Concept Note

High-Level Side Event on Globalizing Efforts to Combat Antisemitism
Hosted by the United States Mission to the United Nations, and the Permanent Missions of Argentina, Canada, Israel, Morocco, and the United Kingdom to the United Nations

February 9, 2023, 3:00 – 5:00 PM
ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters

Background

“States must make combating antisemitism a top priority, to ensure that Jews live not only free from hostility, violence and fear, but also can enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

– Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, Former UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief

Antisemitism today is a multi-faceted threat that violates the safety, security, and sense of belonging for Jewish communities around the world. Like all forms of intolerance and discrimination, antisemitism has a profound impact on the whole of society. It is no longer confined to extremist circles and has become increasingly mainstreamed, including on social media.

In 2019, former UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief Dr. Ahmed Shaheed published a seminal human rights report on antisemitism, which documented the global rise of antisemitic violence, discrimination, and hate speech. In 2022, the Special Rapporteur produced a Follow-up Action Plan to Combat Antisemitism, and in it he reported:

“Antisemitism remains a persistent and serious global problem, with a range, scale and depth that has continued to expand since 2019. Disturbingly, although the number of documented incidents in some countries decreased in 2020, attacks on Jewish people and sites reportedly were committed at record-high levels in many countries once again in 2021.”

Despite increased efforts of governments and multilateral institutions to tackle the threat of antisemitism, antisemitic incidents have continued to rise around the world. In the United States, according to the Anti-Defamation League, 2021 was the highest year on record for documented reports of harassment, vandalism, and violence directed against Jewish communities, and according to American Jewish Committee (AJC), 4 in 10 American Jews have changed their behavior out of fear of antisemitism.

In response to this severe uptick in reports of antisemitic incidents across the United States and more broadly, President Biden and his administration have taken a leadership role to combat this troubling phenomenon. In late December 2022, President Biden announced that the United States intends to launch a national strategy to counter antisemitism. Central to this strategy will be the importance of addressing antisemitism through education, both as an immediate security imperative and a long-term educational investment to promote human rights and tolerance.
Objective

This event will bring together government officials, UN representatives, community leaders and senior figures in the field of combatting hate, to draw attention to the deeply worrying trend of rising antisemitism around the world and to discuss effective solutions for confronting the various manifestations of contemporary antisemitism. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about methods and practical solutions for addressing antisemitism and educating communities around the world.

Participants

Keynote Remarks by Douglas Emhoff, Second Gentleman of the United States

Brief Remarks by the Co-hosts

Followed by a Panel Discussion moderated by Sarah Hurwitz and joined by:

Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism

The Honorable Ted Deutch, CEO, American Jewish Committee

Under-Secretary General Melissa Fleming, UN Department of Global Communications

Format

The event will be hosted by the United States Mission to the United Nations and the Permanent Missions of Argentina, Canada, Israel, Morocco, and the United Kingdom to the United Nations.

The event will be held on February 9, 2023, at 3:00 PM, at the UN Headquarters, ECOSOC Chamber, and live-streamed on UN WebTV.

Member States of the United Nations, as well as permanent observer offices and non-governmental organizations accredited to the UN, are invited to attend. A UN grounds pass (blue badge) is required for entry.