



GOVERNING BOARD
WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS
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REGIONAL REPORTS

North American Jewish Congress

NORTH AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

SEPTEMBER 2006 – JUNE 2007

The North American Jewish Congress met in New York City in September 2006, and recommitted to regional cooperation among the three national affiliates - Canadian Jewish Congress, World Jewish Congress American Section, and Comité Central de la Comunidad Judía de Mexico. As a consequence, the Comité Central and the Mexican Jewish community hosted a regional conference in March 2007, focusing on inter-religious dialogue and outreach to small communities. In cooperation with the Latin American Jewish Congress, the NAJC is now preparing a joint visit to communities in Central America to assess the opportunities for cooperation and advocacy in support of smaller communities, some of which face increasing political and social challenges. Mexico's Jewish community is increasing its role as a regional gateway to these communities.

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

Interreligious and Inter-Ethnic Affairs

CJC Pacific Region's Jewish Christian Dialogue hosted a successful three-way dialogue with Jewish, Christian and Muslim clergy and community leaders. CJC leadership has met with the president of the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada and with leaders of Montreal's Muslim community to advance cooperation and dialogue. The CJC organized the first-ever Israel mission for leaders of Canada's Assembly of First Nations.

Holocaust Awareness and Genocide Prevention

CJC officials met with Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Peter MacKay to discuss solutions for the ongoing crisis in Darfur. The CJC recruited a multi-ethnic coalition to support the deportation of six seniors who lied about their Nazi past to immigrate to Canada. The CJC participated in Canada's first official delegation to the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, after strongly advocating for the new Canadian government to join other Western nations in this cause.

Anti-Semitism

The CJC briefed Members of Parliament on expediting the expansion of the current Criminal Code preventing and prosecuting crimes against religious communal institutions. The CJC Pacific Region organized Holocaust education programming for the Vancouver Police Department, as part of the CJC-PR's partnering with law enforcement and community institutions. The CJC convened an international workshop on combating anti-Semitism, in conjunction with the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Combating Anti-Semitism.

AMERICAN SECTION

Organization

The American Section has completed the updating of its governance and financial oversight functions, and continues to recruit and attract new member organizations from the American Jewish community.

Western Hemisphere

In cooperation with the YPDC and Latin American Jewish Congress, the American Section has sent delegations to the past three annual General Assembly sessions of the Organization of American States (and other intermediate sessions), and most recently delivered an oral statement at the OAS dialogue between civil society and foreign ministers, warning against the politicization of energy resources within the region and from outside. The American Section also addressed the regional convention of the Union of Jewish Congregations of Central America and the Caribbean.

Interreligious and Inter-Ethnic

The American Section has engaged Muslim religious and political leaders in the United States to speak out against anti-Semitism generally and more specifically against the Holocaust denial campaign by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Section also convened public meetings with prominent African-Americans and Latinos on these same issues. The American Section again hosted Catholic-Jewish dialogue in New York City, mostly with leaders of the French Conference of Catholic Bishops and key New York rabbis. Additional policy events include briefings on international Jewish concerns, organized for national Jewish press, American Jewish organizations, students, and Washington policymakers.

Anti-Semitism

The American Section arranged for the U.S. State Department's anti-Semitism envoy to address the NAJC's Mexico City assembly, participated with other key American Jewish organizations in policy preparations for the OSCE's Bucharest Conference taking place in June 2007.

COMITÉ CENTRAL

Community relations

Comité Central officials meet periodically with the President and other senior Mexican officials to discuss international affairs and minority issues. Since the Mexican elections, the Comité has met with the new President, and annually organizes a public community meeting with the President of Mexico. The Comité also participates in federal and municipal commissions to promote religious

accommodation and safeguard civil rights. Comité leaders have met with senior Foreign Ministry officials to discuss the Middle East situation and the growing Iranian threat. During the Lebanon conflict in the summer of 2006, the Comité and the Tribuna Israelita conducted extensive outreach to inform news editors and reporters, government officials and opinion-shapers regarding the facts on the ground.

Interreligious Affairs

Comité leaders met with the president of the Bishops' Conference of Mexico to develop programming for educating Catholic university students about the 'Nostra Aetate' declaration. They consulted with the Director General of Religious Associations at the Mexican Ministry of the Interior on the law of religious associations in Mexico.

North American Jewish Congress

The Comité hosted the first regional conference of the North American branches of the World Jewish Congress, which featured working sessions on outreach to small communities, integrating young leaders into community structure, interreligious dialogue and interfaith programming. Guest speakers included the Mayor and the Archbishop of Mexico City.

Report prepared by Shai Franklin, NAJC Executive Director

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