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Special Bulletin

Hate crimes increased by 37% in 2020: Federal Government begins to address the situation with a National Summit on Antisemitism

CHES was there!

Ottawa, July 21st: A virtual gathering of the Prime Minister and key government ministers and leading stakeholders in the fight against antisemitism was hastily organized in response to the disquieting increase in antisemitic hate crimes.

CHES participated by invitation and was represented by CHES Chair Mina Cohn and Dr. Art Leader. Mina's presentation of CHES' concerns earned congratulations from co-chair Hon. Irwin Cotler.

We hope this summit will act as a catalyst for concrete actions.



Mina Cohn, CHES Chair

CHES was honoured to join with B'nai Brith, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), and representatives of large and small Jewish community organizations from across Canada. Repeatedly voiced were concerns that the safety of Jews and the Jewish community is being threatened at an increasing rate by persons who have become emboldened by inaction on the part of authorities. Professor Cotler, CIJA, the Friends of the Wiesenthal Centre, and B'nai Brith all presented action plans.

The specific concerns raised included:

1. The need for better security for Jewish organizations (We note that Public Safety Canada recently allocated significant monies to help the organizations modernize both physical and virtual security)
2. The fears for the safety of Jewish students on campuses across the country
3. The absence of a co-ordinated plan to educate children, youth, and young adults about the Holocaust and antisemitism /racism in Canadian society
4. The spread of hate posts and bullying on social media
5. The need for more support and training for police and others in the justice system to recognize, pursue, and punish hate crimes

CHES stressed that teachers' political views which support hatred have no place in Canadian educational institutions and that Jewish students must be safe in their schools and should not be threatened by antisemitism or racism at schools, at rallies, or on social media.

There was a clear generational difference between older participants who see Holocaust education as the key vehicle to combat antisemitism and younger Jews who are experiencing antisemitism that is combined with anti-Israeli, racist, or gender attacks. Young adults spoke about the urgent need for universities, colleges, and schools to address the threats they are experiencing.

It is noteworthy that the pleas of Jewish youth had the greatest impact on the Prime Minister and his ministers.

Much needs to be done, and over the next sixty days, we will be monitoring the government in anticipation of concrete actions.

CHES was there! Now we urge you to join us in the fight against hatred. Join one of our committees. Become a donor. We need you, your ideas, and your support!

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