

January 24, 2023

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

Response to Increase in Antisemitic Incidents

Jewish communities in Los Angeles, the United States, and around the world have long endured many types of antisemitism. According to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), antisemitism is defined as a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions, and religious facilities. Unfortunately, over the last several years antisemitism has been on the rise, including many high-profile incidents.

Each year, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Center on Extremism tracks incidents of antisemitic harassment, vandalism, and assault in the United States. In 2021, the ADL tabulated 2,717 antisemitic incidents throughout the United States. This was a 34% increase from the 2,026 incidents in 2020 and the highest number on record since the ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979. Of the 2,717 incidents in 2021, 1,776 were cases of harassment, a 43% increase from 2020, and 853 incidents were cases of vandalism, a 14% increase from 2020. There were also 88 incidents of antisemitic assault, a 167% increase from 2020. Of the 2021 antisemitic incidents, 525 occurred at Jewish institutions such as synagogues, Jewish community centers, and Jewish schools, an increase of 61% from 2020. The number of

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incidents reported by the ADL likely represents only a portion of the antisemitic attacks that occur each year. However, the data shows very troubling trends, particularly the increase in the number of overall incidents and violent attacks.

Los Angeles County saw similar troubling increases in incidences of hate in 2021. According to the County's Commission on Human Relations, religious crimes spiked by 29% in 2021 and the rate of violence was the highest on record. Notably, 74% of those attacks targeted Jewish individuals. For the first time in the Commission's tracking of hate incidents, antisemitic hate crime was the top target in middle-east related hate crimes. In the past, such crimes were primarily anti-Muslim/Middle Eastern, but, in 2021 all of these crimes were anti-Jewish. The total of 81 recorded anti-Jewish hate crimes in 2021 was 7% higher than the number recorded in 2020.

Across American culture, politics, and even business, expressions of antisemitism have grown louder in recent years. Recently, there have been several incidents of high-profile individuals making extreme antisemitic comments, which have led to additional incidents and has unfortunately normalized the behavior in some individuals' minds. There has also been a rise in white-supremacist and right-wing extremist groups which have targeted the Jewish community. At times these groups have been promoted by politicians and other high-profile individuals, which has advanced the hate speech and sought to normalize it. In 2021, the ADL recorded 484 antisemitic incidents attributed to known right-wing extremist groups or individuals inspired by right-wing extremist ideology, which was a 52% increase from 2020, and represented 18% of all

incidents.

In addition to tracking antisemitic incidents, ADL has also measured antisemitic attitudes among Americans since the early 1960's. From September through October 2022, ADL surveyed more than 4,000 individuals regarding antisemitic attitudes. The results of this survey showed several concerning trends. Specifically, 85% of Americans believe at least one anti-Jewish trope, as opposed to 61% in 2019, and 20% of Americans believe six or more tropes, which has nearly doubled since 2019 when the rate was 11%. These percentages are the highest in decades. Additionally, many Americans believe in Israel-oriented antisemitic positions, including 18% who are uncomfortable spending time with a person who supports Israel. This data shows that not only are antisemitic incidents increasing, but American's attitudes are also becoming more antisemitic.

Over the last several years there have also been a number of high-profile antisemitic incidents in Los Angeles County, including the display of antisemitic messages on a 405-freeway overpass in October; vehicles with antisemitic messages; harassment of individuals in public; and numerous incidents of antisemitic flyers being found at homes, on cars, and in public. Many of these antisemitic flyers included propaganda-style hate speech related to the COVID-19 pandemic and Jewish people. Flyers have been found in many locations, including recently in the Fairfax District, Beverly Hills, Pasadena, Manhattan Beach, and West Hollywood. There have also been a number of violent antisemitic attacks, including mass shootings at synagogues and unprovoked attacks in public. For example, in September 2021, two men emerged from a vehicle

and attacked several Jewish men who were dining outside a restaurant in Los Angeles. The two men were charged with assault with a hate crime enhancement for attacking the victims because of their religion.

All antisemitic attacks are disturbing, and the recent increase in incidents is even more disturbing. The County's Commission on Human Relations has taken intentional steps against acts of hate, including posting counter messages at the 405-freeway overpass in October. But, the Jewish community should not be forced to endure antisemitism in the first instances, including continual harassment, physical violence, and disturbing incidents at important community institutions, such as synagogues, schools, and community centers. At a time of heightened aggression towards the Jewish community we must work with the community to take steps to reduce and ultimately eliminate antisemitism. In partnership with law enforcement, we must also take immediate steps to protect the Jewish community from these continued threats.

As we approach Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, 2023, this motion requests that the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department provide a report back to the Board of Supervisors on the number of antisemitic incidents that have been reported to the Department over the last five years, as well as any trends being shown by the data. This motion also requests that the Sheriff's Department provide a report to the Board of Supervisors on the actions it is taking in response to the rise in antisemitic incidents and additional efforts the Department plans to take to protect the Jewish community.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Request that the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department provide a report back to the Board of Supervisors in 30 days with the number of antisemitic incidents that have occurred over the last five years, including any trends or data available regarding the incidents.
2. Additionally, request that the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, in consultation with the Los Angeles Commission on Human Relations, the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee, and any other relevant partners, provide a report back to the Board of Supervisors in 30 days detailing the measures the Department has taken in response to the increase in antisemitic incidents and additional measures the Department can take in order to ensure the safety of Jewish community members in the County.

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