to protect individuals from anti-Semitic violence. It is therefore appropriate for the OSCE to continue to monitor and urge action against these anti-Semitic attacks.

Because of the recent disturbing attacks on Jews in Europe, I recently introduced a resolution in the Senate with Senator Gordon Smith, another member of the Helsinki Commission, as

well as Senators Schumer and Hatch, that expresses the sense of the Senate regarding anti-Semitism and religious tolerance in Europe. The resolution calls on European governments to use the full power of their law enforcement tools to investigate and punish anti-Semitic violence, to decry the rationalizing of anti-Jewish attitudes and even violent attacks against Jews as merely a result of justified popular frustration with the conflict in the Middle East; and to take measures to protect and ensure the security of Jewish citizens and their institutions. I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues to pass this resolution.

An important part of combating anti-Semitic violence is shining light on its evil nature and destructive impact. Today's Helsinki Commission hearing is an important part of that process. I look forward to hearing and learning more from this distinguished panel.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.