

**Opening Statement by the Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin**  
**Helsinki Commission Hearing**  
**on**  
**“Anticipating and Preventing Deadly Attacks on European Jewish Communities”**  
**Tuesday, April 18, 2016**  
**1:00 PM**  
**Room 210 Cannon House Office Building**

Recent events indicate the clear need for strategies to ensure the global security of Jewish communities.

Last year, after being appointed the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance, I visited with members of Jewish communities and others in Paris and Copenhagen, to hear directly from those most egregiously affected by the 2015 attacks. They not only expressed continuing security concerns, but a certainty that more attacks would occur. Despite government efforts to secure Jewish sites in the wake of the attacks, they questioned how long such security could realistically remain in place given the need to also secure larger society. Moreover, they questioned their future in a country where Jews and others could not live together without fear of violence.

For some time, I have advocated for efforts that would address the root causes of anti-Semitism and stem the tide of violence. More resources have now been marshaled in this fight, from increased State Department funds to new initiatives at the OSCE spearheaded by the German Chairmanship. Human rights leaders from across Europe and the United States are now working together to address hate. I recently hosted young Muslim and Jewish leaders who were encouraging their communities to join forces. The OSCE has trained law enforcement officials across the region to recognize and prosecute anti-Semitic and other hate crimes across the region so that perpetrators know they will be punished.

In addition to my position within the OSCE PA, the OSCE, EU, and many governments including our own have appointed officials to address anti-Semitism in our societies. I have long worked with the Department of State’s Special Envoy on Combatting Anti-Semitism, Ira Forman, who unfortunately could not be here today. I am pleased that we are joined by the OSCE Chair-in-Office Personal Representative Rabbi Baker.

Despite these best efforts, more must be done.

We are currently witnessing a growth in extremist political rhetoric across the OSCE region, fueling an environment where expressions of hate are becoming increasingly more acceptable, and violence more frequent. For this reason I have advocated closer cooperation between the United States’ government and European counter-parts to combat anti-Semitism and other biases. Our countries have had a long history of cooperation in the military and economic spheres. It’s now time to apply our common efforts to strengthen our societies. Our repeated failures to protect the most vulnerable are increasingly challenging the very tenets of our democracies, and leading to their erosion.

Alongside hard power, governments must equally provide long-term investments in soft power, such that we no longer need to fear our neighbors -- and there's something worth saving behind the walls we erect.

Finally, efforts to promote the security of Jewish communities, or to combat anti-Semitism more broadly, depend on robust protections for democracy, the rule of law, and human rights: democracy and minority rights will stand or fall together.

In this regard, I am troubled by reports that Princeton-based Holocaust historian Jan Gross was recently summoned and interrogated by Polish prosecutors. Apparently Polish law enforcement is concerned that Gross's remarks on war-time events in Poland may have "insulted the Polish nation." If we are to combat anti-Semitism, we must be able to discuss it without fear of prosecution.

I look forward to hearing the recommendations from our witnesses today on strategies to address the immediate safety concerns of Jewish communities. I also await your thoughts on what more we can be doing to shift societal attitudes so that there is no longer a need for enhanced security measures, and Jews can live as all others in our societies.