



State Department's Religious Freedom Report Recognizes Severity Of Global Anti-Semitism

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On May 20, 2013, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry released the State Department's annual International Religious Freedom Report for 2012, describing the U.S. assessment of the status of religious freedom in every country. The report covers government policies violating religious belief and practices of groups, religious denominations and individuals, and U.S. policies to promote religious freedom around the world.

This annual report demonstrates the American commitment to the fundamental democratic right to practice one's religion without interference from government and signifies and underscores the role governments must play in protecting that right. It shines a light on a number of important issues specifically related to the persecution of religious minorities, including government sponsored discrimination, religious bigotry and hatred propagated by the media, and violence directed at specific religious denominations.

While addressing all forms of religious discrimination, the U.S. government's role in monitoring and combatting anti-Jewish expressions around the world is an important feature of the report. It highlights incidents of anti-Semitism on the governmental level, in politics and within the media, and documents acts of vandalism and violence directed at Jews. These include:

Iran — The government's continued Holocaust denial and propagation of anti-Semitic stereotypes, including pronouncements by President Ahmadinejad regarding "Zionists...ruling the major world affairs" for some 400 years.

Egypt — Senior Muslim Brotherhood officials, including Supreme Guide Mohamed Badei, frequently issue anti-Semitic statements, while the media airs anti-Semitic programming, including the TV series "Horseman without a Horse" based on the notorious anti-Semitic forgery "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." The widespread hatred and violence directed at Egypt's Coptic Christian community is also mentioned.

Venezuela — Anti-Semitism is quite prevalent in the government controlled media, particularly in opinion pieces and editorial cartoons. The recent presidential candidacy of Henrique Capriles, a Catholic of Jewish descent, was a main focus of the media's anti-Semitism.

Chile - There has been an increase in the number anti-Semitic public statements, particularly across social media platforms. Incidents of anti-Jewish vandalism are on the rise, and a number of physical attacks against Jews were documented, including an assault on a 14 year-old by a group of Neo-Nazis.

The State Department's report also makes a number of references to ADL's work in highlighting and combating global anti-Semitism, particularly in Europe. These include:

Austria – ADL's training projects with the Ministry of Education on Holocaust education.

Greece – ADL's statements calling on government authorities to do more to counter the anti-

Semitic rhetoric and violent actions of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn political party.

Hungary – ADL's statements calling on the government to enforce a new law that would hold members of parliament legally accountable for espousing hateful remarks. This law was in reaction to an anti-Semitic statement by a member of country's neo-Nazi Jobbik party, who called on parliament to "assess how many MPs and government members are of Jewish origin and who present a national security risk to Hungary." The report also cited ADL's survey on anti-Semitic attitudes in Hungary which showed a significant rise in the percent of the population harboring anti-Semitic attitudes.

Turkey – ADL's statement criticizing a cosmetics company for featuring Adolph Hitler in a shampoo commercial that ran on state television.

The State Department's International Religious Freedom Report for 2012 can be found here:

[International Religious Freedom Report for 2012](#)

Source: [Anti-Defamation League Blog](#)