



Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights Leadership Conference Education Fund

Declaration and Recommendations for the 10th Anniversary of the OSCE's Berlin Conference on Anti-Semitism

Introduction

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights is the oldest, largest, and most diverse civil and human rights coalition in the United States. Founded in 1950, The Leadership Conference consists of more than 200 national organizations, representing persons of color, women, children, labor unions, individuals with disabilities, older Americans, major religious groups, LGBT, and civil liberties and human rights groups. The Leadership Conference Education Fund is the research and education arm of the civil rights coalition.

Over the years, The Leadership Conference has been at the forefront of efforts to combat racism and discrimination in all its forms, including the fight against hate crimes and anti-Semitism. As such, our participation in the 2014 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Civil Society Forum on Anti-Semitism and high level government meeting is an important aspect of that effort. In 2014, as we mark the five-year anniversary of the historic signing of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, we note that Americans have learned a great deal – the hard way – about how failure to combat bias and bias motivated crimes can cause an isolated incident to fester and result in widespread tensions that can take years from which to recover. The Leadership Conference has been at the forefront of challenging American political leadership as well as civil society leaders to confront these tensions through legislative, public education, outreach, and communications initiatives at the national, state, local, and international levels.

Background

The Leadership Conference recognizes that the struggle against the persecution of Jews was a touchstone for the creation of some of the foundational international human rights instruments and treaties as well as the development of OSCE human dimension mechanisms. In fact, in our own country, the fight against anti-Semitism has been a vital part of the campaign to secure historic civil rights achievements, develop hate crime laws and responses, and establish programs to address all forms of prejudice. The coalition works together to counter anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred because to do so elevates our common humanity while at the same time advancing the quest for equality and fair treatment for all.

Reflective of how the coalition works together on American policy, The Leadership Conference delegation to the 2014 Berlin meeting is a diverse group to reinforce that fighting bigotry against one community must be the priority of the broader community. While governments bear ultimate responsibility to safeguard vulnerable communities, The Leadership Conference believes that visible concern and advocacy beyond the Jewish community is vital to the fight against anti-Semitism and against the sense of alienation of its victims. No community should stand alone in the face of prejudice and violence. Our experience has demonstrated that broad, inclusive coalitions can help to mobilize public concern and promote more accountable, responsive government action.

As the participating States of the OSCE gather to assess the effectiveness of their actions over the last decade, they do so against the backdrop of a stunning escalation of anti-Semitism across the region that has shocked the conscience of the world. The Leadership Conference, therefore, reminds this esteemed body that just as the Berlin Declaration in 2004 broke important ground when countries affirmed that “political developments in the Middle East and elsewhere must never justify anti-Semitism;” this summer, we saw a clear and troubling pattern of violence targeting Jews and purportedly expressing opposition to actions or policy of the Israeli government.

Some Governments, including France, Germany, and Italy, where the majority of incidents have occurred, have strongly condemned anti-Semitism as unacceptable and they have matched those words with action. Some civil society leaders have set strong examples, including the campaign by the German newspaper, *Bild*, which promoted statements against anti-Semitism from politicians, business leaders, civic leaders, media personalities and celebrities with “Never Again Jew Hatred” on the front page; and the rejection of anti-Jewish attacks as “morally unjust and unacceptable” by the Union of Mosques of France.

The view of The Leadership Conference today is as clear as it was in our statement in 2004: “Criticism of the practices and policies of any state is the right and duty of responsible leaders.” And governments must protect the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. However, hate violence is not an acceptable form of criticism or protest. In the words of President Obama’s National Security Advisor, Ambassador Susan Rice, “It’s one thing to use the right of free expression to criticize particular policies of a particular government. No nation is immune from criticism, fair and otherwise, including our own—take it from me as a former UN ambassador. But an anti-Jewish riot is not a policy critique. It’s not free expression when a protest turns into a mob that attacks a synagogue and a kosher grocery store....That’s just hate, and it’s got to stop.” (July 28, 2014)

The Leadership Conference also notes with concern the recent growing electoral success of politicians and political parties throughout the OSCE participating States that espouse anti-Semitic, racist, xenophobic and homophobic views. In several countries, these parties have had outsized influence on sitting governments, which threatens to undermine the values on which the OSCE is based and is a formidable obstacle to combating anti-Semitism, bigotry and hate crimes.

Moving Forward: Recommendations for 2014

Recalling our Declarations in Berlin (2004), Brussels (2004) and Cordoba (2005), we focus today on anti-Semitism. In doing so, we are mindful that in advancing the fight against anti-Semitism, we elevate the duty of governments to fight xenophobia, racism, and bigotry in all its forms and protect all individuals from discrimination and bias-motivated violence. As President Obama has said, “Standing up to anti-Semitism is not simply about protecting one community or one religious group. There is no such thing as ‘targeted’ hatred.”

We came to Berlin to call on governments to take action and to exchange ideas and best practices with NGOs from other OSCE participating States. We hope to learn about new strategies and to add our support to the global fight against anti-Semitism, racism, and xenophobia; and we hope this message will reach across racial, ethnic, and religious lines. Non-governmental organizations should work together to visibly project the breadth of those who have a stake in countering anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination as an affront to broader societal values shared by all sectors.

Because governments have the most immediate and powerful ability to safeguard communities through the use of their bully pulpit and their policy making and law enforcement powers, we call on participating States of the OSCE to:

1. **Condemn unequivocally all manifestations of anti-Semitism** – including its promotion in the political sphere - and make clear that anti-Semitism and hatred are incompatible with the values of human rights and human dignity. This includes directing government officials to improve the tenor of how they speak about individual groups and uphold the shared humanity of all members of society.
2. **Investigate and prosecute anti-Semitic and all violent hate crimes**; train law enforcement, prosecutors and judges to do so as well as to work with communities to promote greater reporting of anti-Semitic incidents and other hate crimes.
3. **Work in partnership with civil society** to craft a system for tracking the actual number of hate crimes, prosecutions, convictions, and punishments; publicly disclose the data and share it with ODIHR. ODIHR can assist in this regard by working with the National Points of Contact on hate crimes to include civil society participation in their annual meeting and working consultations.
4. **Convene a national summit** on fighting anti-Semitism and hate crime which gathers officials from relevant ministries, experts, practitioners and civil society and religious leaders. The Summit can elevate concern and highlight best practices and promote the benefits of an effective response to anti-Semitism and hate crime.

5. **Implement effective education against anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry.** While providing security is essential in the short term, a long term approach is needed to educate students and the public about all manifestations of anti-Semitism, whether it is Holocaust denial disguised as historical debate or anti-Jewish harassment disguised as opposition to Israel. ODIHR should inventory and report on best practices on education initiatives against anti-Semitism and bigotry across the region.
6. **Convene regular consultations** with Jewish community organizations and non-Jewish civil and human rights organizations alike, and other representatives of civil society, to demonstrate visible support, listen to concerns and solicit recommendations on improving security and supporting victims. Solicit and share ideas for interventions and support for all groups vulnerable to xenophobic attacks or hate crimes so that broader support for action and public denunciation of such attacks occurs from a broader, more diverse set of community leaders and stakeholders.
7. **Task and resource law enforcement officials to address security needs** at sites of hate crimes, including Jewish schools, synagogues and community centers.
8. **Support and use ODIHR tools to fight anti-Semitism and hate crimes.** Participating States should use the Berlin conference as an occasion to commit extra budgetary contributions to sustain and expand use of the ODIHR tool kit, as well as to invite ODIHR to share expertise and conduct training.
9. **Reappoint the Personal Representative of the Chair in Office on Anti-Semitism** as well as the Personal Representatives addressing intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and xenophobia and bigotry against all groups.
10. **The OSCE Permanent Council should adopt a decision urging Participating States to implement these recommendations and to report on progress.** The Permanent Council should task ODIHR to monitor, compile and make available information received from governments.

Delegation Background
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The Leadership Conference Education Fund Delegation for the
10th Anniversary of the OSCE's Berlin Conference on Anti-Semitism

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund are honored to be a part of the 2014 meetings in Berlin, and to deliver the above observations and recommendations. We are pleased again to have the opportunity to bring a declaration of diverse organizations to represent our work together on these critical issues.

Wade Henderson, Delegation Leader, is the President and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund. He establishes the vision and program priorities for the organizations, serves as the spokesperson for the organizations and chief strategist and lobbyist on legislative matters.

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Zainab Al-Suwaij is an Iraqi American activist and the co-founder and Executive Director of the American Islamic Congress. She advocates for women's equality, civil and religious rights and interfaith understanding.

Ellen Buchman is Vice President, Field Operations, at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund. She develops and implements the organization's field outreach on policy education campaigns and its grassroots outreach and training of partners and coalition members on effective coalition organizing models.

Stacy Burdett serves as the Government & National Affairs Director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), where she is also point person on immigration reform and the fight against anti-immigrant bigotry. Burdett co-chairs The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights' task force on human rights.

Michael Calhoun is President of the Center for Responsible Lending; and a board member of The Leadership Conference Education Fund. Mike provides overall direction for the Center, and directs the federal policy team. He is a seasoned civil rights and consumer protection litigator.

Tanya Clay House is the Director of the Public Policy Department at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. In this capacity she works closely with all Committee projects focusing on core issues such as education, voting rights, employment discrimination, fair housing, affirmative action, criminal justice, immigration, and other racial diversity issues.

Richard Cohen is President of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). Cohen came to the SPLC in 1986 as its legal director; and prior to becoming SPLC president in 2003, he served as its vice president for programs, which include the Intelligence Project and Teaching Tolerance.

Caroline Fredrickson is President of the American Constitution Society. In this capacity, Fredrickson oversees the group and provides a steady hand of leadership to the nation's leading progressive legal organization, with more than 40 lawyer chapters and student chapters in nearly every law school in the United States.

Jean Freedberg joined the Human Rights Campaign as Deputy Director, HRC Global on October 20. She spent the past eight years at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, first as communications director then as public engagement director in the Museum's Center for the Prevention of Genocide.

Linda Kamm, who is now retired, held various senior legal positions with the U.S. Congress and the Executive Branch and served on the boards of several Jewish organizations, including American Jewish World Service and Americans for Peace Now. She continues to be active in public affairs.

Karen McGill Lawson is the Executive Vice President and COO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund. She works with the president to establish overall program goals; maintain the organization's financial stability; and manage ongoing strategic planning and evaluation.

Elliott Lichtman is a well-respected attorney with decades of experience in immigration law. His practice is wide-ranging, covering employment-based and family-sponsored immigration, as well as other discrete areas of immigration law.

Judith L. Lichtman is an attorney specializing in women's rights and an advocate for human and civil rights. Lichtman currently serves as the Senior Advisor of the National Partnership for Women & Families; and as Chair of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

Mee Moua is the President and Executive Director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC. She leads AAJC's efforts to promote civic engagement, forge strong and safe communities, create an inclusive society and empower Asian Americans and other underserved communities.

Robert Rubin, a civil rights attorney since 1978, is former Senior Counsel and Legal Director for the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area. Prior to joining the Lawyers' Committee, he was the ACLU staff counsel in Jackson, Mississippi. In the area of immigrant and refugee rights, he has successfully litigated more than 20 class actions. Robert currently has his own law practice.



Scott Simpson is Press Secretary at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund. He implements press strategies for policy campaigns; plans and organizes high-quality press events; and produces communications materials that deliver consistent, understandable messages.

Jasjit Singh is Executive Director of the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund. Singh brings several years of experience as a consultant and auditor for Fortune 500 companies while at Deloitte and Touche where he oversaw finances, process flows, and the organizational development as a supervising manager for various private sector companies.

Tad Stahnke serves as the Vice President, Research and Analysis, at Human Rights First. Stahnke co-chairs The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights' task force on human rights.

Hadar Susskind is the Director of Bend the Arc Jewish Action and the Bend the Arc Jewish Action PAC. His work is focused on building a strong political operation that will bring the voices of progressive American Jews into the halls of power in Washington, DC.

Brent A. Wilkes is the National Executive Director for the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), this country's largest and oldest Hispanic organization. Wilkes manages the operations of the LULAC National organization regarding national policy, legislative advocacy, program development and resource development.

June Zeitlin is Director of Human Rights Policy at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund. She also serves as OSCE Chairperson's Special Representative on Gender Issues.

Harold Zirkin is a Managing Director of United Capital of Bethesda and Chairman of the Investment Committee for the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System, a \$35 billion pool of assets. Harold has been involved with and served on the boards of numerous local charitable organizations including Children's Hearing and Speech, Washington Hebrew Congregation, Jewish Historical Society, and Sister to Sister.

Nancy Zirkin is Executive Vice President and Director of Policy at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund. In coordination with the president, she develops and implements the organization's strategies on legislative campaigns and leads and coordinates the coalition on priority policy issues.