

News and Current Events :: U.N. releases unprecedented first ever anti-Semitic report - anti-Semitism on the uptick - posted by docs (), on: 2019/10

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The United Nations released an "unprecedented" report on anti-Semitism on Monday, which pointed out that the frequency appears to be increasing. It also linked anti-Semitism to denunciations of Israel as well as the Palestinian-led Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement, which calls for a boycott of all Israeli products.

The report stressed that the "prevalence of anti-Semitic attitudes and the risk of violence against Jewish individuals and sites" is significant.

The report, "Combating Antisemitism to Eliminate Discrimination and Intolerance Based on Religion or Belief," was released on Monday by U.N. Human Rights Council's special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shahed.

The special rapporteur recognized that the sources of anti-Semitism are varied and pointed out what he thinks are the three main strains:

They are: "growing use of anti-Semitic tropes by white supremacists including neo-Nazis and members of radical Islamist groups"; an increase in "anti-Semitic narratives or tropes in the course of expressing anger at policies or practices of the government of Israel"; and the objectives, activities and effects of the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement.

The report said that "anti-Semitic hate speech is particularly prevalent online."

It also made mention of several exceptionally violent incidents that "have had an outsized impact on Jewish individuals' sense of security in recent years."

Specifically, the report mentioned the 2018 attack at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, where a gunman opened fire and killed 11 congregants "in the deadliest attack on Jews in U.S. history."

The report noted that the gunman's "comments during the attack and social media activity on the days preceding it revealed a belief in a host of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories rooted in a far-right, white supremacist ideology."

It pointed out that about six months later, "a gunman similarly motivated by white supremacist ideology killed one congregant and wounded three others at a synagogue in the Poway California community."

In that case, police said the 19-year-old man armed with an assault-type rifle opened fire inside the Southern California synagogue in April as worshipers prepared to celebrate the last day of Passover.

The special rapporteur also said he "received numerous accounts concerning vandalism and desecration of Jewish synagogues and cemeteries, as well as other recognizably Jewish sites."

The report urged states to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of anti-Semitism as a global guide for identifying, monitoring, and responding to incidents.

The working definition was adopted by the alliance in 2016 and was developed as a tool "to facilitate more accurate and uniform monitoring of anti-Semitism" as well as to educate officials and the public about the different forms of anti-Semitism.

The report said, "The working definition defines anti-Semitism generally as: 'a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations ... are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.'"

The report said that in the U.S. in 2017, 58 percent of religiously-motivated bias "were driven by anti-Semitic bias." The Permanent Mission of Israel to the U.N. noted, adding that it also said that governments enact laws and policies that rest

strict Jewish practice, including limiting kosher slaughter methods or preventing Jewish people from political participation in higher office.

Israel's Ambassador to the U.N. Danny Danon responded to the report saying, "We welcome the release of this unprecedented report on the subject of Antisemitism."

The release of the report comes about one month after IMPACT-se, a research and policy institute that analyzes how textbooks measure up to (UNESCO) standards for acceptance, peace and tolerance, and other watchdog organizations, including Jerusalem-based research institute NGO Monitor, presented examples of anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish content in Palestinian textbooks at the 99th session of the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in Geneva, Switzerland.

Anne Herzberg, legal adviser and U.N. liaison at NGO Monitor, told Fox News: "It is interesting that this is the second time in such a short period that we see a shift away from the usual anti-Israel tone of U.N. institutions."

She said the release of Shaheed's report comes after NGO Monitor made a submission to the rapporteur and met with him in Geneva.

"This report marks one of the first times the U.N. has addressed the issue of anti-Semitism in any detail," Herzberg said.

"The special rapporteur condemned the use of anti-Semitic tropes and denial of Israel's right to exist by BDS activists."

The Human Rights Council did not immediately respond to Fox News's request for comment.

The president of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), an international federation of Jewish communities and organizations, said he hopes the report "serves as an eye-opener to the United Nations and its member states."

"The World Jewish Congress is extremely pleased with the results of the report on anti-Semitism prepared by U.N. Special Rapporteur Shaheed," WJC President Ronald Lauder said.

Lauder added that The WJC took part in the facilitation of the research "to ensure that the very real concerns facing our communities on a daily basis were not only taken into consideration, but also addressed as areas deserving of serious and direct attention."

The Palestinian Mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to Fox News's request for comment.

The findings will officially be presented to the U.N. General Assembly next month, according to the WJC.

Fox News's Ben Evansky contributed to this report.