

Resolution PA 2105 - 4

Antisemitism in the time of the COVID-19 Pandemic

THE 16th PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS,

REAFFIRMS its previous resolutions on combating antisemitism, including 1409gb-4, Fighting Antisemitism in Europe, PA 170424 -7, Combating Cyber Hate, GB 1811 - 1, Recognition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism, EC 1910 - 2, Special Envoys and Coordinators Combating Antisemitism;

DEEPLY LAMENTS the catastrophic effect the COVID-19 pandemic has had worldwide and mourns the tragic loss of life, commiserates with all affected by this terrible illness, and deplores the economic devastation it has brought about;

APPLAUDS the strength and resilience Jewish communities around the world have demonstrated in dealing with COVID-19, including establishing measures to worship safely, implementing innovative programs to respond to the crisis and joining in support of one another, especially the most vulnerable members of their communities, embodying the spirit of *Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*;

CONDEMNS the targeting of Jews and other minorities, in particular Asians and individuals of Asian descent, as responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic in many parts of the world;

FURTHER CONDEMNS the targeting of Jews as convenient scapegoats in an alarming revisiting of other periods throughout history when Jews were blamed during times of crisis, including, for example, for poisoning wells and causing the bubonic plague;

DEPLORES the fact that despite this pandemic's universal effect, disinformation, antisemitic hate speech and conspiracy myths are increasingly being disseminated, both on- and offline;

EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN that today's technology allows for instant dissemination of hate speech, disinformation and conspiracy myths on a much larger scale than ever before, enabling the authors of such falsehoods and vile rhetoric to spread lies and incite hatred too often resulting in violent attacks on minority groups, including not only Jews, but other groups such as refugees, Muslims and those of Asian descent, undermining the strength of our democracies;

WELCOMES the strong condemnation of the rise of antisemitism and hate speech during the COVID-19 pandemic by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, other UN officials, and world leaders;

CALLS UPON governments to take all necessary measures to modify existing educational curricula at all levels in order that educational systems foster critical thinking, digital literacy, democratic citizenship education, as well as education about the Holocaust and other genocides as a way to build high levels of empathy

towards the “other” while using fact-based knowledge to reduce the impact and reach of disinformation and conspiracy myths;

URGES continued efforts to ensure that strong legislation is in place against hate speech and antisemitism, including Holocaust denial, with a focus on ensuring that content communicated via the internet and on social media is monitored and effectively moderated through such legislation and public policies;

CALLS UPON communication, internet, social media, and e-commerce companies to ensure that:

- their community standards and policies properly address the eradication of all manifestations of online antisemitism, and that their enforcement processes are swift, comprehensive and effective;
- promoters of antisemitism and other race or religious hatred do not benefit from the use of their platforms;
- their platforms are used as educational tools in the fight against hate speech, antisemitism and Holocaust denial.

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Approved by the 16th WJC Plenary Assembly, 25 May 2021