In August 1936, 250 leaders representing Jewish communities in 30 countries met in Geneva for the first World Jewish Congress plenary assembly to unite in the face of mounting threats posed by Hitler and his Nazi government. Since then, the WJC has regularly held such gatherings around the world.

In August 1942, the WJC was the first organization to sound the alarm and alert the world to the Nazi plan to annihilate European Jewry.
The WJC is the most influential global advocacy body for Jewish communities worldwide and the State of Israel. With offices in New York, Washington DC, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Geneva, Vilnius, Zagreb and Jerusalem, we continue to expand our diplomatic credentials, meeting with international leaders in their parliaments and offices. Firm in our convictions, we bring to the fore issues of utmost importance to the Jewish people, including rising anti-Semitism, terrorism and other global threats, and the treatment of Israel in world bodies.
The World Jewish Congress marked its milestone 80th anniversary in 2016. Founded to mobilize world Jewry to the growing dangers of Nazi Germany, WJC’s warning pleas were met with silence and indifference. What resulted was the largest organized mass murder in human history.

Eighty years later, Jews are once again the targets of anti-Semitic violence and intimidation in their communities, on college campuses and across social media platforms. Extreme far right and far left political parties make gains in European elections. In Israel, Jews face deadly waves of terror, an emboldened Iran that openly brags about its destruction and a biased campaign of defamation, demonization and delegitimization at the United Nations and its bodies.

Over these past eight decades, the World Jewish Congress has gone from being a quiet organization with a famous name to the most important, pro-active and far-reaching Jewish organization in the world, recognized as the voice and diplomatic arm of world Jewry. That is why presidents, prime ministers, even popes, open their doors for the World Jewish Congress.

And we tell every world leader the same thing: Work with us to ensure that the Jews in your country are safe and free. And do not side with those who would harm them.

The Jewish people continue to face serious threats. And although we come from many diverse places with unique stories and different languages, one thing remains constant: We are one people, standing with pride. And we take care of each other. This is our greatest strength.

As you will read in the following pages, WJC is looking to the future and has undertaken some of the most pioneering and exciting programs, projects and initiatives on behalf of Israel and our global Jewish communities. Most gratifying, we are engaging, educating and training the next generation of Jewish leaders to carry on WJC’s essential work.

I have done many things in my life, but there is no accomplishment, no title, no honor that I am more proud of than being president of the World Jewish Congress.

When I look back on WJC’s history and consider where we have been, what we have seen and where we are today, I believe we have reasons to be optimistic.

Please stand with us. We are working to build a brighter tomorrow for all Jews everywhere.

From WJC President
Ronald S. Lauder
The World Jewish Congress has been a foundation for Jewish strength and unity for eight decades. Today, this organization is the preeminent global advocacy body for the Jewish people and the gold standard for success. We believe in the power of “together” to shape better futures for everyone. Even as the world is becoming more complex, with our Jewish communities continually tested by a rise in anti-Semitism, physical insecurity and the ongoing delegitimization of Israel by international bodies—we stand united.

Through commanding diplomacy, advocacy and activism, in cooperation with our member communities in nearly 100 countries on six continents, our Regional Affiliates—Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, European Jewish Congress, Latin American Jewish Congress, WJC Israel, WJC North America—and our international partners, the World Jewish Congress works tirelessly to protect and defend the Jewish people. In the international halls of power; at the United Nations; with political, religious and ethnic allies and through traditional and social media, we safeguard, strengthen and support every Jewish community—no matter how large or how small. And we also speak out for Israel at every turn.

Despite an unpredictable and tumultuous landscape, we should not forget that Jews today have much to be proud of. Our communities around the world are thriving and living a vibrant Jewish life, proud of their culture and their identity. And the State of Israel is strong and among the most developed and advanced countries of the world, at the forefront of some of the greatest innovations in technology, academia and defense.

As we look ahead, there will undoubtedly be further tests and trials. But history has taught us that hardship and suffering do not define our people. Strength and hope do. And this charges the exceptional staff and dedicated lay leadership of the World Jewish Congress with a special responsibility to speak out whenever we witness anti-Semitism, to oppose hatred in all its forms and to protect one another.

Together, we must never be silent. Together, we must never be indifferent. Together, we must always remember. Together, we will achieve our goals.
Babi Yar 75th anniversary commemoration
Photo: Shahar Azran
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**SELECT HIGHLIGHTS OF WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS ACHIEVEMENTS & ACTIVITIES**

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- **11**th Plenary Assembly in New York brings together more than 600 representatives of Jewish communities in over 50 countries to hear from world leaders and discuss issues of global and regional concern.
- Diplomatic meetings with 60 delegations in conjunction with the opening of the United Nations General Assembly, as well as the heads of other UN bodies, advance WJC’s agenda.
- Major UN event seeks recognition of Jews from Arab lands.
- Babi Yar 75th Anniversary Commemoration.
- Social media reach across all platforms tops 85 million viewers.
- International Center for the Study of Yiddish and European Jewish Culture attracts nearly 6,000 participants.

- Establishment of Global Jewish Security Department to help Jewish communities protect and defend their citizens and institutions from the terrorist threat.
- Global humanitarian campaign reaches out on behalf of the families of fallen IDF soldiers.
- Major UN event seeks recognition of Jews from Arab lands.
- #WeRemember International Holocaust Remembrance Campaign reaches 100 million people.
- Release of groundbreaking report: “The Rise of Anti-Semitism on Social Media.”

- Special Plenary Assembly in Buenos Aires unites more than 400 Jewish leaders from nearly 70 countries to commemorate the terrorist attacks against the Israeli Embassy and the AMIA Jewish community center.
- Establishment of Counter Delegitimization Unit to confront the anti-Semitic Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel.
- The WJC Jewish Diplomatic Corps (JDCorps) grows to over 200 members from 43 countries.
- George Shultz, Joe Biden, General Colin Powell, Kirk Douglas and George Stevens honored at annual Theodor Herzl Award Galas.

- Publication of *The World Jewish Congress, 1936–2016* chronicling the challenges, achievements and vision of the organization on the occasion of its 80th anniversary.
- #WeRemember International Holocaust Remembrance Campaign reaches 100 million people.
- 15th Plenary Assembly in New York brings together more than 600 representatives of Jewish communities in over 90 countries to hear from world leaders and discuss issues of global and regional concern.
- 16th Plenary Assembly in Buenos Aires unites more than 400 Jewish leaders from nearly 70 countries to commemorate the terrorist attacks against the Israeli Embassy and the AMIA Jewish community center.
- Establishment of Global Jewish Security Department to help Jewish communities protect and defend their citizens and institutions from the terrorist threat.
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Celebrating the 80th anniversary of the World Jewish Congress, more than 600 representatives of Jewish communities in over 90 countries gathered in New York in April 2017 for the organization’s 15th Plenary Assembly, the supreme decision-making body of the organization. It was the first time this meeting was held in the United States.

Ronald S. Lauder was unanimously re-elected for a third term as World Jewish Congress President. David de Rothschild, Governing Board Chair; Chella Safra, Treasurer; Moshe Kantor, WJC Policy Council Chair, and Robert Goot, WJC Policy Council Co-Chair, were also re-elected to their respective positions.

In a video message on Yom HaShoah, the Jewish community’s Day of Holocaust Remembrance, U.S. President Donald J. Trump heralded “the unbreakable spirit of the Jewish people,” adding: “In the memory of those who were lost, we renew our commitment and our determination not to disregard the warnings of our own time. We must stamp out prejudice and anti-Semitism everywhere it is found. We must defeat terrorism, and we must not ignore the threats of a regime that talks openly of Israel’s destruction. To all of you who have come from around the world, let it be known that America stands strong with the State of Israel.”

Marking the first time a UN Secretary General has spoken before an international gathering of Jewish leaders, António Guterres delivered the keynote address at the opening WJC Plenary Dinner. “You can be absolutely sure I will be in the front line in the struggle against anti-Semitism.” He added: “Israel needs to be treated like any other UN member state. [Israel] has the undeniable right to exist and to find peace and security in relations with all its neighbors, allowing the Jewish people to live and enjoy all the benefits and enormous creativity that its people have been able to show in so many areas of human activity.”

“The modern form of anti-Semitism is the denial of the existence of the State of Israel.”

UN Secretary General António Guterres
"As long as I’m America’s representative at the UN, I am going to stand for human rights and I am going to stand for the truth. And that means I am going to stand for Israel."

Nikki Haley, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations

Speaking of the UNESCO Executive Board decision to refer to the Western Wall solely by its Muslim name, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova pledged to defend the rightful links of all three monotheistic religions to Jerusalem: "The Al Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram al-Sharif, the sacred shrine of the Muslims, is also Har Habayit—or Temple Mount—the holiest place in Judaism whose Western Wall is revered by millions across the world, a few steps away from the Saint Sepulchre and the Mount of Olives holy to the Christians. The outstanding universal value of Jerusalem, and the reason it was inscribed on the World Heritage list, lies in this synthesis, which is an appeal for dialogue, not confrontation."

Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland thanked the WJC for its friendship and strong statement condemning the January 2017 murder of Muslim worshippers in Quebec City, adding: “I’m very sad to say that Jewish people are the most likely religious group in Canada to be targeted for hate crimes—27 percent—despite the fact that the Jewish population is less than one percent of the Canadian population. This is totally unacceptable. The government of Canada is committed to ensuring the safety and security of Canada’s Jewish community.”

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Featured panelists, members of the International Council of Jewish Parliamentarians, addressed the current issues and challenges facing Jewish legislators who have chosen public service.

L to R: Gillian Merron, Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and former U.K Member of Parliament; the Hon. Eliot Engel (D-NY), Chair, International Council of Jewish Parliamentarians; Ranking Member of the U.S. House Foreign Relations Committee, U.S. House of Representatives; the Hon. Nita Lowey (D-NY), U.S. House of Representatives; the Hon. Waldo Wolff, National Chamber of Deputies of Argentina; and the Hon. Lee Zeldin (R-NY), U.S. House of Representatives

The World Jewish Congress, 1936–2016 chronicles the dramatic, diplomatic efforts and historic achievements of this preeminent organization, including: the WJC’s rescue efforts during the Holocaust; its pioneering role in crafting groundbreaking Jewish-Catholic dialogue; its assistance to the prosecutors at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg; its diplomatic negotiations that enabled Jews from Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria to emigrate to Israel, France and elsewhere during the 1950s and 1960s; its exposure of Kurt Waldheim’s Nazi past; its leadership in achieving reparations by Swiss banks of more than one billion dollars to Jewish Holocaust victims and their heirs; its critical hand in fighting the UN’s odious resolution equating Zionism with racism; its efforts to preserve the historical integrity of the Auschwitz death camp; its work on behalf of Soviet Jewry; its attitude toward Jews living in post-Holocaust Germany; and its call for justice in the Buenos Aires terrorist attacks.

“We in Israel believe we have no better friend than the World Jewish Congress.”

Danny Danon, Jewish Ambassador to the United Nations

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The World Jewish Congress works tirelessly—
with the EU and its member states, at the United Nations and with the U.S. Administration—to monitor, expose and combat global anti-Semitism in all its insidious forms.

WJC Global Jewish Security Department

Sadly, many Jewish communities fear for their physical security. In October 2015, following a renewed outbreak of violent anti-Semitism, the WJC established its Global Jewish Security Department, staffed by an international team of experts, to assess the threat to individual Jewish communities, enhance the physical infrastructure of communal institutions and train local volunteers to organize and respond effectively to crises.

Since its founding, the WJC’s Security Department has made important advances in dozens of Jewish communities around the world.

The WJC gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the David Berg Foundation in support of this program.

In coordination with the European Jewish Congress’ Security Crisis Centre (SACC World), the WJC’s Global Jewish Security Department undertakes these coordinated activities:

- Security audits of Jewish centers and assistance with defensive infrastructure reinforcement
- Advocating with governments for support and information sharing
- Training communities in crisis management response efforts
- Creation of a tailored global emergency notification app
- Close cooperation with local community volunteers, intelligence and police forces

WJC Special Plenary Assembly

At the largest summit of international Jewish leaders in Latin America in recent decades, more than 400 leaders from nearly 70 countries joined the World Jewish Congress for its special Plenary Assembly in Buenos Aires to hear from Argentine President Mauricio Macri and to commemorate the terrorist attacks against the Israeli Embassy in 1992 and the AMIA Jewish center in 1994. The WJC continues to call for justice for the victims of terror and has urged the Argentine government to vigorously investigate the untimely death of Argentine special prosecutor Alberto Nisman, chief investigator of the AMIA bombing.

Global Forum Combating Anti-Semitism in Latin America

The Latin American Jewish Congress (LAJC), a regional branch of the World Jewish Congress, co-hosted this inaugural event, coinciding with the 22nd anniversary of the deadly bombing of the AMIA Jewish center. Held in conjunction with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Hispanic Leadership Coalition-Israel, more than 250 participants from 17 countries, including a large youth group from Argentina, came together to assess the impact of anti-Semitism and formulate effective societal and governmental responses including education, internet and media, legislation and interfaith dialogue.

“Argentina is back in the world and stands ready to join in all battles for human rights, and against terrorism.”

Argentine President Mauricio Macri
The so-called Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign seeks to undermine the existence of the Jewish State of Israel. It opposes a two-state solution, opposes peace and opposes coexistence.

The World Jewish Congress North America has avidly supported and advocated for the passage of anti-BDS legislation in the United States, both federal and local, such as the Combating BDS Act of 2016 (S.2531) and the Israel Anti-Boycott Act of 2017 (S.720)

WJC Counter Delegitimization Unit
To combat the delegitimization of Israel at international bodies, the WJC created a dedicated department, established in 2016, to confront BDS head on—online, on college campuses, in corporations and at international bodies. Through student empowerment, advocacy and diplomatic engagement, the WJC has placed itself at the forefront of the fight against the delegitimization of Israel.

Ambassadors Against BDS Summit
The World Jewish Congress and Israel’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations hosted more than 3,500 students, dignitaries, public officials and NGO representatives in the iconic hall of the UN General Assembly for its second Ambassadors Against BDS Summit. The summit provides the next generation of leaders with the necessary tools to fight anti-Israel and anti-Semitic sentiments.

Digital Ambassador Club
This new WJC initiative offers a unique global communications platform to galvanize and organize online activists for Israel, sharing ideas and best practices to work collaboratively.

“The World Jewish Congress has stood bravely for the rights of all Jews. You have been a strong supporter for the State of Israel. We appreciate all you are doing for us.”

Israel President Reuvin Rivlin
WJC Ambassadors Against BDS show their support for Israel.
Photo: Shahar Azran
The World Jewish Congress and the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles have launched the West Coast Campus Pitch Competition, with plans underway to bring the initiative to cities across Europe and Latin America.

The World Jewish Congress and the Israeli Consulate in New York held its 2nd annual Campus Pitch Competition, an opportunity for college and university students to present their ideas to broaden the conversation about Israel and Jewish issues on campus.

In 2017, the winning prize was awarded to Yale University student Lia Weiner for her proposal to hold mock Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on campus in cooperation with pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian student groups.

In 2016, two Baruch College students created a walking photo gallery on campus featuring Israelis from different segments of society, promoted by live Israeli music and Israel-themed food stations.

The Israel Council on Foreign Relations (ICFR)
Operating under the auspices of the World Jewish Congress, the ICFR is a non-partisan forum for the study and debate of foreign policy issues, particularly regarding Israel, the Middle East and Jewish affairs. Former Minister Dan Meridor serves as the Council’s president.

The Council welcomes heads of state, foreign ministers and other intellectual and political leaders from abroad to Israel. It publishes The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs, and hosts the Israel-European Young Diplomats Forum, bringing together young EU and Israeli diplomats for professional exchanges and training.

International Council of Jewish Parliamentarians (ICJP)
A WJC initiative, the ICJP brings together Jewish elected officials from around the world in Jerusalem and Washington, DC to support democratic dialogue, promote human rights and combat hate directed at Jews and all minorities. Congressman Eliot L. Engel is the Chairman of ICJP. Professor Irwin Cotler, former Canadian MP and former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, is Vice Chairman.

In April 2017, the World Jewish Congress and Israel’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations launched the Education Without Borders photo exhibition at the UN headquarters in New York. The exhibition showcases a unique Israeli initiative that provides education to children of all backgrounds who are hospitalized for more than three days, highlighting Israel’s commitment to human rights, particularly concerning the support and protection of children.

The exhibition was first displayed at the Palais des Nations in Geneva in September 2015, and has since run at the Hotel de Ville in Strasbourg and UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

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The WJC has become a leading Jewish organization active in the United Nations and its bodies, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO), United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The WJC continues to advocate for fair and unbiased treatment of Israel, the protection of minorities, women’s rights and religious freedom. The WJC works tirelessly against Palestinian incitement, the threat of global anti-Semitism, terrorism and extremism.

Meetings of WJC lay leadership and senior staff occur with UN high-level position holders, representatives and ambassadors on a regular basis in New York, Geneva and Paris. Permanent Representatives to the United Nations and other senior political figures are frequent visitors to the WJC office in New York for meetings and briefings with our lay leadership and staff.

**UN General Assembly**

In 2016, the UN passed only one resolution condemning Iran; one resolution against North Korea; one resolution against Crimea and three resolutions against Syria. At the same time, it passed 20 resolutions against Israel.

During opening sessions in September 2016 and 2017, WJC President Ronald S. Lauder, CEO and Executive Vice President Robert Singer and other WJC representatives from New York and around the world met with nearly 60 delegations and heads of state to advance the organization’s agenda on issues including the treatment of Israel at the United Nations, Iran, anti-Semitism, global terrorism and the condition of local Jewish communities.

**UN Human Rights Council**

The WJC highlights bias towards Israel, advocates for fair treatment and regularly addresses the Council to call for the removal of biased Israel-related resolutions and discussions, such as Agenda Item 7, which solely and unfairly singles out Israel.

**UNESCO**

In 2017, Jews around the world marked the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, a city where Judaism, Christianity and Islam enjoy access to their holy sites. When the Executive Board of UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee adopted one-sided decisions seeking to deny the Jewish and Christian ties to Jerusalem’s holy sites and challenged Israel’s sovereignty over Jerusalem, the WJC worked directly with UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova to try and reverse this trend. Our message remains clear: Jewish roots in Jerusalem stretch back for thousands of years. Diplomats serving at UNESCO in Paris do not have the power to erase Jewish history.
The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the largest commission in ECOSOC, condemned only Israel as the sole violator of Palestinian women’s rights. In addition to participating in CSW meetings to speak out against this discriminatory resolution, the WJC promoted a positive agenda, co-sponsoring side events that highlighted the successes and challenges of women around the world in politics, engineering and technology.

The World Jewish Congress North America launched a major humanitarian effort urging the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to press Hamas for the return to Israel of the bodies of IDF soldiers Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul, killed in Gaza in 2014 during Operation Protective Edge. More than 11,000 individuals worldwide signed a WJC petition on behalf of the families of the fallen soldiers.

With anti-Semitism and other forms of extremism on the rise around the world, international sporting organizations must reject politics and continue to promote the values of sportsmanship, goodwill, harmony and respect among nations. Following intervention by the World Jewish Congress and its affiliated communities around the world, FIFA, the most prominent regulatory body in the sporting world, deferred its vote questioning the status of Israeli teams that play in the West Bank.

“Burying one’s dead is a humanitarian right and a religious right.”

WJC CEO and Executive Vice President Robert Singer
Babi Yar 75th anniversary commemoration
Photo: Shahar Azran
Venice
Commemorating the 500th anniversary of the establishment of the Venetian Jewish Ghetto at Venice’s La Fenice opera house, WJC President Ronald S. Lauder declared: “The creation of this ghetto was the first time that an entire community was separated because of their religion. And yet, despite this decree, the Jewish community still flourished within the walls. Just like in the Venice Ghetto, Jews today show the same resilience. For 5,000 years, we haven’t disappeared.”

Distinguished guests at the event included U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Italian dignitaries.

Bishkek
World Jewish Congress CEO and Executive Vice President Robert Singer joined with the Jewish community in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan to unveil a monument in honor of the citizens of the region who welcomed the Jewish refugees forced to flee the Nazi-occupied western regions of the Soviet Union during WWII.

Looted Art
For the World Jewish Congress, restitution and compensation of European Jewish assets seized during the Holocaust are, first and foremost, issues of justice, morality and human dignity. As a founding member of the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO), currently chaired by WJC President Ronald S. Lauder, also chairman of the Commission for Art Recovery, the WJC is committed to finding fair and equitable solutions to address the issue of art works stolen by the Nazis prior to and after World War II.

#WeRemember
In commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the World Jewish Congress created and launched an unprecedented global campaign encouraging people to speak out on social media to honor the victims of the Shoah and raise awareness about the Holocaust.

The campaign called on people around the world to hold up a sign with the words “We Remember” and post it to social media with the hashtag #WeRemember.

This WJC campaign reached 100 million people across the globe, with more than 200,000 participants from every continent, including a wide range of European members of parliament and officials, as well as Israeli and American politicians and public figures.

Joining forces with the WJC, the Auschwitz Museum in Poland projected thousands of “We Remember” photos on a giant projection screen beside the International Monument at Birkenau from January 24–26. The event was also streamed live on the WJC’s Facebook page.

Babi Yar
On the 75th anniversary of the murder more than 35,000 Jews at Babi Yar, World Jewish Congress President Ronald S. Lauder and 100 other WJC leaders travelled to Ukraine to commemorate the atrocity committed by Nazi Germany on September 29–30, 1941 near Kyiv.

World Jewish Congress CEO and Executive Vice President Robert Singer addressed the official memorial commemoration, along with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, German President Joachim Gauck and U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker.

Athens
World Jewish Congress President Ronald S. Lauder, addressing a Holocaust commemoration ceremony in the Greek capital, recalled the tragedy that nearly destroyed the Jewish community of Greece and questioned whether the world has learned the lessons of the Shoah. President Lauder urged the people of Greece to fight extreme-right, anti-Semitic parties such as Golden Dawn.

The WJC is committed to preserving the memory of those who perished in the Shoah. Throughout Europe, the World Jewish Congress plays an integral role in commemorating the Holocaust, while fighting for the rights of survivors and the heirs of those who did not.

Babi Yar
Excerpt from “Babi Yar” by Yevgeny Yevtushenko

There are no monuments over Babi Yar. But the sheer cliff is like a rough tombstone. It horrifies me. Today, I am as old As the Jewish people. It seems to me now, That I, too, am a Jew.

Excerpt from “Babi Yar”

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The WJC Jewish Diplomatic Corps

The World Jewish Congress places great importance on identifying, welcoming and training the next generation of talented, energetic and dedicated Jewish leadership.

The WJC Jewish Diplomatic Corps (JDCorps), a flagship program of the World Jewish Congress, is a global network of accomplished Jewish professionals, age 28–45, from a wide variety of backgrounds. The program currently hosts more than two hundred JDs from 45 countries who act as emissaries on behalf of Israel and the Jewish people in their home countries. Since 2014, JDCorps members have developed and delivered 41 formal statements before the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

At the first JDCorps Global Summit, participants visited the Council of Europe and the Palais des Congres for briefings from senior European officials on issues of shaping a democratic society, human rights, freedom of speech and anti-Semitism. In Basel, Switzerland, the delegation followed in the footsteps of Theodor Herzl, modern Zionism’s founding father, who convened the First Zionist Congress in 1897.

TOGETHER WE BUILD A STRONG JEWISH FUTURE
WJC President Ronald S. Lauder (center, alone) flanked by members of the WJC Jewish Diplomatic Corps at the Basel hotel where Theodor Herzl was famously photographed overlooking the Rhine River.

Photo: Shahar Azran
Interfaith dialogue and outreach are critical components of the WJC’s work. For 80 years, the World Jewish Congress has been a pioneer in furthering relations, enhancing understanding, advancing mutual respect and building coalitions with interreligious groups around the globe.

Our relationship with the Catholic Church continues to strengthen. In October 2016, Pope Francis received World Jewish Congress leaders at the Vatican, led by President Ronald S. Lauder, and including the heads of Jewish communities in Europe and the Americas. The pontiff called for Christians and Jews to come together to speak out against brutality in the world.

Feast of Tabernacles
For the past 35 years, Evangelical Christians from all over the world have come to Jerusalem each fall on the occasion of Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles. Organized by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), this gathering is the largest annual tourist event in Israel.

In a video message, WJC President Ronald S. Lauder thanked the 4,000-strong audience for standing with the Jewish people and with Israel. WJC CEO and Executive Vice President Robert Singer highlighted the plight of Christians and other minorities in Syria and Iraq.

International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC)
As a member organization of IJCIC, the WJC North America continues to build bridges of mutual respect and understanding, paving the way for constructive and cooperative responses to racism, bigotry, discrimination, terrorism and other challenges shared by faith communities.

Knesset Christian Allies Caucus (KCAC)
Israel Allies Foundation (IAF)
Working closely with these non-partisan groups, the WJC mobilizes support for Israel by opening formal and direct lines of communication between Israeli lawmakers and Christian leaders, organizations and political representatives around the world.

“
To attack Jews is anti-Semitism, but an outright attack on Israel is also anti-Semitism.”

Pope Francis
The World Jewish Congress speaks out forcefully against the increasing number of government actions that seek to condemn and ban the cornerstones of Jewish religious practices: ritual animal slaughter (shechita) and male circumcision (brit milah). In statements delivered before the UN Human Rights Council and other global bodies, the WJC calls for such bans to be recognized as “attacks on fundamental liberties” and “violations of freedom of religion.”

International Center for the Study of Yiddish and European Jewish Culture
To save the language and culture of European Jewry that almost disappeared after the Holocaust, in 2014 the World Jewish Congress established its International Center for the Study of Yiddish and European Jewish Culture in Vilnius, Lithuania. The only center of its kind in the world, Yiddish language, culture and rhythm are alive again.

The Center currently operates in 12 countries on four continents, including Israel, Russia, Romania, Lithuania, Estonia, Moldova, Belarus, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Canada.

Through frequent seminars, classes and symposiums, the Center is educating teachers, students, community leaders, IDF officers and members of the public about the rich history that their ancestors left behind. In 2016, approximately 2,100 people took part in the Yiddish Center courses. To date, the Yiddish Center has conducted more than 130 seminars for a total of more than 6,200 participants.
Street corner in Vilnius, Lithuania
Photo: Shahar Azran
The World Jewish Congress has been heralded as the “diplomatic arm of the Jewish people” by virtue of our remarkable access in the global corridors of power, expertise, on the ground experience and moral passion for representing the Jewish cause. On every front, the WJC stands prepared to use its reach, respect and credibility to defend and strengthen the Jewish people and support the State of Israel.

Jews from Arab Lands
November 29, 1947 was a day of great celebration for Jews around the world when 2,000 years of exile came to an end. But in the Middle East and North Africa, 850,000 Jews were forced to flee Arab lands after the creation of the State of Israel. Unlike Palestinian refugees, these Jewish refugees have been neither recognized nor assisted in any manner by the United Nations.

For the fourth consecutive year, the World Jewish Congress, together with Israel’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations, hosted a major event at UN headquarters in New York to call for international recognition of the Jewish refugees, remembrance of their suffering in any future negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis, an accurate reporting of Jewish assets left behind and the preservation of religious institutions, such as cemeteries and synagogues, that still exist in Arab countries.
TOGETHER WE SHAPE PUBLIC OPINION
Through thousands of newspaper and online articles, press releases, op-eds and broadcast interviews, reaching hundreds of millions of people globally, the WJC’s messages dominate the headlines and are the most widely disseminated of any Jewish organization.

The WJC’s digital and social media presence continue to grow at an extraordinary rate. Our Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social media channels are among the most popular of all Jewish organizations. Our combined reach across all platforms was 81.5 million people in 2016 with 50% growth recorded on Twitter and Facebook over the previous year. By the end of 2017 we anticipate reaching close to 200 million people online with 350,000 active followers.

The WJC produces innovative, impactful and highly successful petition and social media campaigns on issues of anti-Semitism, UN bias and Holocaust remembrance.

Our flagship monthly newsletter, World Jewish Digest, provides more than 120,000 subscribers with compelling stories of global Jewish interest and importance.

The WJC’s #WeRemember social media campaign in remembrance of Holocaust victims became the largest of its kind in history. The German newspaper Bild, Europe’s largest daily with more than 10 million readers, devoted a full-page feature to promote and support the campaign.

Fighting Cyberhate

Anti-Semitism exists in public squares, in cities and in towns. It also exists on virtual public squares and spaces. The World Jewish Congress is conducting large-scale petition campaigns and actively lobbying internet and social media giants Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft, Google, YouTube and others to make the digital world a safer place by cracking down on anti-Semitic and other hateful content on their sites.

A major WJC research report entitled “The Rise of Anti-Semitism on Social Media” found that more than 382,000 anti-Semitic posts were uploaded to social media platforms in 2016—an average of more than 43.6 posts per hour, or one post every 83 seconds.

Among other key findings:

- Forty-one percent of online anti-Semitic discourse includes hate speech against Jews;
- Forty percent includes anti-Semitic symbols such as the swastika.
- Eight percent of anti-Semitic posts include calls to harm Jews. Eighty posts per day, or one post every 20 minutes, included a call for violence against Jews.
- The United States is the country with the most instances of anti-Semitism on social media (68 percent), followed by Germany (9.4 percent), the UK (4 percent), Canada (2 percent) and France (0.5 percent).
- The WJC, which has been widely distributed, was conducted by the Israeli monitoring firm Vigo Social Intelligence.

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Established in 2014, the WJC’s National Community Directors’ Forum brings together senior Jewish communal professionals from more than 40 countries to foster communication and cooperation on issues of common concern such as fighting hatred, strengthening the security of Jewish institutions and effective communications on social media. Through seminars and training, leaders share best practices and are given the necessary tools in the fight against anti-Semitism and terror. The Forum has taken place in Prague, Lisbon and Dublin. The 2017 Forum will be held in Cape Town, South Africa.

More than 400 people from Jewish communities in 15 countries in southeast and central Europe gathered in the small Balkan town of Budva, Montenegro for the fourth annual Mahar Conference, aimed at strengthening the cultural identity and community of Jews around the region and their relationship with Israel. The event was supported by the World Jewish Congress, the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress and the government of Montenegro.

A delegation from the World Jewish Congress and the Russian Jewish Congress, led by WJC President Ronald S. Lauder, met with President Ilham Aliyev and the Azeri Jewish community.

World Jewish Congress President Ronald S. Lauder delivered a keynote address in London regarding the growing tide of anti-Zionism, anti-Semitism, hatred and terror targeted against Jews and others in the UK and other European countries.

More than 850 guests, including senior French politicians, attended the annual dinner of the Jewish umbrella organization and a WJC member organization in Paris.

Leaders of the African Jewish Congress (AJC), which federates Jewish communities in sub-Saharan Africa and maintains close relations with the World Jewish Congress, met in Cape Town to exchange views on the challenges of preserving Jewish identity, global security issues and the state of relations between Israel and the governments of their respective countries.
The World Jewish Congress' Theodor Herzl Award is the organization’s highest honor. It recognizes outstanding individuals who work to promote Theodor Herzl’s ideals for a safer, more tolerant world for the Jewish people.

In November 2015, the WJC honored former U.S. Secretary of State George P. Shultz at a gala event in New York. In November 2016, the WJC presented its Herzl Award to U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden. The WJC also presented its inaugural Teddy Kollek Award for the Advancement of Jewish Culture to legendary actor, author and philanthropist Kirk Douglas. Douglas’ son Michael accepted the award on his father’s behalf.

In November 2017, the WJC will present its Theodor Herzl Award to former U.S. Secretary of State General Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret.). The Teddy Kollek Award will be bestowed upon the late great director George Stevens, to be accepted by his son George Stevens, Jr.

Previous recipients of the WJC’s Herzl Award include Shimon Peres, Elie and Marion Wiesel, Henry A. Kissinger, George Weidenfeld and, posthumously, Ronald Reagan and Axel Springer.

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The WJC American Section, also the independent U.S. affiliate of the World Jewish Congress, facilitates American Jewish input into WJC’s global deliberations and advocates for Israel at the United Nations and in the public arena.

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The World Jewish Congress is uniquely positioned as the representative body of Jewish communities and organizations in nearly 100 countries across six continents, working on their behalf with foreign governments, international agencies, law enforcement, and at the grass roots level to:

- safeguard Jewish security;
- combat anti-Semitism, bigotry and extremism;
- support Israel and advance Middle East peace;
- advocate on issues of international human rights;
- preserve the memory of the Holocaust;
- promote and enhance interfaith relations; and,
- nurture future generations of Jewish leadership.

Charity Navigator, the largest independent evaluator of philanthropies in the United States, has, for the second consecutive year, cited the World Jewish Congress, American Section, with its highest 4-star rating for good governance and fiscal responsibility and efficiency.