

**Testimony by Rabbi Marvin Hier, Founder and Dean, Simon Wiesenthal Center  
United States Helsinki Commission - Feb 7, 2008  
“Taking Stock: Combating Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Region”  
Honorable Congressman Alcee L. Hastings, Chairman**

Chairman Hastings, Co-Chairman Cardin, distinguished members of Congress, thank you for inviting the Wiesenthal Center to comment on the OSCE's work in the fight against anti-semitism and bigotry.

Following WWII, when the Nazi death camps and the murder of 6 million Jews were laid bare before the world, there was hope that the horrors of Auschwitz would finally end the 2,000-year unabated hatred directed against the Jewish people.

But it did not. After the defeat of the Third Reich, and the establishment of the State of Israel, state anti-semitism became a principal tool of the Soviet Union and her allies. When the Cold War ended, anti-semitism became privatized, but nonetheless remained a threat.

Today, with the phenomena of extremist Islamic movements throughout the world poisoning impressionable youth in the large Muslim diaspora in Europe, classical anti-semitic themes and imagery have resurfaced with a fury. Conspiracy theories such as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, blood libels, Holocaust denial, are the staple of Jihadist sermons and websites. As Franco Frattini, the European Commissioner of Justice, noted just last week, 50% of anti-semitic incidences in Europe are tied to radical Islamic elements.

State anti-semitism is back in vogue as well and has become an integral part of statecraft in some Muslim countries, extending its tentacles to the highest levels of government. The new anti-semitism is especially dangerous because it is inextricably linked to the world of terrorism.

That is why the work of the OSCE is of such crucial significance, particularly when contrasted with the United Nations. There, the General Assembly is paralyzed by 57 Muslim states who exercise a virtual veto over its activities, politicizing and turning UN conferences, such as **Durban I**, into a hate-fest, where speaker after speaker rails against the US, and lays all the world's problems at the doorstep of the State of Israel. It was at **Durban I** that Jewish NGOs, such as the Simon Wiesenthal Center, were physically intimidated, publicly maligned - accused of being outlaws and supporters of an apartheid state.

Free from such politicization and constraints, the OSCE has emerged as a leader in the field of tolerance and today is the most important international address confronting anti-semitism, Islamophobia and other forms of bigotry.

From its conferences in Cordoba (2005), Bucharest (2006), and Dubrovnik (2007) the OSCE has charted a new course, introducing a curriculum on anti-semitism for teachers, encouraging all 56 member-states to annually commemorate the Holocaust, to monitor hate crimes and train law enforcement how to respond. Indeed, this year 29 member states had already agreed to hold annual commemorations. But unfortunately, not all countries have responded. Sadly, some countries ignore hate crimes or pretend they are free of them.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center is proud that we have been present at many of these conferences and have contributed to these initiatives.

But the OSCE can do much more. Here are some examples:

This year marks Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The same haters that brought us **Durban I** intend to use that historic date as a dress-rehearsal for "**Durban II**" in 2009. The agenda for **Durban II** is being planned by the UN Committee - led by Libya, Iran, Sudan, and Cuba. The targets again will be the US and Israel. In the case of the latter, their program will call for boycotts, demonization, de-legitimizing, and exclusion. For these very reasons, Canada has decided to boycott **Durban II**.

We call upon the US Congress' Helsinki Commission to urge the OSCE to establish a **Durban II** monitoring mechanism. Just as the OSCE was the catalyst for the series of conferences on anti-semitism and bigotry, it should now take a leadership role prior to **Durban II**.

Another area of concern is the Internet, where the Wiesenthal Center has a special expertise. The Internet, the most powerful marketing and communications tool ever, has empowered us all. Unfortunately, it is also manipulated by hate and terror groups to spread dangerous creeds among the young and impressionable, to recruit, and raise funds.

The OSCE has a pivotal role to forge an alliance between its member nations, concerned NGOs, and the online community to monitor and marginalize the forces of hate while protecting personal freedoms.

On the day of the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, there was one hate site; today our researchers are tracking some 8,000 problematic websites, blogs, and videos, including **Facebook** and **YouTube**, which teach how to commit acts of terror; who to hate and who to kill.

That is what motivated us to introduce our new website, AskMusa.org, which is our outreach effort to the Muslim world to provide basic information about Jews and Judaism in Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Indonesian, and English. This is an innovative example of how the Internet can be used to break down stereotypes and build bridges.

Under the guise of human rights many nations and NGO's seize any opportunity to attempt to de-legitimize Israel. There are never any international conferences on women's rights in the Arab world – never resolutions on the abuse of children – never condemnations of the gestapo tactics used by the so-called “modesty police,” who arrest and beat people and violate human rights each and every day because such issues would embarrass the leaders of the 57 member Muslim states.

On the other hand, the quickest way to get a resolution before the UN is for the subject matter to be about Israel. The UN Human Rights Council has, since its inception, passed thirteen condemnations, twelve of them against Israel.

The General Assembly has held many Special Sessions on important issues of the day, such as Drug Trafficking, Apartheid, AIDS, Disarmament, but never a session on Suicide Terror, the crime of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which can engulf all of mankind – unless we act against all of her enablers.

Because of the UN's failure to act, the OSCE should take the lead on Suicide Terror and other crucial issues.

Simon Wiesenthal always said that the Jews did not cause anti-semitism and it cannot be left to them alone to cure it. To do that requires a concentrated effort and mobilization on the part of world leaders, governments, and clergy from all faiths. None of us can be bystanders. As Albert Einstein reminded us, "The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing."