



Jewish Community
Relations Council
MILWAUKEE
JEWISH FEDERATION



Nathan & Esther Pelz
Holocaust Education
Resource Center
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JEWISH FEDERATION

Statement on Recent Increase in Anti-Semitic Incidents

August 4, 2014

The Jewish Community Relations Council and the Nathan & Esther Peltz Holocaust Education Resource Center of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation express grave concern about the recent dramatic uptick in anti-Semitic incidents.

We are disheartened and outraged that mobs in Europe are screaming slogans such as "Death to Jews" and "Jews to the gas," synagogues and Jewish institutions are being vandalized and firebombed. Trending hashtags on social media include #HitlerWasRight. Across the globe, protests about the war between Israel and Hamas have devolved into riots and served as a platform for vitriolic, hateful attacks on Jews, individually and as a community.

While it may be tempting to consider this a European problem, Jewish communities across the United States, including ours, are also experiencing threats, vandalism, intimidation, and a shocking increase in anti-Semitic expression.

Here in Milwaukee, we note a sharp increase of hateful messages, including intimidation and hateful name-calling at protests and in social media. Those messages include: Placards at pro-Palestine rallies featuring Stars of David with red lines drawn through them; cheers of "Hey Yid, go home" and comparisons between Jews and Nazis; exchanges on social media include classic anti-Semitic canards about greedy Jews and Jewish control of the media.

One of the most powerful lessons of the Holocaust is that a blend of hatred, violence and scapegoating is dreadfully destructive and self-destructive; in Europe, it took the lives of millions of innocent human beings and left an entire continent in ruin.

As bearers of this lesson, we are heartened by the many European leaders who have spoken out against anti-Semitism. As French ministers Laurent Fabius and Bernard Cazeneuve wrote in an opinion article in the New York Times, "[A]nti-Semitism is our common enemy. It is an existential threat to all of us, because it is in complete contradiction of our shared values."

We call on all people of goodwill to stand firm against anti-Jewish hatred, bigotry and discrimination. Let us together take action to ensure that our communities are safe for all people.