

CONFERENCE REPORT

The conference, which was held at the premises of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem, was a great success. 130 participants from 21 countries, among them politicians, ambassadors, and representatives of NGOs. Sadly, the Social Media were unable to send a single representative. The conference generated a list of 17 excellent recommendations for all actors. This report offers highlights, conclusions and recommendations.

Highlights per Panel.

Panel I – The relevance and influence of right-wing antisemitism and Holocaust denial on the digital landscape.

Carole Nuriel

What is driving online antisemitism? It is driven by people and not by technology.

MySpace was been abandoned by haters due to its zero tolerance policy.

Tech companies are the key to fighting hate online. YouTube and Facebook have improved their ways of dealing with haters however this was not done overnight.

We should explain to YouTube and Twitter how Hamas and ISIS operate. We must develop new approaches to tackle the challenges.

ADL provides social networks with the context of the content in order to get them to understand the gravity of the material and remove it.

Education - people have to understand what racism is all about.



Mark Weitzman

Countries like The Netherlands and Poland embrace some forms of Holocaust distortion.

The Nazi-campaign for a march in the Jewish Neighborhood of Golders Green in London in summer 2015 embodied the online promotion of the idea of exterminating Jews.



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Antisemitism has become globalized and technology plays a big part in that. Fighting antisemitism needs to be done global as well.

We are at a point now where antisemitism has become normalized and a talking point in civilized society.

There are three approaches that we need to take:

Research and advocacy: Using social media in Holocaust education.

There is a positive role for social media; we can use social media to address the issues of Holocaust denial.

The solution cannot be imposed by the government it should be stemming from civilized society.

Social industry: if we don't have the industry involved we cannot accomplish anything.

Globalized effort: it cannot be addressed by one organization.

Civilized society still maintains shreds of antisemitism and we should address this and deal with this issue thoroughly.



David Matas

(about complaining to the social media) Because people don't know what's being decided and what's going on they are discouraged to deal with this issue. In order to encourage people to engage more we have to let them know how the system works.

Prof. Dina Porat

(Moderator): the importance of legislation in dealing with antisemitism. Once the data and

legislation are there, it makes it easier to deal with hatred and antisemitism.

Nonviolent online antisemitism is overt and thus tends to be more challenging to deal with.

Panel II How the left was lost. Durban, online Left-wing anti-Zionism, the BDS movement and the perversion of Human Rights.

Prof. Gerald Steinberg

It is not that the left was lost, it is that the left lost itself. We expect the left not to be antisemitic and intolerant.

The Durban NGO forum declared Israel as a racist apartheid state.

It is important to recognize that such a conference did not come out of nowhere it has a background of the rejection of the right of the Jewish people to have a Jewish state and that is a form of antisemitism.

The anti-Israel Industry is funded by churches and large non-governmental organizations supposedly doing humanitarian work.

They are sending young people to witness the "suffering" of the Palestinian people.

Holocaust imagery used against Israel. Israelis are compared to Nazis.

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Kenneth Roth (Human Rights Watch) is obsessed with attacks against Israel using the language of human rights but not mentioning the rocket attacks by Hamas, no mentioning Palestinian violence. The demonization of Israel.

Fifteen million dollars are allocated to funding these organizations (Human Rights NGOs) and the funders are mostly unaware of how the money is used. E.g. a Medical NGO funded by the British government promotes anti-Israel sentiments.

The penetration of this language into the left is translated into social media antisemitism and the main remedies also come from social media, shaming, following the money, discussing, education.



David Hirsh

Why don't people stop after realizing that they are engaging in antisemitism?

People believe that Jews use the excuse of antisemitism to silence criticism of Israeli crimes. This element constitutes an antisemitic worldview. Many experts and scholars judge this idea not to be antisemitic. What we recognize as antisemitism discourse others see as a democratic discourse...

Antisemitism is carried, defended, and legitimized by people who say they are not antisemitic. Racists and bigots always disagree with anti-racists on what racism is...

In academia, Israel is portrayed as a radical oppressing state. These are the institutions where politicians, journalist, and activists come from. Once, this view was hardly found but today it has taken a prominent role in the leadership of the Labour party. None of that bothers the electorate. We know we are dealing with antisemitism but calling it out is a losing strategy.

Our task is to find a democratic way of thinking and dealing with this issue. The fight against antisemitism is a fight for democratic speaking and democratic rights.

Struggles over the definition is a struggle in dealing with antisemitism and most people see the definition as part of the Israeli plan to defend itself against criticism.

Peleg Reshef

At the Youth NGO Forum (part of the UN World Conference Against Racism in 2001, Durban, South Africa) -students were shocked by what happened- Students handed out t-shirts with a picture of an Arab with a child from South Africa and on the back, it said "Apartheid Israel". The majority of the participants were European. Throughout the conference, it was very well understood that the preparation for the conference was massive, it was very well funded.

The Durban NGO Forum following the next day was another NGO conference where anti-Israel propaganda was publicly shown. They were interviewed by the media who cares about this issue; it is not always biased and their narrative could also be heard. We need to broaden our horizons and alliances. The issue of antisemitism should not be addressed by Israel / Jews alone it should be a global effort. The use of online hatred started in Durban. Durban was the starting point of the BDS-movement. This issue should be addressed by anyone who cares about human rights and dialogue and we should make sure to create dialogues with those who are not part of the conversation. The threat is also for Europe's democracy and not just for Israel. The battle for democracy should be a global one it might start with Israel but it doesn't end there.



Panel III – Antisemitism mainstreamed: the inversion of perpetrators and victims, Radical Islam and the 'new' antisemitism.

Dr. David Suurland



All our effort of countering terror and antisemitism depend to a great extent on the level of which the community is aware of antisemitism and racism. The amount of conspiracy theories that are accepted in the Arab world is mind-boggling. Practical solution to this

problem: as long as societies accept antisemitism it would be extremely hard to fight it.

Oren Segal

Incitement to violence against an individual or groups is more accessible today. Racists spread their messages and recruit people. Today antisemitism in its most dangerous forms is more accessible than ever before on a global scale. Antisemitism is a fundamental tactic used in trying to radicalize, recruit people and promote terrorism around the world. The use of antisemitism is a critical part for these groups in order to grow. WordPress is used to promote IS-propaganda. They didn't have clear term of services regarding incitement to violence. Why are they leaving beheading-videos on their servers?

Care should be taken to protect free speech and not to curb legitimate criticism. Internet Providers should give attention to making expertise available to those looking to gain more knowledge about antisemitism. Tools to flag advocacy of terrorism should be added to reporting options.

Panel IV – Towards solutions: the role of the Industry, Civil Society and Lawmakers

Ambassador Gideon Behar (moderator):

We can measure what's happening on the internet and the numbers are huge. Day by day, there is more antisemitic discourse. A major part of the problem is that the internet industry for the most part does not become part of the solution and thus the problem becomes more complicated. There is much positive content, sayings in Islamic scriptures and traditions. We always put the finger on the negative things we need to give those positive things a more prominent place. We must bear in mind that behind antisemitism, there are anti-Semites who are promoting it.



Ms. Katharina von Schnurbein

The fight against antisemitism must not be left to the Jews, it is the responsibility of society at large. As for the Social media, we need more transparency about the criteria that they use. When content is visible within Europe they need to apply European legislation. They also need to improve their network of flagging platforms. Internet is a virtual world but there is a direct link to the real world and so we must deal with it in the real world. We need to have more willingness from the states in addressing the issues of holocaust education and antisemitism.

Philippe Schmidt

We need the cooperation of the internet industry. The argument that says 'we can't deal with legislation on antisemitism because it violates the first amendment (of the USA) is simply not true. They can do it if they want to. It is useful to put in place legislation that deals with antisemitism. The legislation has been a great help in the fight against antisemitism. It is not enough but is not useless. It is useful. We need the USA to be much more efficient when it comes to legislation. People have been influenced by it and it has had impact.

Benjamin Fischer

We need advocacy, Leadership training for students. Political seminars in cooperation with Yad VaShem. The abuse of holocaust imagery shows there's a need for holocaust education The bigger the organization is, the less young people are involved in it. We want them to be involved since they are fluent in social media. When speaking about antisemitism, we talk as



Jews speaking to Jews. We have to learn how to address non-Jews, we have to learn how to address the European societies. Advocating and partnering with organizations that are non-Jewish is very important. We are being perceived as people who only speak about antisemitism and this is becoming a problem. Try not to only address antisemitism. The topics we talk about also have to differ.

Panel V – Towards solutions: Coalition Building, Education, Counter Speech.

Stefan Glaser

Our goal is that children can use the internet without being exposed to hatred or racism.

We should take measures in order to have hateful content removed. We should monitor content and deal with content that is illegal. Cooperation is an important part in getting positive results. Change in strategy in the realization that YouTube, Facebook and twitter are part of the problem as well as part of the solution.

Dr. Kathrin Meyer

Antisemitism expresses itself in different forms and we need adults to deal with it. It is not possible to educate about the holocaust without talking about antisemitism. Holocaust denial is really a double murder: killing the Jews in the Holocaust and then denying it.

We need to have a real impact on the governmental level. The government needs to implement and the experts should be its advisors.

Working on consensus can be a blessing and a curse. In a consensus-based organization, when a consensus is reached it sends a very strong message to the outside world. It is important to have a clear working definition of antisemitism and to use it (Like the (EUMC) working definition of Antisemitism).

Countries need to face their reluctance of acknowledging that antisemitism does exist. We should work on coalition building.

Ido Daniel

My organization (ISCA) has dealt recently with more than 29,000 cases of antisemitism in social media. ISCA is an initiative of the National Union of Israeli students. We have one hundred students who are active on different platforms, engaging on main



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content platforms like Yahoo answers. We monitor and we take action. An example: right now Hitler is very popular on Twitter and it is challenging to take the accounts that promote him down. We also note Antisemitism on shopping sites. These are social network kind of shopping sites so if you complain about these issues it could help. Anti-Semites are abusing hashtags on social media and we should address this issue. Lastly, we should use mockery when dealing with Holocaust deniers and antisemites. The power of mocking and ridicule is much underestimated.

Robin Sclafani



Our Organisation (CEJI) works on the problem by Monitoring and analyses of Data, Coalition building, Education and Counterspeech, and promoting legislation and enforcement of law. Coalition building makes you able to uncover more incidents, educate each other, multiply your response force and share resources. Through education you can raise awareness, build capacity, strengthen resistance and resilience and create a culture of respect. Counterspeech confronts haters, influences culture and creates empowerment.

Jane Jacobs (Moderator): Antisemitism and holocaust education have to be intertwined.

Recommendations

Preamble

The conference notes that antisemitism is not a Jewish problem; it is a global problem which should be dealt with globally. Furthermore, the conference agrees that antisemitism is a direct threat to Western values and democracy and online antisemitism is a major contributor to contemporary anti-Jewish violence.

The International Network Against Cyber hate (INACH) and the Israeli Students Combating Antisemitism (ISCA), organizers and conveners of the conference, will work together to address these issues in the future, using and promoting the recommendations made by the conference.

The conference, gathered together in Jerusalem, adopted the following recommendations, which are supported by representatives from 21 countries.

Recommendations to National Governments, International and Intergovernmental bodies, NGOs and Internet Industry actors.

The conference calls upon all actors to:

1. Endorse and implement the Working Definition on Antisemitism, which is a guideline for understanding contemporary antisemitism and also the most practical guide for identifying incidents, collecting data, and for supporting the implementation and enforcement of legislation dealing with antisemitism.
2. Establish, identify and develop the capacity of national, regional and local legal units responsible for combating cyberhate/antisemitism, to make stronger use of existing laws to prosecute cyberhate and online antisemitism and to propose to legislatures, consistent with the free speech constraints of each country, enactment of the legal basis for prosecution of cyberhate and online antisemitism where such laws are absent.
3. Promote and support coalition building on an inter-governmental level to apply and enforce existing legislation against Hate Speech.
4. Promote and support coalitions, alliances and partnerships that work on antisemitism and other subjects.
5. Promote and support student-based targeted activism like ISCA (and others).
6. Promote, lobby for and support funding for NGOs and/or student programs like ISCA.
7. Foster, Promote and support awareness-raising programs incorporating core components on antisemitism, hate speech, and the Holocaust targeting many specific audiences including the wider public.
8. Promote and encourage the intertwining of antisemitism and holocaust education, since it is not possible to educate about the Holocaust without talking about antisemitism.
9. Promote and support training on counter-speech.
10. Promote the use humor and irony as powerful weapons in counter-speech, e.g. memes.



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11. Address racism in migrant communities and refugee groups by, amongst other measures, education about Holocaust and antisemitism.
12. Make use of positive references of Muslim-Jewish shared common ground using Jewish and Islamic sources.
13. Increase coalition building with the Social Media industry working on shared goals.
14. Request and promote precise definitions and terms of service from social media, e.g. on terrorism and antisemitism, and at the same time urge the social media Industry to condemn terrorist exploitation of their services.
15. Call upon the Internet Industry to uphold and enforce terms of service which preclude hate speech.
16. Encourage the Internet Industry to use technological means to prevent online hate speech, racism, antisemitism.
17. Research those Human Rights organizations and the BDS movement who pervert the universal ideals of human rights by promoting online hatred of Jews.
Research Governmental and EU funding of anti-Israel campaigns and the creation of open guidelines for the funding of human rights organizations that rely on public funds.



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Photo-Impression





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