



The Center for the Study of  
Contemporary European Jewry  
The Lester and Sally Entin  
Faculty of Humanities  
Tel Aviv University

# For a Righteous Cause

## Annual Report 2023







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**The Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University** supports research on Jewish history, culture, politics, and interfaith relations. It publishes the flagship annual Antisemitism Worldwide Report and the annual For a Righteous Cause Report. Every year, the Center organizes three seminars on Jewish affairs that are open to the public and publishes eight issues of Perspectives – analytic essays on contemporary Jewish life and thought.

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# FOR A RIGHTEOUS CAUSE

The Report, published annually by the Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry on the eve of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, documents and analyzes some of the year's most important developments and initiatives in the fight against antisemitism and racism at large across the world. It explores educational programs, legislation, and judicial and political action to express gratitude to those who joined the righteous cause, encourage others to follow their example, and present policy proposals to improve existing programs.

A six-month team effort by seven experts based with the Center and beyond it, the Report relies on field observations, interviews, and diverse publications and data. It gives particular attention to initiatives in countries often overlooked by the media.





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# FOREWORD

Against an alarming rise in antisemitic incidents worldwide, governments, organizations, and individuals have promoted in recent years laudable and diverse initiatives to protect Jews from harm, educate publics about the Holocaust, and preserve Jewish heritage. Initiatives cover a wide field – from tougher legislation to creative instructional programs.

With so many initiatives advanced worldwide, a comparative perspective is useful; this report provides a broad overview of what is being done and what can still be improved.

It is misleading to examine the efficacy of initiatives against racism only based on their success in convincing racists to amend their ways. Current social climates and dynamics make the complete elimination of racism unlikely. It is thus crucial to equip the majorities that are averse to bigotry with the knowledge, commitment, and passion to stand against evil.

The fight against antisemitism will be well served by the introduction of more rigid, universally applied, and comparable definitions of what constitutes antisemitic-motivated assault or slander. Our Center renews its call for greater cooperation between law-enforcement agencies around the world that would create databases allowing for the reliable tracking of global trends.

Fighting antisemitism has become a cause that unites Jews of different orientations. That is good. Yet sadly, it is today the only such cause.

The enemies of Jews should not become their definers. Antisemitism must not be allowed to become the sun around which Jewish identity revolves.

Jews should be informed by their rich heritage and make their voices heard on other existential issues as well – environmental concerns, human rights and dignity, scientific pursuits, and philosophical explorations. Similarly, while Holocaust remembrance is a moral duty, it should not overwhelm the study of other chapters in Jewish history.

The past year was overshadowed by the crimes against humanity committed by the fascist Russian regime in Ukraine. The Russian dictator Putin is responsible for the gravest atrocities committed in Europe since the defeat of Nazism. With his messianic crusade on behalf of an imagined volk, utter disregard for human life and international law, and conspiracy-laden agenda, he has positioned himself as a Hitler-like danger to world peace.

It was only to be expected that the brutal and illegitimate Iranian regime, which seeks the destruction of Israel, ended up as Putin's main ally. Fascists are twains that always end up meeting. The Russian-Iranian alliance is now the biggest threat to humanity at large and to the security of the one state Jews have.

This evident reality was met with mild and often embarrassing condemnations by Israel's morally-pale President and Prime Ministers, as well as by some Jewish organizations. Their restrained responses are not only a grave strategic error, but also a moral one, raising inevitable questions as to whether they were indeed committed to the universal moral lessons they

preached to others. It is disgraceful that Israel permits the entry of pro-Putin performers, and allows the free flow of pro-facist media campaigns, whose motivations are to the very least questionable. There are some things that moral societies cannot accept.

The year ended with some encouraging news, with Germany joining other countries in formulating a national strategy for the fight against antisemitism. It also ended with disturbing news about a former American president, Donald Trump, who, so it appears, is not uncomfortable with hosting Holocaust deniers in his private residence. To the belatedly disenchanted among his Jewish allies, this should serve as an essential reminder: politics that thrive on conspiracy theories and bigotry will always end up making Jews unsafe.

Recent Israeli elections saw the rise of a political party, Jewish Strength, rooted in the teachings of the racist Rabbi Meir Kahane, who introduced Nazi-like legislation to the Knesset and was shunned from all sides of the aisle. His former disciples assure that they have parted from his legacy. They should be given the benefit of the doubt. Yet that is all they should be given. Israeli governments have always been reserved in their engagements with European political parties with fascist roots. Israeli political parties with similar roots cannot expect to be treated differently by other governments. Racism is racism, despicable and unjustified, whoever the racists are.

# CYPRUS: SETTING AN EXAMPLE FOR THE WORLD ENTIRE

Cyprus does not have an antisemitism problem. The local police have not recorded in recent years a single racially-motivated attack against Jews, while the number of incidents recorded in countries with more substantial Jewish populations is on the rise.<sup>1</sup> Still, the island's authorities engage and take a leading role in confronting antisemitism and in preserving the historical memory of the Holocaust.

This proactive approach should not come as a surprise. Cyprus prides itself on its deep commitment to upholding and protecting universal values of human rights, promoting diversity, and combatting all forms of discrimination, racism, and xenophobia.

Borne out of this commitment is the conviction that the roots of antisemitism, its contemporary manifestations, and the means to fight this phenomenon should be carefully studied as a preemptive means and as a humanistic and moral universal obligation.

Cyprus has made multiple public commitments to fighting antisemitism and preserving the memory of the Holocaust. In December 2019, it became the seventeenth country to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism and applied for observer status to the IHRA.<sup>2</sup> Three years later, in January 2022, Cyprus adopted the IHRA Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion.<sup>3</sup>

Though not legally binding, both definitions serve as useful tools to guide education and training, fostering commitment to diversity and confronting racism and discrimination.

Cypriot leaders were not content with making commitments without substance and have moved with determination from adoption to action.

At the forefront of Cyprus's action on antisemitism and Holocaust remembrance are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Youth. Together, these three ministries chose to prioritize education and training to reduce existing gaps in knowledge regarding antisemitism, the history of the Jewish people, and the Holocaust among students, educators, law enforcement personnel, and the general populace.

<sup>1</sup> "Antisemitism – Overview of Antisemitic Incidents Recorded in the European Union, 2010-2020," European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, November 9, 2021, 32, [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2021-antisemitism-overview-2010-2020\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-antisemitism-overview-2010-2020_en.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> "Cyprus: At the Core of States Fighting Antisemitism [Greek]," *Offsite News*, December 18, 2019, <https://www.offsite.com.cy/eidiseis/topika/kypros-ston-pyrina-ton-kraton-poy-katapolemoyn-ton-antisimitismo>.

<sup>3</sup> "Cyprus Marks Holocaust Remembrance Day," *Cyprus Mail*, January 27, 2022, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/01/27/cyprus-marks-holocaust-remembrance-day/>.

To effectively educate and train, the three ministries have employed an approach that emphasizes cooperation and coordination between and among government ministries and agencies, countries, non-governmental organizations, and academia. This multifaceted, comprehensive approach recognizes the necessity of fostering collaborations based on the target audience's needs.

With the decline of the Covid-19 pandemic over the past year, the three ministries were finally able to organize and hold multiple educational events and training seminars. Though the types of events organized varied, they all served one purpose – raising awareness about antisemitism and preserving the memory of the Holocaust so that Cypriots remain vigilant and ensure such evil acts are not committed now or in the future. Further, these events reinforced the idea that antisemitism is not just a problem Jews face across the world; its manifestations undermine democracy and human rights in society.

One fundamental aspect of preserving the memory of the Holocaust is informing Cypriots of their own overlooked history, which provides reasons for pride. Over 50,000 Jewish refugees, Holocaust survivors fleeing Europe, were interned in British detention camps on the island between 1946 and 1949 to prevent them from reaching the Land of Israel. Under British colonial rule at the time, the Cypriots made efforts to ease and alleviate the hardships of daily life for the Jewish refugees living in the camps, even helping some escape and reach the Promised Land.<sup>4</sup>

In February 2022, on the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the closing of the British detention camps, the Cypriot Defense Ministry dedicated a monument to Jewish children born in the camps between 1946 and 1949.<sup>5</sup> The following month, the municipality of Strovolos, in cooperation with the Embassy of Israel in Cyprus, the Embassy of Greece, and the Foreign Ministry, hosted Nasia Dionysiou, a Cypriot author, who spoke about her recently released novel “What are the Camps.” The novel draws attention to the degrading treatment by the British of Jewish refugees who had managed to survive Nazi concentration camps. The event also featured a photo exhibit of the camps.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the year, the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth organized several lectures in cooperation with the Embassy of Israel in Cyprus and Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Museum, to educate students and teachers on the Holocaust.

In February, the Ministry organized with Yad Vashem four online lectures for history teachers and other educators interested in learning about the Holocaust, as well as an online lecture

<sup>4</sup> Gina Agapiou, “Defence Minister Commemorates 73 Years since Closure of Jewish Detention Camps,” *Cyprus Mail*, February 28, 2022, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/02/28/defence-minister-commemorates-73-years-since-closure-of-jewish-detention-camps/>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. For details on the British detention camps, see: Ulvi Keser, “Jewish Survivors and Detention Camps in Cyprus after the Second World War,” *Journal of Modern Turkish History Studies* 13, no. 26 (Spring 2013): 105-138; David Schaary, “The Social Structure of the Cyprus Detention Camps: 1946-1949,” *Studies in Zionism* 3, no. 2 (1982): 273-290; and Nahum Bogner, *Deportation Island: Jewish Illegal Immigrant Camps on Cyprus 1946-1948* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishing, 1991) [Hebrew].

<sup>6</sup> “The Presentation of Nasia Dionysiou’s book ‘What are the Camps’ took place on 3/14/22 [Greek],” Municipality of Strovolos, March 15, 2022, <https://www.strovolos.org.cy/pragmatopoiithike-i-parousiasi-tou-vivliou-tis-nasias-dionysiou-ti-einai-enas-kampos-stis-14-3-22/>.

for secondary students with Moshe Aelion. Mr. Aelion, a survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau, spoke about his experience with students and teachers from 65 schools around Cyprus.<sup>7</sup>

Through this partnership, the Ministry also engaged middle and high school students through visual arts. In the spring, several high schools hosted Yad Vashem's exhibition "Spots of Light: To Be a Woman in the Holocaust," which gives voice to the experience of Jewish women during the Holocaust.<sup>8</sup> Through the personal stories of individual women, students were made aware of the choices these women made in the face of great evil and brutality, putting faces and names to a historical event students knew little about.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the Ministry also held a creative arts competition, "Honoring Victims of the Holocaust – The Fight Against Antisemitism."<sup>9</sup> Students were encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings on the Holocaust and antisemitism while also reflecting on their enduring relevance and importance today through any artistic medium they chose – in writing, painting, photography, and cinema, among others. Students who distinguished themselves in the competition were honored at an awards ceremony in June.<sup>10</sup>

In March, Cypriot law enforcement officials participated in a training seminar on antisemitism and radicalization, led by senior members of our Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at TAU.

Organized by the Cyprus Police Academy together with the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, the Interior Ministry, the Embassy of Israel in Cyprus, and the Israel Foreign Ministry under the guidance of Ruth Cohen Dar, the two-day "Antisemitism and Counteraction" seminar provided participants with practical knowledge on antisemitism and the Holocaust, as well as techniques and tools for identifying and investigating antisemitic incidents.

In his opening remarks, the Chief of Police, Stelios Papatheodorou, emphasized the obligation of law enforcement to take preventative measures against antisemitism to avoid incidents before they arise and to protect Jewish life and culture in the country.<sup>11</sup> Stefi Drakou, the Minister of Justice and Public Order, stressed that "racism and discrimination of all forms must be dealt

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, "An Online Lecture was Held with Holocaust Survivor Mr. Moshe Aelion [Greek]," Facebook, February 3, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ypourgeiopaideias/posts/pfbid02ehqKF4vEEsWhz3C8b3AezVVet71YpGhkbAhkFxiSL2FhTxffjF7tiqyJmJqhxsSL>, and "Press Release: An Online Lecture was Held with Holocaust Survivor Mr. Moshe Aelion [Greek]," Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth, February 3, 2022, <https://enimerosi.moec.gov.cy/archeia/1/yp13528a>.

<sup>8</sup> "The State Pays Tribute to the Victims of the Holocaust [Greek]," *Offsite News*, January 27, 2022, <https://www.offsite.com.cy/eidiseis/topika/i-politeia-apotinei-foro-timis-sta-thymata-toy-olokaytomatos>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth, "Award Ceremony for High School Students Who Distinguished Themselves in Creative Competition 'Honoring Victims of the Holocaust [Greek]," Facebook, June 29, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ypourgeiopaideias/posts/pfbid02myGv3voQyc15d21wckzUDTGhYp98Fx3hF2cbYfv97wkGF7Zxpux8QnH8xtw5EL6l>, and "Press Release: Award Ceremony for High School Students Who Distinguished Themselves in Creative Competition 'Honoring Victims of the Holocaust [Greek]," Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth, June 29, 2022, <https://enimerosi.moec.gov.cy/archeia/1/yp14176a>.

<sup>11</sup> Opening remarks of the seminar translated from Greek for the author and other members of the Center's delegation.

with immediately and effectively to prevent the revival of painful experiences of the past.” To do so, law enforcement personnel must gain knowledge and be equipped with the right tools to apply that knowledge.

The seminar included lectures on the history of Israel, the reasons for the present-day proliferation of conspiracy theories, the history of antisemitism and its current manifestations, and radical supremacist extremism.

In follow-up conversations and email exchanges with several participants who requested to remain anonymous because they were not formally authorized to comment, the importance of gaining a basic knowledge of Jewish history, the history of the Holocaust, and antisemitism was a common theme.

One participant acknowledged that prior to the seminar, he did not really know what antisemitism was and had only a passing knowledge of the Holocaust from what he had been taught in school.

Reflecting on his time in the seminar, an officer emphasized that being equipped with a better understanding of what constitutes antisemitism will enable him to respond accordingly when an incident comes to his attention.

Another participant, a sergeant, stated that she had taken what she learned over two days as a base from which she has tried to enrich her own knowledge and transferred “the main information on antisemitism to [her] colleagues.” She also integrated what she learned into her police work in safeguarding the human rights of other vulnerable people and groups in the country. She stated: “knowledge is a key tool for the improvement and better handling of any incidents/reports in the future.”

The sergeant’s response embodies the Cypriot conviction – antisemitism is not just a Jewish problem. It is a human rights issue that has broader implications for other vulnerable minorities and the state of democracy.

## Policy Recommendations

1. **Advise and Inform.** Cyprus is right in prioritizing instructional programs for the public and for law enforcement. Instruction is the most efficient way of preempting racist incidents before they happen. Public officials, including law enforcers, cannot be expected to adequately engage with antisemitism where it happens without adequate training as to what it is.
2. **Cooperate.** The comprehensive, multifaceted approach adopted by the government of Cyprus demonstrates the utility of cooperation and coordination between government ministries, foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, and academia.
3. **Expand.** Given its efficacy, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs should endeavor to expand the Cyprus model to other countries, including outside Europe.

– Dr. Carl Yonker



# THE ARAB WORLD: EMBRACING HERITAGES, CORRECTING FALSEHOODS

Toxic antisemitic and Holocaust-denying literature has proliferated in the Arab world for over a century, largely in response to the achievements of the Zionist movement. On the other hand, discussion of the histories of Jews in Arab lands, including their most glorious chapters, was sidelined, and even prohibited. This created a vicious cycle: As a consequence of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Arabs were presented with distorted, malicious images and chronicles of Jews and Judaism that did not spare a single pejorative stereotype, which, in turn, negatively impacted the prospects for peaceful settlement of the conflict.

This is now changing.

During 2022, the Arab World has witnessed a fresh spirit of openness towards Jews and Judaism. The trend was primarily evident in The United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Morocco. Yet considerable positive examples were also recorded in Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The embrace of Jewish heritage in Arab countries is related to normalization processes with Israel. It is also affected by campaigns against Islamist radicalism that cultivate social environments of religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue.

In the UAE, Jewish communal life is already flourishing, including the development of educational facilities, the opening of kosher restaurants, the construction of Jewish synagogues, mikvehs, and cemeteries, and the reception of new rabbis from abroad.<sup>1</sup> In Bahrain, the Association of Gulf Jewish Communities launched in January 2022 a project to renovate the old Jewish cemetery located in the capital Manama.<sup>2</sup>

Over the past years, Saudi Arabia has also experienced a gradual emergence of an unofficial Jewish community with an unofficial chief rabbi, Jacob Herzog. With the consent of Saudi authorities, he provides for the religious needs of Jews who came from all over the world to work in the Kingdom, such as Sefer Torah and kosher food. He is currently raising funds to build a mikveh.<sup>3</sup>

Morocco has the largest Jewish community in the Arab world, estimated at 3,000 people. Interior Minister Abdelouafi Laftit presented the monarch in July 2022 with new measures, including the establishment of a National Council of the Moroccan Jewish Community responsible

<sup>1</sup> Yoni Michanie, "Meet the Rabbi Who Made It Possible to Live a Jewish Life in the UAE," *JNS*, October 4, 2022, <https://www.jns.org/meet-the-rabbi-who-made-it-possible-to-live-a-jewish-life-in-the-uae/>.

<sup>2</sup> Hudahaifa Ebrahim, "Only Jewish Cemetery in Gulf States Gets New Life as Peace Flourishes," *The Medialine*, January 16, 2022, <https://themedialine.org/life-lines/only-jewish-cemetery-in-gulf-states-gets-new-life-as-peace-flourishes/>.

<sup>3</sup> Zvika Klein, "Meet Jacob Herzog, Saudi Arabia's Self-Proclaimed Chief Rabbi," *Jerusalem Post*, July 23, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-712621>.

for “safeguarding the cultural heritage and religious influence of Judaism and its authentic Moroccan values.”<sup>4</sup> In August, Morocco inaugurated the Beit Yehuda Museum of Jewish History in Tangier.<sup>5</sup>

Following decades of politically motivated antisemitism in popular media, in religious sermons, and in textbooks, there are promising signs of change also in Egypt. Since 2014, the Egyptian regime has changed its policies and discourse towards Jews and Judaism. Civilian initiatives accompany governmental policies of renewed interest in Egypt’s Jewish heritage. Both contribute to creating a new Egyptian collective memory that is more likely to reembrace Egypt’s Jewish past and reconcile with it.

This phenomenon is partly encouraged by the desire of the regime to reconstruct Egyptian national identity, with Judaism as a part of that identity. The current official identity discourse includes two fundamental components. One is a negative component that conceptualizes Egyptian identity as the antithesis of the Islamist identity advocated by the Muslim Brotherhood. The other component is positive, and it presents Egypt’s nationalism as a multi-layered pluralistic synthesis of identities and heritages: Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic, Arabic, Mediterranean, African, and – to a certain extent – also Jewish.<sup>6</sup>

This embracing spirit is supported by some independent Egyptian scholars who argue that due to the mass expulsion of Jews from Egypt during the Nasserist era, their country has lost much of its “genuine” liberal character as a diverse, open, and tolerant society. For them, the revival of Judaism is part of Egypt’s quest to rediscover itself.<sup>7</sup>

The regime is investing efforts in supporting the renovation of neglected Jewish sites. Following the renovation of the Eliyahu Hanavi Synagogue in Alexandria two years ago, in September 2022, it was reported that the ancient Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo is also about to reopen its gates for tourists and the handful of Jews who still reside in Egypt.<sup>8</sup>

The renovation efforts are led by the head of the Jewish Community of Egypt, Magda Haroun. In recent years, Haroun has become a symbol of religious co-existence in Egypt. As she put it in an interview last April, her home is the only one in the country where the three monotheistic

<sup>4</sup> EJC, “King Mohammed VI Endorses New Authorities for Moroccan Judaism,” *European Jewish Congress*, July 14, 2022, <https://eurojewcong.org/news/communities-news/morocco/king-mohammed-vi-endorses-new-authorities-for-moroccan-judaism/>.

<sup>5</sup> Safaa Kasraoui, “Morocco Inaugurates Museum Dedicated to Jewish History in Tangier,” *MWN*, August 21, 2022, <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2022/08/350897/morocco-inaugurates-museum-dedicated-to-jewish-history-in-tangier?s=09>.

<sup>6</sup> Ofir Winter and Assaf Shiloah, “Egypt’s Identity during the el-Sisi Era: Profile of the ‘New Egyptian,’” *Strategic Assessment* 21, no. 4 (January 2019), 66-67, 74.

<sup>7</sup> “Egypt’s Jews Spread Out to the Exhibition, and Critics: A Model of Pluralism in the Face of Identity Conflict [Arabic],” *al-Ahram*, July 13, 2021, <https://gate.ahram.org.eg/daily/News/815613.aspx>.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmed Gomaa, “Egypt Set to Open Ben Ezra Synagogue,” *Al-Monitor*, October 3, 2022, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/09/egypt-set-open-ben-ezra-synagogue#ixzz7gyIBFqT>.

religions live together: a Jewish lady, a Christian Catholic husband, and two Muslim daughters from her Muslim ex-husband.<sup>9</sup>

As part of Haroun's efforts to revive Jewish culture in Egypt, the Drop of Milk Association for preserving Egypt's Jewish heritage, which she heads, held an online conference in October 2021 about the history of Maimonides as one of the most influential Jewish figures in Egyptian history. This conference brought together speakers from Egypt, the USA, and Israel.<sup>10</sup>

The growing embrace of Jewish history involves recognition of the Holocaust for what it actually was. In January 2022, Egypt actively participated in the UN General Assembly session that adopted a resolution condemning Holocaust denial. The Egyptian Ambassador to the UN conveyed the Arab consensus on the resolution, stating that the "memory of such a black hole in history must be kept alive in the global consciousness so that it is never repeated."<sup>11</sup>

A week later, the US Embassy in Cairo and the Washington-based US Holocaust Memorial Museum marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day at the Four Seasons hotel on the banks of the Nile River.<sup>12</sup> A columnist for the daily *al-Ahram*, the veteran politician and researcher Usama Ghazali Harb, called for recognizing the Holocaust as "one of the greatest crimes of mass extermination in human history."<sup>13</sup>

Egypt's literary scene provides encouraging demonstrations of changing approaches to Judaism. "Touring the Cairo Book Fair this year, one cannot ignore all the books and novels that deal with the Jews of Egypt," noted a July 2021 article in *al-Ahram*.<sup>14</sup>

The Cairo International Book Fair of 2021 introduced no less than 12 new books, including historical books and literary novels, about Jewish history, with titles such as *Jews of Egypt in the Twentieth Century: How Did They Live and Why Did They Leave?*; *Jews of Egypt in Popular Proverbs, Jokes and Aphorisms*; *The Jews of Ancient Egypt*; *Al-Da'ud Building*; and *The Last Egyptian Female Jew*.<sup>15</sup> Several other books on similar themes were published in 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Elsaha, "We are the Only House in Egypt... [Arabic]," Facebook, April 24, 2022, [https://m.facebook.com/ElsahaEGAIHurra/videos/561970258682050/?extid=WA-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN\\_GK0T-GK1C&ref=sharing](https://m.facebook.com/ElsahaEGAIHurra/videos/561970258682050/?extid=WA-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GK0T-GK1C&ref=sharing).

<sup>10</sup> The Drop of Milk Association, "Maimonides from Córdoba to Cairo: A Journey through Time and Knowledge," October 3, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/events/cairo-egypt/maimonides-from-c%C3%B3rdoba-to-cairo-a-journey-through-time-and-knowledge/389229196033683/>.

<sup>11</sup> Dalia Ziada, "Courting Jews: The Latest Trend in Arab Politics," *Meem Center*, February 12, 2022, <https://www.meemcenter.com/post/courting-jews-the-latest-trend-in-arab-politics-english>.

<sup>12</sup> Kamal Tabikha, "US Embassy in Egypt Marks International Holocaust Remembrance Day," *National News*, January 24, 2022, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/2022/01/24/us-embassy-in-egypt-marks-international-holocaust-remembrance-day/>.

<sup>13</sup> Memri, "Egyptian Politician: The Holocaust was 'One of the Greatest Crimes of Mass Extermination in Human History,' which 'Shocks the Human Conscience throughout the Generations,'" *Memri*, August 26, 2021, <https://www.memri.org/reports/egyptian-politician-holocaust-was-one-greatest-crimes-mass-extermination-human-history-which>.

<sup>14</sup> "Egypt's Jews," *al-Ahram*, July 13, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Sayyid Ahmed, "Book Fair – Twelve Novels and Books that Delve into the History of Egyptian Jews [Arabic]," *Masr360*, July 20, 2021, <https://masr360.net/-رواية-وكتاب-12-ثقافة-وفنون/معرض-الكتاب-12-رواية-وكتاب-12-ثقافة-وفنون/معرض-الكتاب-12-رواية-وكتاب-12-ثقافة-وفنون>.

While some positive government actions towards Jews could be interpreted as instrumental means to improve Cairo's standing in Washington, to present a moderate Egyptian face to the world, or to boost tourism,<sup>16</sup> literature is a somewhat different story. It is made for internal consumption and reflects popular cultural and social dynamics. Most of the books published as part of the wave of Jewish interest are characterized by their balanced approach and even nostalgia for Egypt's Jewish past.

Two books stood out more than others in their reception by the reading public. One is *Mitzrayim: Tales and Families of the Jews of Royal Egypt*, published in 2022. Its author, the historian Midhat 'Abd al-Raziq, stated in the introduction that his motivation in authoring his study was that the Arab library still lacks an integrated literary work that discusses Jewish families, their lives, and their impact on Egypt.<sup>17</sup>

The book examines the stories of 15 Jewish families who lived in Egypt from Muhammad 'Ali's era to the Nasserist one. It is divided into three tales, with titles in both Arabic and Hebrew.

'Abd al-Raziq refrains from the use of common negative stereotypes of Egyptian Jews as stingy, petty, and dishonest. Rather, he notes the positive qualities of the Jewish Egyptian merchants of old times, including integrity, accuracy, and expertise. For instance, he describes the Cattai family who contributed to the economic development of Egypt with the establishment of the banking system following the arrival of Ya'qub Cattai to Egypt in 1801.<sup>18</sup>

According to the book, Egyptian Jewish families were involved in a sizeable number of charitable activities designed to help poverty-stricken people, be they Jews or Muslims.<sup>19</sup> One example of Jewish benevolence and tolerance is that of Da'ud 'Adas, who owned famous clothing stores in Cairo and Alexandria, such as Rivoli, Hano, and Benziyon. In 1945, he printed a Ramadan Imsakiah (a schedule that includes all prayer times) on the occasion of the holy month and distributed it to passers-by in the streets and to worshipers in mosques.<sup>20</sup>

'Abd al-Raziq accurately accounts that during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Zionism was not perceived as a threat in Egypt. In 1897, Egyptian nationalist activist Mustafa Kamil met the visionary of the State of the Jews, Theodor Herzl, and asked for his support for Egypt's independence.<sup>21</sup>

Another book that shines for its positive attitude is Usama al-Shadhli's novel *Shimon al-Masri's Papers*, which was published a year before *Mitzrayim*. It tells the biblical story of the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt through the eyes of a seven-year-old boy named Shimon, who recorded the events of the journey.

<sup>16</sup> Haisam Hassanein, "Sisi Restores Jewish Heritage in Egypt," *WINEP Policy Analysis*, December 14, 2018, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/sisi-restores-jewish-heritage-egypt>.

<sup>17</sup> Midhat 'Abd al-Raziq, *Mitzrayim: Tales and Families of the Jews of Royal Egypt* (Cairo: al-Rawaq Publishing, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 2022), 10 [Arabic].

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 21, 56-79.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 61-62.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 97-98.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 315.

Shimon is a descendant of an Israelite father and an Egyptian mother. He is portrayed in the book as tolerant and receptive towards others, whatever their beliefs, and as someone who was able to preserve his humanity despite the horrors that surrounded him during the Exodus.<sup>22</sup> According to the author, his novel attempts to explore the behavior of an individual in a society that is in a state of wandering.<sup>23</sup>

One of al-Shadhli's fans is the religious affairs advisor to the Egyptian president, Sheikh Usama al-Azhari, who expressed his admiration for the novel, saying it "will continue to have a very special place for me, making it one of the best I have read."<sup>24</sup>

Al-Shadhli's book received extensive coverage in the Egyptian media.<sup>25</sup> In July 2022, the Alexandria Cultural Library held a symposium about the book.<sup>26</sup> In October 2022, Dar al-Rawaq, the novel's publisher, announced that Saudi MBC Studios obtained the rights to adapt the novel into a TV series.<sup>27</sup>

There were some critical views about the historical scrutiny and the religious accuracy of the recently released pro-Jewish books. Moreover, a few readers expressed fear that embracing and friendly approaches toward Jews could create sympathy among young people for Israel and marginalize the Palestinian cause.<sup>28</sup>

For instance, a researcher of Israeli affairs, Ihab 'Abd al-Gawwad, suggested that these books intersect with the desire of the American administration to revive Jewish-Arab ties in the Middle East.<sup>29</sup> Still, the books were not banned, neither by the regime nor by storeowners, and their critical reception was overall positive – indicating that times are, perhaps, changing for the better.

<sup>22</sup> Usama al-Shadhli, *Shimon al-Masri's Papers* (Cairo: al-Rawaq Publishing, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 2021), 609-610 [Arabic].

<sup>23</sup> Suha al-Saman, "'Al-Masri al-Yawm' Interviews Usama 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Shadhli, Author of the Novel 'Shimon al-Masri's Papers': My Novel Discusses 'Social Wandering' and 'Loss of Direction' [Arabic]," *al-Masri al-Yawm*, October 19, 2021, <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/2442712>.

<sup>24</sup> Nidal Mahmud, "Usama al-Azhari on the Novel 'Shimon al-Masri's Papers': One of the Best Novels I have Read [Arabic]," *al-Dustur*, August 20, 2021, <https://www.dostor.org/3545888>.

<sup>25</sup> Mustafa Taher, "Usama al-Shadhli Discusses His Novel 'Shimon al-Masri's Papers' on Nile Cultural Channel [Arabic]," *al-Ahram*, September 6, 2021, <https://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/2947349.aspx>.

<sup>26</sup> Muhammad al-Gharib, "Usama al-Shadhli: al-Azhari is a Religious Man Who Combines Literature, Thought, History, and Political Understanding [Arabic]," *al-Balad*, July 24, 2022, <https://www.elbalad.news/5370615>.

<sup>27</sup> Rana Ashraf, "Transforming the Novel 'Shimon al-Masri's Papers' into a Dramatic Work – Details [Arabic]," *al-Balad*, October 8, 2022, <https://www.elbalad.news/5473548>.

<sup>28</sup> Ahmed, "Book Fair [Arabic]."

<sup>29</sup> Al-Sayyid Shhatta, "The Search for the 'Hidden' – The Secret of Egyptians' Passion for Searching the History of Absent Jews [Arabic]," *Raseef22*, February 2, 2022, <https://raseef22.net/article/1086305>.

## Policy Recommendations

1. **Encourage Religious Pluralism and Tolerance.** The Egyptian authorities should be encouraged by Western governments and international organizations to continue and promote policies that create a climate of religious pluralism and tolerance towards Jews and Judaism, and religious minorities at large. State cultural institutions, such as the General Egyptian Book Organization, should continue supporting the publishing of balanced history books and novels on Jewish history, as well as promoting them in the media. The Egyptian Ministry of Education should incorporate some of the new historical books on Egyptian Jewry in the national curriculum.
2. **Welcome and Support.** Israel should warmly welcome displays of tolerance toward Jews and Judaism and render support, including financial, to initiatives that aim to revive Jewish heritage in Egypt and other Arab countries. Israeli Jews who migrated from Arab states can play a role in bridging the gaps of time and place through tourism, education, and culture exchanges.
3. **Joint Initiatives.** Israel and Egypt should establish joint governmental and civil initiatives with the participation of descendants of the Egyptian Jewish community. Such activities can enable neighbors to express their appreciation for each other, revive their forgotten shared history, and build their common future.

– *Dr. Ofir Winter and Shereen Eltaieb*

# AFRICA: HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE AS A MIRROR AND GUIDE

Visits by experts in Holocaust studies and remembrance to a number of African countries informed how educators and activists there are using terms associated with the Holocaust to engage with their own historical tragedies and relate them, both on the national and international levels. These educators do not ignore the uniqueness of the horrors the Nazi regime and its allies committed, although the risk this happens in the process is there; rather, they borrow terms associated with the Holocaust as a means to deepen the understanding of their own national sufferings and tragedies.

In Dakar, the capital of Senegal, when the visitor is taken to the seashore to see the House of Slavery, the site from which millions of Africans were sent to slavery from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup>, the guide explains: “This is our Umschlagplatz.” He is referring to the term used in the Warsaw Ghetto, and then in other ghettos, for the squares and areas close to train stations into which Jews were herded and then sent to death camps.

It is explained to the surprised visitor that the tragedy of slavery, the most painful event in African history, is remembered in African countries as tantamount to the Jewish tragedy, and that the African term ‘Maafa’ actually means Holocaust or at least a devastating disaster.

In South Africa, associations with the Nuremberg laws are prevalent when Apartheid laws and regulations are discussed. Apartheid laws were imposed by the country’s white rulers upon its black population between 1948-1994, segregating them and reducing them to second- and third-class citizens. The Nuremberg laws, enacted in 1935, segregated the Jewish citizens in Germany from the rest of society, demoted their civil status, and humiliated them.

There is expressed concern in South Africa that, as time passes, the young generation that experienced Apartheid only from textbooks would not keep the memory alive. The comparison of Apartheid to the Nuremberg laws is a means of doing so and challenges people from other countries never to forget what black South Africans endured.

The Holocaust is particularly present in the narratives of educators in Rwanda. In 100 days, from mid-April to the beginning of July 1994, as many as a million Tutsis (the ethnic minority in the country) were brutally murdered by members of the Hutu majority, usually with machetes. Each year these 100 days are commemorated in ceremonies and gatherings. Banners hanging at the entrances to villages and in central squares demand: “Kwibuka!” – “Remember!” Other prominently displayed banners cry: “Never Again Rwanda!”

Museums and educational programs in Rwanda explain the genocide as the result of the policies enacted by the two colonial powers that ruled the country: Germany (until the end of the First World War) and Belgium (following the War and until independence in 1962). The



Belgians brought colonial cruelty to new heights and cynically divided Hutus from Tutsis and incited them one against the other.

There is enormous interest in Rwanda in how Israel and the Jewish people engage with the memory of the Holocaust, preserve it, and make it universally recognized and relevant. It has intensified in recent years when tens of thousands of Hutu perpetrators imprisoned for their crimes were released from jail and returned to their homes, close to the survivors of the crime they committed.

In Kigali, the capital, the Genocide Memorial, the central museum in the city, is dedicated to presenting the historical roots of the genocide and its development. On one of the walls, very large letters read: “the Road to the Final Solution.”

The guide emphasizes the steps that led to the mass murders. First and foremost, the Hutu propaganda that depicted the Tutsi as “Untermensch,” as snakes and cockroaches (an especially poignant insult in the local culture) who should be totally exterminated by true patriots.

The themes raised by the museum’s presentation and by the guide concern the development of racist ideologies, the ways they are disseminated, and how people are convinced to absorb them. The guide emphasizes that dehumanization always precedes mass murders, serving as an incentive to participate in the killing. He also raises the question of how societies can recognize and foresee such developments before it is too late.

This all sounds more than familiar to a Jewish visitor.

High school teachers present painful questions when speaking with Jewish experts. For example, as to the proper age for children to be taught the detailed cruelty of the Rwanda genocide. Another example: how to answer pupils who ask them about the cruelty of fellow citizens who, one bright day, turned murderously against their neighbors. And especially: how to answer the pupils’ questions about their parents and grandparents – how did they react; did they resist or were they passive; did they ignore signs of approaching disaster?

The teams in charge of collecting victims’ testimonies, sorting them, and preserving them for future use seek also to learn from the Jewish model of remembrance. For example, they ask how testimonies are recorded in Israel and by Jewish communities worldwide, how one can examine the credibility of the survivors’ stories without making them feel accused, and how to preserve testimonies in an accessible way. They also inquire as to how Holocaust denial is engaged with in the Jewish world.

University students who come by the hundreds to listen to the presentations of scholars of the Holocaust radiate feelings that “the whole world was against us.” Once the massacre started, the UN committees, the Security Council included, began lengthy debates about whether events in Rwanda constituted genocide. Recognition would have forced the UN to send an intervention force. Tutsi forces ultimately stopped the killings before the UN reached a final decision, and a bitter feeling of being forsaken has remained among Rwandese.

France was allied with the Hutu leaders for some years before 1994, and it is argued that French troops participated in the murders alongside their allies, so much so that even a 2021



joint Rwandese-French report concluded that the latter carries a heavy responsibility for the genocide.

There were cases of clergy who convinced thousands of Tutsi to hide in their churches, only to let the Hutu come in and perpetrate the murders. Where was God, ask the young university students. Where was the Pope, John Paul II? He should have cared; he should have intervened. These tormenting ponderings are not strange to Jews, and it is understandable why they are asked to help find answers.

## Policy Recommendations

The deep interest in how the Jewish people cope with the memory of the Holocaust creates opportunities for cooperation on many levels.

1. **Expand Contacts.** The UN Outreach Department initiates annual events in more than a hundred countries on International Holocaust Memorial Day. The vital work it does should be expanded by establishing direct contacts between African and Jewish organizations.
2. **Educate Together.** On the educational level, the questions raised in societies that experienced genocides and other crimes call for mutual deliberations with Jews who have dealt with similar experiences. Student and teacher exchanges and new and joint educational programs should be introduced. This need not involve comparing one suffering to another or diminishing the uniqueness of the Holocaust.
3. **Study Together.** With an eye to the academic interest in the Holocaust in several African countries, joint conferences and publications with Holocaust researchers, mutual opening of archives, and exchange of scholars should be encouraged. Given the current polarized, and even politicized, state of the study of the Holocaust, new types of cooperation are all the more important as a means to assert scientific approaches and, at the same time, the universal essentiality of studying the Holocaust.

– Prof. Dina Porat



# GERMANY: BORUSSIA DORTMUND IS GETTING OFF THE BENCH

In May 2022, Borussia Dortmund officials visited Israel to highlight their public commitment to the fight against antisemitism. The delegation included, among others, the club's CEO and Chairman of the Board, Hans-Joachim Watzke, Vice-CEO Carsten Cramer, and Antidiscrimination Delegate Daniel Lörcher.

During a ceremony at Yad Vashem, Watzke wrote in the center's guestbook that "[we] at Borussia Dortmund are proud of the cooperation and friendship with Yad Vashem! We are very committed to remembering the six million Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust. This act of remembrance will forever be our duty and our responsibility!"

Watzke also stated that the club had increased cooperation with Yad Vashem based on a perception that there was growing antisemitism in society: "Working with Yad Vashem is fantastic and actually over the last decade has become a part of the DNA of Borussia Dortmund as we continue to advocate against antisemitism in all forms."<sup>1</sup> Lörcher, in an interview for this Report, said that "we see football as a chance to address antisemitism."<sup>2</sup>

This latest visit to Israel in general, and to Yad Vashem in particular, adds to the club's laudable recent actions. The club, also known as "BVB" (Ballspielverein Borussia – Ballgames Association Borussia), has committed to put an end to antisemitism in and around its stadium.

Research on the links between football and political extremism demonstrated that mass sporting events contribute to shaping the collective identity of nations and are thus prone to be abused by radical movements, especially those for whom national identity is a core concern.<sup>3</sup> Football was recognized as a way for the politically marginalized to blow off steam.<sup>4</sup>

Being a fan of a certain sports team can provide people with a sense of community and pride, and thus ease the adoption of political messages prevalent in supporter communities.<sup>5</sup> By

<sup>1</sup> Joshua Halickman, "Dortmund's Statement of Israeli Friendship," *The Jerusalem Post*, May 19, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/j-spot/article-707041>.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with the author, November 25, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Christina Holtz-Bacha, "Fußball-Fernsehen-Politik," in *Fußball-Fernsehen-Politik*, ed. Christina Holtz-Bacha (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Wichard Woyke, "Olympische Spiele und Fußballweltmeisterschaften. Mega-Events und ihre Bedeutung für die Politik," in *Sport und Politik: Eine Einführung*, ed. Wichard Woyke (Schwalbach im Taunus: Wochenschau, 2006), 28.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Pfeiffer, "Menschenverachtung mit Unterhaltungswert. Musik, Symbolik, Internet – der Rechtsextremismus als Erlebniswelt," in *Erlebniswelt Rechtsextremismus: Menschenverachtung mit Unterhaltungswert, Hintergründe, Methoden, Praxis der Prävention*, ed. Stefan Glaser and Thomas Pfeiffer (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2013), 44-45; Julia Becker, Ulrich Wagner, and Oliver Christ, "Nationalismus und Patriotismus als Ursache von Fremdenfeindlichkeit," in *Deutsche Zustände: Folge 5*, ed. Wilhelm Heitmeyer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), 146.

forming a type of patriotic identity centered on a football club, opposing teams become radical outsiders that need to be delegitimized and showered with hateful attributes.

Some football fans struggle with the encroaching commercialization of football, which, in their view, threatens their club as a social community. Young fans especially are receptive to messages spread by anti-globalization movements that reject the mainstream media, police, and organizations such as the DFB (The German Football Federation). Those movements typically feed off some form of nationalism and racism, interspersed with antisemitic imagery.<sup>6</sup>

Antisemitism, and racism at large, have been, for years, part of the German football scene. The uncompromising and intensive efforts by Borussia Dortmund to address antisemitism followed years of relative neglect.

In 1983, neo-Nazis among the ranks of Borussia Dortmund fans – and of their local nemesis Schalke 04 – agreed to be filmed for a TV documentary. Ulrich Leinweber's "...die sind eben so" ("...that's just the way they are") revealed the propensity for violence and antisemitism displayed by the fan clubs *Borussenfront* and *Mighty Blues*.

On shirts and banners, the "ss" in *Borussenfront* was typed in runic script, alluding to the Nazi SS. Hand-drawn swastikas framed the group's logo. A member of *Borussenfront* who called himself "son of the Führer" explained that he appreciated the Nazis' drive for power and thought that all Schalke fans should be "exterminated."<sup>7</sup> *Mighty Blues*' members offered similar statements.

The documentary ended with them lining up, collectively performing the Hitler salute, and chanting *Sieg heil*.

Still, during the 1980s and 1990s, Borussia Dortmund did not recognize the fight against neo-Nazis in and around its stadium as a primary concern, even though the club already had links to Israel, including friendly matches and training camps, and took several general measures to fight racism.

Encouraged by public disinterest, Siegfried Borchardt (nickname SS-Siggi<sup>8</sup>), one of the founders of the abovementioned *Borussenfront*, co-founded violent local right-wing brotherhoods and pursued a political career. Borchardt and his companions turned Dortmund into a "stronghold of right-wing extremism in Western Germany."<sup>9</sup>

Neo-Nazis from outside the city moved to Dortmund's Dorstfeld neighborhood, aiming to establish a "nationally liberated zone" (*national befreite Zone*). They opened cafes and shops

<sup>6</sup> Gunter A. Pilz et al., eds., *Wandlungen des Zuschauerverhaltens im Profifußball* (Schondorf: Hofmann, 2006), 14; Geisler and Gerster, "Strategien der extremen Rechten," 200.

<sup>7</sup> Ulrich Leinweber, "...die sind eben so" (Cologne: Milestone Pictures, 1983), <https://www.politische-bildung.nrw.de/digitale-medien/titelverzeichnis/details/medien/die-sind-eben-so>.

<sup>8</sup> David Walden, "Ein Neonazi schlägt sich durch - SS-Siggi im Dortmunder Stadtrat," *Der Spiegel*, June 16, 2014, sec. Panorama, <https://www.spiegel.de/video/ein-neonazi-schlaegt-sich-durch-ss-siggi-im-dortmunder-stadtrat-video-1501278.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Nordstadtblogger, "Die Geschichte des Neo-Nazismus in Dortmund," *Nordstadtblogger*, October 18, 2021, <https://www.nordstadtblogger.de/die-geschichte-des-neo-nazismus-in-dortmund/>.

as meeting places and to sell clothing with extremist signs and slogans. They organized protest marches attracting over one thousand participants, some of the largest right-wing marches in Germany.

The club began addressing the problem only in the mid-to-late 2000s. This was part of a broader change in German football when the country hosted the 2006 FIFA World Cup and could no longer hide the blatantly obvious infiltration of football by extremist groups, which had the potential to cause a national and international image problem.

Before the tournament, the ultra-nationalist Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) called for a “White [...] real NATIONAL-Team!”<sup>10</sup> The slightly more intellectual, so-called New Right (*Neue Rechte*) framed the World Cup as a chance to promote a paradigm change towards a proud, nationalist discourse.<sup>11</sup>

In 2006, Theo Zwanziger became president of the DFB. He recognized the urgency of addressing political extremism and promoted taking more socio-political responsibility.

The DFB and other actors involved, such as fan initiatives and police, began to more actively fight bigotry against Jews, as well as homophobic, racist, and xenophobic incidents,<sup>12</sup> and created and funded fan initiatives buoyed by a budget of ten million Euros annually.<sup>13</sup>

The DFB also created the Julius Hirsch Award – named after a former Jewish player of Germany’s national team, who was murdered in Auschwitz in 1943 – to honor initiatives for human dignity and against antisemitism and racism.

In 2006, Borussia Dortmund’s anti-racism fan project won broad recognition and received the abovementioned Julius Hirsch Award for “Kick Racism Out,” a campaign launched during the World Cup, as well as for the founding of an educational center for disadvantaged youth. In 2011, the club began organizing educational trips for young fans to Auschwitz.

However, neo-Nazis in Dortmund continued to gain ground, and Borussia Dortmund did not show enough resolve to stop them. In December 2012, news outlets noted problems with the private security company the club hired to protect the up to 82,000 fans in Germany’s largest football stadium (originally: Westfalenstadion, since 2005: Signal Iduna Park, after an insurance company bought the naming rights). *Der Spiegel* claimed that the security company was “infiltrated by right-wing extremists who spread racist slogans and beat up away fans.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Geisler and Martin Gerster, “Fußball als Extrem-Sport – Die Unterwanderung des Breitensports als Strategieelement der extremen Rechten,” in *Strategien der extremen Rechten: Hintergründe-Analysen-Antworten*, ed. Stephan Braun, Alexander Geisler, and Martin Gerster (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009), 190.

<sup>11</sup> Dieter Stein, “Der Traum ist nicht zu Ende,” *Junge Freiheit*, July 7, 2006, <https://jungefreiheit.de/sonderthema/2006/der-traum-ist-nicht-zu-ende/>.

<sup>12</sup> Unabhängiger Expertenkreis Antisemitismus, *Antisemitismus in Deutschland – aktuelle Entwicklungen*, 256; Theo Zwanziger, “Fußball ist Politik - Fußball ist Gesellschaft,” in *CSR und Sportmanagement - Jenseits von Sieg und Niederlage: Sport als gesellschaftliche Aufgabe verstehen und umsetzen*, ed. Alexandra Hildebrandt, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Springer Gabler, 2019), 11-12.

<sup>13</sup> Geisler and Gerster, “Strategien der extremen Rechten,” 202.

<sup>14</sup> Rafael Buschmann, “Borussia Dortmunds Nazi-Problem,” *Der Spiegel*, December 12, 2012, <https://www.spiegel.de/sport/fussball/borussia-dortmund-probleme-mit-nazis-und-hooligans-unter-ordnern-a-872213.html>.

The article reported that a Schalke 04 fan who went to the restrooms during a match in Dortmund emerged with a concussion, broken ribs, and a bruised jawbone. He was beaten up and kicked in the head by marshals hired to protect fans.

The main suspect was a hooligan with a criminal record. He was both a security marshal and a member of the violent right-wing gang Northside. Some of his colleagues were also members of Northside or other extremist and violent groups.<sup>15</sup> On his openly accessible Facebook profile, which plainly showed his connections with Borussia Dortmund officials, the marshal posted pictures of himself performing the Hitler salute.

Initially, Borussia Dortmund reacted cautiously to the reports, promising to handle the matter with due diligence but assuming the marshal's innocence until proven guilty. The marshal was taken off duty but not fired. This, despite evidence of his doing the Hitler salute.<sup>16</sup> CEO Watzke declared that he did not see a large-scale infiltration of the security staff by right-wing extremists.<sup>17</sup>

BVB Antisemitism Delegate Lörcher recognized that this reaction demonstrated a lack of resolve. He explained that, in retrospect, BVB officials, like others in society, failed to see the structures in which the extreme right operated. They saw a problematic marshal rather than a right-wing network trying to undermine society.

Then, on December 21, 2012, the club issued a press release signed by Watzke that signaled a greater resolve for combatting antisemitism and other forms of right-wing extremism.

The club acknowledged past incidents, such as supporters flying a Nazi flag or putting up banners declaring solidarity with Borchardt, and listed its measures against antisemitism. These included prohibiting racists from entering the stadium, increasing the security staff to roughly 800 marshals, and installing a high-resolution camera system. Other measures noted were the founding of a charity, *leuchte auf* (light up), that seeks to advance social pluralism; regulations that explicitly prohibited for the first time the display of right-wing extremist, violence-glorifying, or racist signs; the hiring of additional social workers for fan affairs and the creation of a working group to investigate the problem. The club also made notice of its initiatives for the integration of migrants and for Holocaust education. It promised to increase funding for the annual youth trips to Auschwitz drastically.<sup>18</sup>

Around the same time, in 2012, Borchardt co-founded a political party – Die Rechte (The Right-Wing). In the 2014 municipal elections, it gained one seat with one percent of votes (2,100).<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Most fan groups have no official political affiliation and avoid making political statements: Geisler and Gerster, "Strategien der extremen Rechten," 189.

<sup>16</sup> Buschmann, "Borussia Dortmund."

<sup>17</sup> Jörg Weiler and Christian Kynast, "Nazi-Verdacht! BVB-Boss wirft Ordner raus," *Bild*, December 17, 2012, <https://www.bild.de/sport/fussball/borussia-dortmund/boss-watzke-wirft-ordner-raus-27702864.bild.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Hans-Joachim Watzke and Christian Hockenjos, "Erklärung zum Vorgehen gegen rechtsextremistische Tendenzen im Umfeld von Borussia Dortmund," December 21, 2012, <http://www.bvb.de/News/Uebersicht/Erklaerung-zum-Vorgehen-gegen-rechtsextremistische-Tendenzen-im-Umfeld-von-Borussia-Dortmund/>.

<sup>19</sup> Dortmunder Statistik and Berthold Haermeyer, eds., "Kommunalwahlen am 25.05.2014 - Kurzbericht" (Stadt Dortmund, July 1, 2014), 6, [https://www.dortmund.de/media/p/statistik/pdf\\_statistik/wahlen\\_3/Kommunalwahl\\_2014.pdf](https://www.dortmund.de/media/p/statistik/pdf_statistik/wahlen_3/Kommunalwahl_2014.pdf).

*The New York Times* noted with alarm the problem of a man known as SS-Siggi becoming an elected German councilman. According to the newspaper, there were almost 10,000 active right-wing extremists in Dortmund.<sup>20</sup> Die Rechte used his seat in the council for provocative political stunts, such as asking how many people in Dortmund were of Jewish origin.<sup>21</sup>

The election results emboldened Dortmund's neo-Nazis to make more public appearances.<sup>22</sup> During marches, they chanted slogans like "*Wer Deutschland liebt, ist Antisemit*" (He who loves Germany, must be an antisemite), promoted the destruction of Israel, portrayed pictures of Iran's former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad along with the slogan "A World without Zionism," and walked through Dortmund with an Israel-style flag bearing the slogan "Israel is our misfortune" – an adaptation of the Nazi slogan "The Jews are our misfortune."<sup>23</sup>

In 2013, three neo-Nazis attacked an employee of the BVB fan project, Thilo Danielsmeyer, and the club's then-fan delegate Jens Volke before an away game in Donezk. According to Lörcher, both are outspoken antifascists.

In 2014, Die Rechte members attended a friendly match between the under-19 youth team of Maccabi Netanya and a youth team from Dortmund (not affiliated with Borussia Dortmund). They waved Palestinian and German imperial flags and chanted slogans such as "never again Israel," "child murderers Israel," and "Jews out [pause] of Palestine."<sup>24</sup> Only at halftime did the police remove them from the stands.

Meanwhile, Borussia Dortmund continued its activities against antisemitism. Lörcher explained that the club devised a new strategy upon understanding antisemitism not as an individual but as a structural problem: "The BVB strategy was: (a) we need a network, we gather all actors in the city of Dortmund; (b) we need to position ourselves more clearly, name the problem, and send clear messages; and (c) we need to address the positive forces within our community and strengthen their engagement."<sup>25</sup>

In 2014, the club's fan project received a second Julius Hirsch Award (second place) for a visit to memorial sites in Poland. Then, in 2019, Borussia Dortmund donated one million Euros to the building of the new Shoah Heritage Campus at Yad Vashem. According to Lörcher, the donation was a personal initiative by Watzke, who had been so moved by visits to Auschwitz that he felt the need to contribute to Holocaust remembrance.

<sup>20</sup> Alison Smale, "A Neo-Nazi's Political Rise Exposes a German City's Ethnic Tensions," *The New York Times*, June 24, 2014, 10.

<sup>21</sup> Before 1933, Dortmund had a Jewish community of up to 5,000 members and a large synagogue at the heart of the city. Today, according to Zentralrat der Juden, the Jewish community in Dortmund counts some 3,000 members, most of whom came after the fall of the Soviet Union: Jüdische Kultusgemeinde Groß-Dortmund, "Geschichte," *jg-dortmund.de*, no date, <https://jg-dortmund.de/de/gemeinde-dortmund>.

<sup>22</sup> Nordstadtblogger, "Die Geschichte des Neo-Nazismus in Dortmund."

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> A video of the incident is still accessible on the YouTube channel of Die Rechte: Dortmund: Proteste bei Freundschaftsspiel mit Maccabi Netanya, 2014, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDE\\_ui2gUTo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDE_ui2gUTo).

<sup>25</sup> Interview with the author, November 25, 2022.



The donation received widespread media attention. Watzke flew to Israel to participate in the campus's groundbreaking ceremony, where he declared that he was "proud that we, as Borussia Dortmund, can contribute to this special building and against oblivion."<sup>26</sup>

How does the donation to Yad Vashem contribute to fighting antisemites in Dortmund? Lörcher explained that he and his colleagues identified three layers of outreach: "One consists of the groups that we address directly with our programs, such as people that come to a lecture. Then, there are the people we address indirectly, such as families, co-workers, and friends who hear about our lectures and that they were interesting. And then, there is the large stage of football and the public. It was always our primary goal to become unattractive to the extreme right. [...] With regard to neo-Nazis, our clear goal is to push them out of the stadium and that they have no space to feel comfortable."<sup>27</sup> In other words, neo-Nazis would not be able to justify support for a club that promotes such radically different values.

In 2022, Watzke received the Josef-Neuenburger-Medal, awarded by the Jewish community of Düsseldorf for his engagement against antisemitism.<sup>28</sup> In March 2022, Borussia Dortmund hosted a symposium about antisemitism in football, where, among others, representatives of the World Jewish Congress and the Central Council of Jews in Germany participated.<sup>29</sup> Josef Schuster, the council's President, declared that "originally, football was rather the problem, [but] today football is a significant part of the solution to the problem."<sup>30</sup> Lörcher added that the club is also planning a Bar Mitzvah program in cooperation with the Jewish community of Dortmund.

There is little quantitative data on whether the initiatives of Borussia Dortmund and other football clubs in Germany led to a decrease in antisemitic attitudes or incidents.<sup>31</sup>

German police collect data on crime and violence in and around football stadiums on match-day, but do not list antisemitism as a specific category. They do list crimes attributable to the right-wing, such as the showing of anti-constitutional insignia and messages. The resulting data shows a moderate decline in right-wing crimes committed by football fans.

In the season 2002/03, there were 163 criminal proceedings leveled during the entire season in the first and second leagues against fans for committing crimes affiliated with right-wing ideology.<sup>32</sup> The 2018/19 season, when Borussia Dortmund made its donation to Yad Vashem, and the last season fans regularly attended matches before the outbreak of the Covid-19

<sup>26</sup> Borussia Dortmund, "Grundsteinlegung für das 'Haus der Sammlungen' in Yad Vashem," May 2, 2019, <http://www.bvb.de/News/Uebersicht/Grundsteinlegung-fuer-das-Haus-der-Sammlungen-in-Yad-Vashem/>.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with the author, November 25, 2022.

<sup>28</sup> Deutsche Presse Agentur, "Jüdische Neuberger-Medaille für BVB-Geschäftsführer Watzke," *Süddeutsche.de*, September 14, 2022, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/panorama/auszeichnungen-dortmund-juedische-neuberger-medaille-fuer-bvb-geschaeftsfuehrer-watzke-dpa.urn-newsml-dpa-com-20090101-220914-99-755502>.

<sup>29</sup> Jessica Sturmberg, "Antisemitismus und Fußball - Teil der Lösung statt Teil des Problems," *Deutschlandfunk*, April 2, 2022, <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/antisemitismus-fussball-100.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Fabian Scheler, "'Jude ist die größte Beleidigung im Fußball,'" *Die Zeit*, September 12, 2019, <https://www.zeit.de/sport/2019-09/antisemitismus-fussball-stadien-fans-florian-schubert/seite-2>.

<sup>32</sup> Zentrale Informationsstelle Sparteinsätze, Jahresbericht Fußball Saison 2002/03 (Landeskriminalamt NRW, 2003), 4, [https://polizei.nrw/sites/default/files/2016-12/02-03\\_Jahresbericht.pdf](https://polizei.nrw/sites/default/files/2016-12/02-03_Jahresbericht.pdf).



pandemic saw 127 criminal proceedings against right-wing ideology.<sup>33</sup> The latest report from the 2021/22 season recorded only 57 such proceedings in the first, second, and third leagues, as well as cup and international matches – but matches were not regularly attended during the season.<sup>34</sup> This positive change results from social trends and activism, such as the initiatives encouraged by Borussia Dortmund. Yet, at least in part, it also owes to the relegation to the lower leagues of certain clubs whose fans have a greater propensity for racism.

Lörcher, too, does not have quantitative data on antisemitic crime in Borussia Dortmund's stadium. But he stated that in the past five years, he was aware of some ten to fifteen fans who were thrown out of the stadium for wearing clothes or holding signs associated with the extreme right. The club prohibits this in its house order and bans fans who transgress its rules for up to five years.

Off the pitch, Die Rechte has seen a decrease in popularity in Dortmund. The party gained roughly the same result in the 2020 municipal elections as in 2014: one seat and 1.1 percent (2,369) of the votes.

However, given that the NPD did not run, Dortmund's extreme right effectively lost one seat and some 2,000 votes. There was little else for Dortmund extremists to take comfort in. In recent years, high-ranking Die Rechte members were sentenced to prison or moved away from Dortmund. And SS-Siggi died in 2021, aged 67. Cause of death: blood poisoning.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Zentrale Informationsstelle Sporteinsätze, *Jahresbericht Fußball Saison 2018/19* (Duisburg: Zentrale Informationsstelle Sporteinsätze, 2019), 12-13.

<sup>34</sup> Zentrale Informationsstelle Sporteinsätze, *Jahresbericht Fußball Saison 2021/22* (Duisburg: Zentrale Informationsstelle Sporteinsätze, 2022), 5, 8.

<sup>35</sup> Tobias Großkemper, "Streit über die Asche von 'SS-Siggi,'" *Der Spiegel*, December 23, 2021, 46.

## Policy Recommendations

1. **Become a social enterprise.** Borussia Dortmund's recent fight against antisemitism is laudable – but more can and should be done. As a sports association, the club is entitled to significant tax benefits. At the same time, it is a commercial enterprise with a turnover of 350 million Euros in 2021. In the 2020/2021 season, it paid players' salaries totaling 215 million Euros – not including transfer fees and signing bonuses.<sup>36</sup> A one million Euro donation to Yad Vashem and several visits there were comparatively small expenses.

Borussia Dortmund, and other German football clubs, should dedicate a larger share of their turnover to social initiatives. After all, Watzke himself reminded a journalist in Israel in 2022 of a statement by Borussia Dortmund's founding president Franz Jacobi, which the latter issued in 1919: "The quality of a football club is reflected in how well it fulfills its social responsibilities."<sup>37</sup>

2. **Fight Antisemitism in Dortmund.** The donation to Yad Vashem can make a significant contribution to Holocaust remembrance. It also earns the club positive headlines following its problems with radical marshals. However, it does not address the attitudes of roughly 10,000 right-wing extremists in Dortmund. For that, the club needs to invest in neighborhood projects and youth education. While this might earn the club less PR, one million Euros spent on social workers in Dortmund could significantly contribute to the security of local Jews and other minorities.
3. **Be a local and a global club.** Studies show that some young fans struggle with the uprooting of their club from the local environment. Borussia Dortmund presents itself as a down-to-earth club from a working-class city. At the same time, it organizes marketing trips to China and training camps in Dubai.

Some fans find it hard to understand or accept globalization. Borussia Dortmund needs to address this and offer its fans in Dortmund a chance to engage with what they see as their local club. After all, while fans in China watch a match and contribute to TV revenues, the fans in Dortmund represent the club before a worldwide audience.

– *Fabian Spengler*

<sup>36</sup> Benni Hofmann, "Personalkosten: RB hat den BVB im Blick," *kicker*, July 20, 2022, <https://www.kicker.de/personalkosten-rb-hat-den-bvb-im-blick-909891/artikel>.

<sup>37</sup> Halickman, "Dortmund's Statement of Israeli Friendship."

# AROUND THE WORLD: LEGISLATIVE AND LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

A review of legislative and legal developments in the fight against antisemitism reveals significant progress.

Local and national governments from the Americas to Europe and Oceania exercised their executive and legislative powers to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, emphasizing its use as a practical tool for guiding and informing law enforcement investigations into hate crimes. In addition, several governments passed laws to provide critical funding for Holocaust education and to advance harsher punishments and fines for Holocaust denial, antisemitic crimes, and publicly displaying Nazi symbols. In some countries, however, laws related to Holocaust denial and publicly displaying Nazi symbols have met with resistance by free speech advocates who believe the measures restrict freedom of speech, and their arguments cannot be taken lightly.

While the importance of adopting a common definition of antisemitism cannot be understated, it can only serve, like pledges to fight antisemitism, as a starting point for governments to move toward implementation. As the examples below demonstrate, implementation can take different forms.

## The Americas

**Organization of American States (OAS).** In 2022, Guatemala and Colombia joined OAS states Canada, Argentina, the United States, and Uruguay in adopting the IHRA definition, pledging to work with the OAS's first antisemitism envoy, Brazilian attorney Fernando Lottenberg, to confront antisemitism throughout the Western Hemisphere.<sup>1</sup>

**The United States.** In March, President Joe Biden signed the 2022 federal government funding package into law that earmarked US\$2M to implement the 2020 H.R.943 – Never Again Education Act. The US Holocaust Memorial Museum will use the funds to provide resources and training for teachers on Holocaust education. An additional US\$1M in the funding package will finance the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism's policies and projects combating global antisemitism.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Guatemala en la OEA (@GuatemalaOEA), "El Presidente @DrGiammattei adopta la a definición de antisemitismo...", *Twitter*, June 29, 2022, <https://twitter.com/GuatemalaOEA/status/1541970795550937090>, and Iván Duque (@IvanDuque), "Colombia subscribe la Declaración promovida por la @OEA\_oficial para rechazar prácticas de antisemitismo...", *Twitter*, June 2, 2022, <https://twitter.com/IvanDuque/status/1532383157407866880>.

<sup>2</sup> "Rosen Applauds President Biden Signing Bipartisan Government Funding Legislation into Law," Jacky Rosen – US Senator for Nevada, March 15, 2022, <https://www.rosen.senate.gov/2022/03/15/rosen-applauds-president-biden-signing-bipartisan-government-funding-legislation-into-law/>.

New York Governor Kathy Hochul issued a proclamation adopting the IHRA Definition as a helpful resource in confronting antisemitism.<sup>3</sup> Two months later, in August, Governor Hochul signed a package of three bills to “honor and support Holocaust survivors in educational, cultural, and financial institutions.” The new laws will “help ensure schools are providing high-quality Holocaust education” and “require museums to acknowledge art stolen by the Nazi regime.”<sup>4</sup>

While New York school districts have been required since 1994 to educate students about the Holocaust, one of the new bills (A.472C/S.121B) empowers the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to determine if districts are in compliance and if not, help those schools reduce gaps in their knowledge about the Holocaust.<sup>5</sup>

A second bill (A.3719A/S.117A) addresses artwork stolen from European, primarily Jewish families, during Nazi rule, requiring New York museums to acknowledge the stolen art pieces’ origins and their history. The third piece of legislation (A.9338/S.8318) aims to ease the burden of Holocaust survivors who receive reparation payments by requiring the state’s Department of Financial Services to maintain and update a list of banks that waive wire transfer fees associated with those payments. Doing so ensures Holocaust survivors receive their payments in full.

Several other states took legislative and executive actions against antisemitism by adopting the IHRA Working Definition, including Iowa, Arizona, and New Mexico, among others. In March, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds signed a bill (HF 2220) codifying the definition in state law; the bill passed the Iowa House the previous month by a 66-35 vote, while it passed the Iowa Senate unanimously a week later 48-0.<sup>6</sup>

The Arizona state legislature, by a vote of 49-4, passed HB 2675 in April, a bill that requires state authorities to consider the IHRA definition when investigating hate crimes and discrimination.<sup>7</sup> Rather than go through the state legislature, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham issued an executive order establishing the IHRA definition as the state’s legal standard for determining when unlawful discriminatory conduct is motivated by antisemitism. It is the first state to incorporate the definition into law via executive order, as Iowa, Arizona, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Florida did so through legislative action.<sup>8</sup> A similar law was introduced in Georgia,<sup>9</sup> which passed in the State House of Representatives but has yet to pass the State Senate.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>3</sup> “Antisemitism Definition Proclamation,” New York State – Governor Kathy Hochul, June 12, 2022, [https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/IHRA\\_Antisemitism\\_Definition\\_Proclamation-2022.pdf](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/IHRA_Antisemitism_Definition_Proclamation-2022.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> “Governor Hochul Signs Legislation to Honor and Support Holocaust Survivors in Educational, Cultural, and Financial Institutions,” New York State – Governor Kathy Hochul, August 10, 2022, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-signs-legislation-honor-and-support-holocaust-survivors-educational-cultural>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> “Reynolds Signs Anti-BDS of Israel and Antisemitism Bills into Law,” The Iowa Torch, March 24, 2022, <https://iowatorch.com/2022/03/24/reynolds-signs-anti-bds-of-israel-and-antisemitism-bills-into-law/>;

<sup>7</sup> “Arizona Votes to Adopt IHRA Definition of Anti-Semitism,” *Jewish News Syndicate*, April 21, 2022, <https://www.jns.org/arizona-votes-to-adopt-ihra-definition-of-anti-semitism/>.

<sup>8</sup> Zvika Klein, “New Mexico adopts IHRA definition of antisemitism,” *The Jerusalem Post*, August 16, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-714863>.

<sup>9</sup> Bill Cowser, “HB 1274,” Georgia General Assembly, April 1, 2022, <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/61887>.

<sup>10</sup> Jill Nolan, “State Senate Next Stop for Bill that Aims to Define Antisemitism in State Law,” ACLU Georgia, February 28, 2022, <https://acluga.org/state-senate-next-stop-for-bill-that-aims-to-define-antisemitism-in-state-law/>.

**Canada.** In 2022, British Columbia and Alberta became the third and fourth Canadian provinces to adopt the IHRA definition, following Ontario (2020) and New Brunswick (2021).<sup>11</sup> Six provinces have not adopted the definition to date; Quebec pledged to do so, but efforts to officially adopt it in its National Assembly in 2021 failed after the measure did not receive unanimous consent.<sup>12</sup>

Given the significant rise in the number of antisemitic incidents in Canada in 2021 and that Jews were the most targeted minority of hate crimes,<sup>13</sup> a federal budget bill was introduced in April 2022 that also adds a punishment for denying, condoning, or downplaying the Holocaust in the Canadian criminal code. The budget bill also earmarks \$70M for Jewish community initiatives.<sup>14</sup> Adding the Holocaust denial provision has been criticized for being unconstitutional, as it can be deemed to violate free speech protections provided under the Canadian constitution.<sup>15</sup>

## Europe

**European Union (EU).** The European Union agreed on the Digital Services Act,<sup>16</sup> which will require online platforms to remove hate speech, give information on their use of algorithms, and have clear rules to address complaints related to hate speech. They would also be regularly reviewed and monitored by the European Commission. In cases of non-compliance, the platforms will be liable for financial fines. The new Act still needs to be adopted by the European Parliament and the European Council.

<sup>11</sup> Dion J. Pierre, “British Columbia Adopts IHRA Definition of Antisemitism,” *The Algemeiner*, June 17, 2022, <https://www.algemeiner.com/2022/06/17/british-columbia-adopts-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism/>, and Damien Wood, “‘We Stand with Them’: Alberta Adopts IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism,” *CTV News*, September 24, 2022, <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/we-stand-with-them-alberta-adopts-ihra-working-definition-of-anti-semitism-1.6082391>.

<sup>12</sup> “Quebec Urged to Follow Through on Pledge to Adopt IHRA Definition,” *Israel National News*, October 6, 2022, <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/360845>.

<sup>13</sup> “Holocaust Denial – and Downplaying the Nazis’ Murder of Jews – to be Outlawed in Canada,” *CTV News*, April 9, 2022, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/holocaust-denial-and-downplaying-the-nazis-murder-of-jews-to-be-outlawed-in-canada-1.5855681>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Marie Woolf, “Ottawa to Outlaw Holocaust Denial, Playing Down the Nazis’ Murder of Jews,” *The Globe and Mail*, April 8, 2022, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-ottawa-to-outlaw-holocaust-denial-downplaying-the-nazis-murder-of-jews/>; Mark Gollum, “Why Canada’s Plan to Criminalize Holocaust Denial Could be Unconstitutional – and Redundant,” *CBC*, May 10, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/anti-holocaust-denial-bill-charter-budget-1.6446671>; and Patrick Carroll, “Canada to Ban ‘Downplaying’ the Holocaust in Major Blow to Free Speech,” *Fee Stories*, April 11, 2022, <https://fee.org/articles/canada-to-ban-downplaying-the-holocaust-in-major-blow-to-free-speech/>.

<sup>16</sup> “The Digital Services Act,” European Union, December 15, 2020, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A825%3AFIN>.

**Sweden.** A Swedish Labour Court ruled that a Jewish doctor had been unlawfully fired from his job at the Karolinska University Hospital near Stockholm, after he had complained of antisemitic discrimination in the workplace and was then subject to retaliation.<sup>17</sup>

After voicing his complaints, the physician was reassigned and his salary was lowered, and a complaint was submitted against him, suggesting that he posed a risk to patients. His Jewish identity was stated, inexplicably, as relevant in this regard. The Swedish Labour court stated that the accusation against the physician was false.<sup>18</sup> The university also admitted it had no valid reason to fire him. A lawsuit was also filed before the Swedish District Court, and its decision is pending.

**Ukraine.** After the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's parliament, passed a law in September 2021 criminalizing antisemitism, in February 2022, just a week before the fascist Russian invasion of the country, it approved strict sentencing measures for individuals convicted of anti-Jewish hate crimes. The amended criminal code increases the maximum fine for anti-Jewish incitement to \$600, and acts of antisemitic violence are punishable with five to eight-year prison sentences.<sup>19</sup>

## Oceania

**Australia.** In March 2022, the New South Wales (NSW) Legislative Council became the first legislative body in Australia to endorse the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism after the government of Tony Morrison pledged to adopt the definition in October 2021.<sup>20</sup> Following NSW, the legislative councils of South Australia and Victoria also adopted the definition.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to adopting the IHRA definition, Victoria and NSW passed similar pieces of legislation banning public displays of Nazi symbols, specifically the swastika. Under the new laws, an individual who intentionally displays a swastika faces a maximum of a year in jail or a fine of

<sup>17</sup> "Swedish Court Rules Firing of Jewish Doctor was Antisemitic, Illegal," *The Jerusalem Post*, September 1, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-716025>, and "Win! Court Rules that Top Swedish Hospital Illegally Fired Jewish Neurosurgeon Who Complained about Antisemitism," *The Lawfare Project*, September 1, 2022, <https://www.thelawfareproject.org/releases/2022/8/31/win-court-rules-that-top-swedish-hospital-illegally-fired-jewish-neurosurgeon-who-complained-about-antisemitism>.

<sup>18</sup> Cnaan Liphshiz, "Swedish Hospital Wrongfully Fired Doctor Who Complained of Superior's Antisemitic Bullying, Court Rules," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, September 6, 2022, <https://www.jta.org/2022/09/06/global/swedish-hospital-wrongfully-fired-doctor-who-complained-of-superiors-antisemitic-bullying-court-rules>.

<sup>19</sup> Ben Cohen, "Ukrainian Parliament Approves Tough Legal Penalties for Antisemitic Incitement," *The Algemeiner*, February 16, 2022, <https://www.algemeiner.com/2022/02/16/ukrainian-parliament-approves-tough-legal-penalties-for-antisemitic-incitement/>.

<sup>20</sup> "NSW Legislative Council Adopts IHRA Definition," *The Australian Jewish News*, March 24, 2022, <https://www.australianjewishnews.com/nsw-legislative-council-adopts-ihra-definition/>.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Kelsall, "Upper House Recognizes Antisemitism Definition," *Indaily*, July 8, 2022, <https://indaily.com.au/news/politics/2022/07/08/upper-house-recognises-antisemitism-definition/>.

up to A\$22,000 in Victoria and A\$11,000 in NSW; in NSW, an offender can be jailed and fined, and a corporation displaying Nazi symbols will be fined A\$55,000.<sup>22</sup>

Queensland and Tasmania introduced similar legislation to ban Nazi symbols.<sup>23</sup> The passage of the laws also served as an example of interfaith cooperation as the Jewish community worked with the Hindu community on the laws to ensure they provided protections for the religious freedom of Hindus (as well as Buddhists and Jains) to display the swastika for religious and spiritual reasons.

## Policy Recommendations

1. **Education and Training on Antisemitism.** With the growing adoption of the IHRA definition by national and local governments and its promotion as a tool to guide law enforcement investigations, education and training on identifying antisemitism, hate speech, and symbols are crucial. Relevant training programs for law enforcement and legal professionals should be advanced by local Jewish organizations working in cooperation with other NGOs and academics to allow them to identify and prosecute antisemitic crimes effectively.
2. **Promote coordination and cooperation.** Governments and intergovernmental organizations committed to fighting antisemitism should create a forum and platform to confront online antisemitism and other forms of hate speech. There is a need to recognize the transnational nature of hate speech and help countries develop approaches in line with their respective legal traditions and respectful of free speech.

– Adv. Talia Naamat & Dr. Carl Yonker

<sup>22</sup> “Swastika: Victoria Bans Display of Nazi Symbol in Australian First,” BBC News, June 22, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-61890577>, and Carly Douglas, “NSW Has Officially Banned Public Displays of Nazi Swastika,” *News.com.au*, August 11, 2022, <https://www.news.com.au/national/nsw-act/politics/nsw-one-step-closer-to-banning-public-displays-of-nazi-swastika/news-story/7cafeab2d29c057bb471ed99a411f360>.

<sup>23</sup> “Australian State Begins Legislating to Ban the Swastika,” *AP News*, August 9, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/sydney-australia-queensland-victoria-new-south-wales-c39f30eaba0ed8b86d3bc29ee42063d8>.





## AROUND THE WORLD: INITIATIVES BY GOVERNMENTS

A consensus is emerging among governments and intergovernmental organizations regarding the urgency of confronting antisemitism and the best practices to fight its manifestations, preserve the memory of the Holocaust, and conserve and develop Jewish heritage. The approaches adopted by the countries and intergovernmental organizations discussed below embrace holistic or multifaceted strategies. These emphasize the centrality of education and training and seek to resolve problems regarding the reporting and recording of antisemitic incidents.

At the core of the emerging consensus sits the understanding that antisemitism is a human rights issue and its manifestations threaten the democratic essence of societies and states.

Several countries and intergovernmental organizations have developed and published detailed action plans, moving beyond identifying antisemitism as a challenge and shortcomings in the fight against it to actively implementing programs and policies. Stressing the foundational importance of the IHRA Working Definition, intergovernmental bodies like the United Nations and the Organization of American States have urged the IHRA Definition's use in the training of educators, law enforcement, and government officials, and sought to provide guidance on how to do so.

Initiatives have not only focused on fighting manifestations of antisemitism but on Holocaust remembrance and preserving Jewish heritages and enriching them. National and local governments have initiated restoration projects for Jewish cemeteries and synagogues to preserve and revive the history of local Jewish communities.

### United Nations (UN)

In May 2022, Ahmed Shaheed, the United Nation's special rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, published an action plan to combat antisemitism,<sup>1</sup> identifying antisemitism as a “pressing and enduring challenge” that should be confronted urgently by governments, civil society, and the UN.

The eight-point plan, which builds on the special rapporteur's special report on antisemitism published in 2019, identifies problem areas, including a widespread lack of awareness in some countries on what antisemitism is, which in turn affects how law and judicial officials understand and respond to antisemitic incidents.

The vast underreporting of antisemitic incidents across Europe was also emphasized as a central problem, leading to a “gross underestimate” of the problem of antisemitism. The plan calls upon governments to employ special envoys to combat antisemitism and urges the use

<sup>1</sup> “Taking Action to Combat Antisemitism – Follow-up Action Plan,” UN Human Rights, May 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/ActionPlanChanges-May2022.pdf>.

of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, including for Holocaust education and training educators on what antisemitism is.

The action plan also outlines calls for the United Nations as an international organization to focus on combating antisemitism as a human rights concern. This approach has been sorely lacking for decades within UN institutions.

## The Americas

**Organization of American States (OAS).** In July, the OAS, in cooperation with the American Jewish Committee (AJC), co-published a Spanish-language handbook entitled “Handbook for the Practical Use of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.” Based on the 2021 European Commission publication of the same name, the publication provides guidance and examples of how the working definition is used to combat antisemitism by governments, law enforcement, and educational institutions.<sup>2</sup> The OAS, under the secretariat of Luis Almagro, adopted the IHRA Working Definition in 2019 and has since urged the 35 members of the organization to follow suit.<sup>3</sup>

**The United States.** At the end of March, following an eight-month delay, the United States Senate confirmed Deborah Lipstadt as the first special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism with the rank of ambassador.

Professor Lipstadt, a historian of modern Jewish history and Holocaust studies at Emory University, fills a position that has existed since 2004, but is the first to serve as an ambassador.<sup>4</sup> The elevated status signaled the seriousness and importance of combating antisemitism in the eyes of the Biden administration. However, the ambassador is only empowered to address antisemitism abroad.

In the summer, Lipstadt traveled to Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates on her first international trip since being appointed, where she met with senior government officials and civil society figures to promote religious tolerance and combat anti-Jewish hate.<sup>5</sup>

**Canada.** For five straight years, antisemitism has been Toronto’s most reported hate crime.<sup>6</sup> In response, the city of Toronto launched a new public education campaign to raise awareness about antisemitism and remind the citizens of Toronto that antisemitism is not “old news,” but an unfortunate part of the present. The “Toronto For All Campaign” calls on local citizens to act and eliminate antisemitism by becoming educated about the Jewish community and

<sup>2</sup> OED and AJC, “Manual de Uso de la Definición Práctica de Antisemitismo del IHRA,” July 28, 2022, <https://www.ajc.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2022-05/Manual-de-la-Definicion-Practica-de-la-IHRA.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Luis Almagro, “Definition of Antisemitism,” OAS Memorandum OSG/183/19, June 7, 2019, <https://www.oas.org/legal/english/Directives/SG060719.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Yonat Shimron, “US Senate Confirms Deborah Lipstadt as Antisemitism Monitor,” *The Washington Post*, March 31, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2022/03/31/lipstadt-senate-confirmation/>.

<sup>5</sup> Office of the Spokesperson, “Special Envoy Lipstadt Travels to Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates,” *US Department of State*, June 23, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/special-envoy-lipstadt-travel-to-saudi-arabia-israel-and-the-united-arab-emirates/>.

<sup>6</sup> Toronto Police Service, “2021 Annual Hate Crime Statistics,” [https://www.tps.ca/media/filer\\_public/c7/66/c766e428-2c6e-4fa3-ac3c-c7803305a12b/ce29b977-b584-406a-b09f-8e036d3c477e.pdf](https://www.tps.ca/media/filer_public/c7/66/c766e428-2c6e-4fa3-ac3c-c7803305a12b/ce29b977-b584-406a-b09f-8e036d3c477e.pdf).

antisemitism, making their voices heard when they witness acts of bias and hate, offering support to victims, reporting hate crimes, and creating inclusive spaces.

To do so, the campaign provides explanations and examples of manifestations of hate, discrimination, bias, and violence against Jews, while also offering concrete examples of how one can be an ally of the Jewish community through self-education, reporting crimes, supporting victims, and being proactive about being inclusive and raising awareness. The public education campaign is the twelfth one conducted by the city. Previous campaigns focused on eradicating discrimination and racism against other groups like Asians, blacks, and Muslims.<sup>7</sup>

## Europe

**European Union (EU).** Under France’s presidency, in March 2022, the European Council (EC), the body that sets the political priorities of the EU, declared it would treat antisemitism separately from other types of racism.

In line with its prioritization of fighting antisemitism, the EC will target manifestations of online antisemitism by urging social media companies to improve monitoring and removal of antisemitic content, promote the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and improve security around Jewish institutions.<sup>8</sup>

Citing the “alarming rise in racist and antisemitic incidents in EU member states,” the EC called on EU member states to use and endorse the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. It also called to develop action plans to implement the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism, emphasizing the importance of education and training, removing online hate speech, and encouraging people to report racist and antisemitic incidents.

In October 2022, the European Commission marked the first anniversary of the “European Union Strategy on Combatting Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030),” its first comprehensive plan to fight antisemitism and ensure Jewish life in Europe published last year.

Among the actions it took the past year to combat antisemitism are: (a) “The Better Internet for Kids” strategy adopted in May, which includes a clear reference to combating antisemitism on the internet<sup>9</sup>; (b) the signing of the Vienna Declaration by 11 EU member states and several international organizations which committed to developing a common, standard methodology for recording antisemitic incidents<sup>10</sup>; and (c) launching a project to protect Jewish cemeteries in Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic that builds

<sup>7</sup> City of Toronto, “Confronting Antisemitism,” <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/get-involved/community/toronto-for-all/confronting-antisemitism/>.

<sup>8</sup> Zvika Klein, “European Council Adopts Its Conclusions on Racism, Antisemitism,” *The Jerusalem Post*, March 4, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-699363>.

<sup>9</sup> European Commission, “A Digital Decade for Children and Youth: The New European Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids,” May 11, 2022, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:212:FIN>.

<sup>10</sup> European Commission, “Making Antisemitism Visible: Towards a Common Methodology to Record Antisemitic Incidents in the EU,” Newsletter no. 31, June 3, 2022, <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/newsletter-archives/39222>.

on the recent work of the European Parliament, which oversaw two cemetery restoration pilots that advanced contacts between groups seeking to preserve Jewish cemeteries.<sup>11</sup>

**The Netherlands.** The country's National Coordinator to Combat Antisemitism (NACB), Eddo Verdoner, published his action plan to fight rising antisemitism in the Netherlands based on a three-pillar approach: "monitor and follow up," "education and prevention," and "commemorate and celebrate."

Recognizing that antisemitism poses a broader threat to the democratic nature of the state itself, the action plan prioritizes finding mechanisms to make it easier to punish manifestations of online antisemitism, takes a tougher approach to manifestations of antisemitism in football stadiums, and develops plans for promoting Jewish life.<sup>12</sup>

**Austria.** In January, Austria presented its first annual implementation report to parliament detailing actions undertaken to advance the country's National Strategy to prevent and combat all forms of antisemitism.

Adopting a holistic approach, the initiatives undertaken by Austria aim to safeguard Jewish life in the country and ensure the Jewish community's future. Among its successful initiatives were the adoption of the IHRA Working Definition by the Austrian Football Association and Bundesliga, the holding of educational and training seminars on antisemitism for police officers, and initiating and advancing the adoption of a declaration against antisemitism by the UN Human Rights Council.<sup>13</sup>

**Romania.** In December 2021, the Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania (INSHR-EW) launched the project "Stories from the Holocaust. Local histories." The project aims to help and encourage Romanians to rediscover and deepen their knowledge of the history of their communities from a different perspective – through the lived experiences of Jews and Roma who were persecuted, deported, or exterminated during the Holocaust.<sup>14</sup>

To do so, for the past year, the INSHR-EW has organized street exhibitions of graphic novel panels featuring the life stories of Jews and Roma from Suceava, Bacău, Vrancea, Galați, Argeș, and Dolj sent to forced labor, deported to Transnistria, and excluded from the country's economic, social, and cultural life.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> European Commission, "The EU Strategy on Combatting Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030) – One Year in Action," October 6, 2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/eu\\_strategy\\_on\\_combating\\_antisemitism\\_and\\_fostering\\_jewish\\_life\\_-\\_one\\_year\\_in\\_action\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/eu_strategy_on_combating_antisemitism_and_fostering_jewish_life_-_one_year_in_action_0.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Aron Vrieler, "National Coordinator's Action Plan: A Positive Starting Point for Tightening Policy against Antisemitism [Dutch]," *CIDI*, October 6, 2022, <https://www.cidi.nl/actieplan-nationaal-coordinator-positief-uitgangspunt-voor-aanscherping-beleid-tegen-antisemitisme/>, and NACB, "Antisemitism Work Plan 2022-2025," October 6, 2022, <https://www.antisemitismebestrijding.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/10/6/publicatie-werkplan-ncab>.

<sup>13</sup> "Implementation Report 2021 – Austria's National Strategy against Antisemitism," Republic of Austria, January 2022, 11-12.

<sup>14</sup> "Stories from the Holocaust. Local Histories," INSHR-EW, December 2021, <https://www.inshr-ew.ro/en/portfolio-item/stories-from-the-holocaust-local-histories/>.

<sup>15</sup> "Graphic Novel Exhibition in Pitesti: Stories from the Holocaust. Local Histories," INSHR-EW, October 10, 2022, <https://www.inshr-ew.ro/en/graphic-novel-exhibition-pitesti/>.

**Bulgaria.** In recent years, the Bulgarian government and local authorities have demonstrated increased awareness of Holocaust remembrance and the preservation of Jewish heritage. In November, the Bulgarian foreign ministry organized an international conference on combating antisemitism and preserving Jewish heritage, in which the efficacy of different programs and initiatives was examined.

The Sofia municipality continues working on eliminating antisemitic signs from the public sphere, although some in the Jewish community argue its efforts are not sufficient.

For more than a year, the municipality of Vidin, the Bulgarian port city on the southern bank of the Danube River, has been toiling to restore its central synagogue, known as “The White Swan on the Danube.” It is the second-largest synagogue in the country. The restoration project aims to turn the 19<sup>th</sup>-century synagogue into a cultural and community center for Jews and non-Jews that will preserve not only the community’s Jewish history but the town’s, and inject life into the dwindling local community.<sup>16</sup>

## Policy Recommendations

1. **Promote Common Methodology.** Adopting the Vienna Declaration is an important step, albeit not actualized yet, toward standardizing a methodology for recording antisemitic incidents. Doing so will make data on antisemitic incidents comparable between countries, which is currently impossible. The European Commission should work to expand the declaration’s adoption by other EU member states and invite countries outside of Europe to join and participate in developing a common methodology.
2. **Promote National Action Plans.** The experiences of Austria and the Netherlands should encourage the development of holistic national action plans to fight antisemitism, preserve the memory of the Holocaust, and promote Jewish life. The two can provide resources and guides for other countries in developing their own, locally-centered approaches.
3. **Deepen Engagement and Support in New Countries.** The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Diaspora Affairs should deepen engagement and support for countries that have recently begun restoring, preserving, and advancing Jewish heritage. Engagement and support can take many forms, from financially supporting restoration projects of cemeteries, synagogues, and old Jewish quarters to working with local governments to develop educational programs and curricula to teach local Jewish history and the Holocaust.

**- Dr. Carl Yonker & Adv. Talia Naamat**

<sup>16</sup> Jonah Goldman Kay, “A Dilapidated Bulgarian Synagogue Will Become a Cultural Center – and Lifeline for a Dwindling Community,” *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, August 6, 2021, <https://www.jta.org/2021/08/06/global/a-dilapidated-bulgarian-synagogue-will-become-a-cultural-center-and-lifeline-for-a-dwindling-community>.



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