



**Combatting Antisemitism in Canada
B'nai Brith Canada's Views for Discussion with
Rabbi Andrew Baker
Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office
on Combatting Antisemitism
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Introduction

A core element of B'nai Brith Canada's mandate is combatting antisemitism, hate crimes and hate speech. These three issues are inter-connected and must be confronted from that perspective. Such efforts have both a domestic and an international focus and B'nai Brith's bases its work on this approach.

Domestically, the challenges of antisemitism, hate crimes and hate speech must be tackled at the federal, provincial and municipal levels. Religious discrimination starts with hate; the responsibility to confront hatred falls on all of us. Governments bear the primary responsibility for ensuring the safety, security and equal rights of their citizens. Jewish communities deserve no less than their neighbours.

We regard community engagement and working with local law enforcement agencies as essential. Hate speech and hate crimes exist and we must deal with them when they occur – to report them, to understand the motivation, and to hold accountable those responsible.

For many years, **B'nai Brith Canada has published an annual *Audit of Antisemitic Incidents in Canada*, recognized by all levels of Canadian government, and internationally, as an authoritative analysis of the problems we face.** Our work informs, and is informed by, published data on police-reported hate crimes from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. B'nai Brith Canada also **contributes a Canadian 'chapter' to the annual global analysis of antisemitism published by the Kantor Center.**

B'nai Brith Canada's Basic Aims:

1. We address the **twin challenges of antisemitism and hate speech, linking them to the broader threat of discrimination and human rights**, a universal issue that affects individuals everywhere.
2. We see **antisemitism as but a visible portion of the dangers inherent generally in prejudice and discrimination.**
3. We see the **eradication of antisemitism is part of a broader struggle – that of maintaining civil rights for all** people whatever their colour or creed.
4. We see human rights as not just about discrimination; it **includes social issues such as bullying and religious intolerance** that can impact anyone regardless of ethnic background.
5. We emphasize **more than advocacy** to combat antisemitism; that those who practice it must understand their **words and actions will have specific consequences**;
6. We emphasize that dealing with antisemitism, hate crimes and hate speech are **not just multicultural issues, they are public safety issues.**
7. We emphasize **that federal and provincial action to combat racism often has a different focus** than actions we regard as necessary to confront religious discrimination and antisemitism.
8. We emphasize that the historical focus on **education related to Holocaust issues and persecution of the Jews is not a substitute for action to address contemporary challenges** faced by Canadian Jewry, including Holocaust denial and obfuscation.
9. We emphasize that a current **focus by government on countering anti-Muslim sentiment must not overlook that Jews are the most targeted religious community** in Canada when it comes to hate crimes.
10. We emphasize the **connection between anti-Israel behaviour, anti-Zionism and antisemitism**, including in international bodies and inter-parliamentary forums.

Our Basic Proposals to the Canadian Government (December, 2017)

- The federal government has an essential role to play in helping law enforcement, communities, and schools prevent and respond to antisemitism by implementing effective anti-bias education and hate crimes prevention programs and activities. This involves essential cooperation with provinces and municipalities.

- The government, and legislators, can help by supporting and strengthening anti-bias and hate crimes education programmes to help schools and communities address antisemitism and all forms of violent bigotry.
- Canada should continue to take a leadership role in the global sphere in mobilizing governments and the international community to confront antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and all forms of hatred and bigotry.
- Canada should continue to play a leadership role advancing this in international organizations, especially within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and through its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).
- Canada should continue to use appropriate intergovernmental fora and international organizations to promote and press for legislative, judicial and educational action to fight anti-Semitism, and encourage the improvement of data collection of anti-Semitic hate crimes.
- Given Canada's diversity and multicultural make-up, there may be opportunities for Public Safety Canada, the RCMP, and Canadian law enforcement to enhance training of international law enforcement in the area of monitoring and responding to antisemitism and hate crimes.
- Combatting antisemitism should be incorporated into the full array of Canada's human rights and democracy programming, funding, and public diplomacy efforts. There is a particular role for Global Affairs Canada and our diplomatic missions abroad.
- Canada should continue to support and expand educational programmes at home and support global efforts to counter prejudice and enhance efforts to teach the universal lessons of the Holocaust.
- Canada should make clear to leaders in the Arab and Muslim world that the unchecked proliferation of antisemitism in the media and popular culture in their societies runs contrary to human rights norms and is an impediment to progress.

- Domestically, the government and Canadian legislators can be forthright in expressing to Canadian Muslim leaders that they must confront and condemn language that vilifies Canadian and international Jewry – just as Jewish leaders must be prepared to challenge all instances of anti-Muslim hatred and bigotry

The scope of our recent work:

- Publication of our Annual ***Audit of Antisemitic Incidents in Canada*** – April, 2018.
- Publication of an ‘**Eight Point Plan to Tackle Antisemitism**’ – April 2018.
- Sponsorship of international conference on antisemitism at York University, Toronto – October, 2018.
- Participation in the #No2Antisemitism Campaign at the 2018 United Nations General Assembly (Organized by Israel, the EU, Canada and the USA) – September, 2018.
- Testimony before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, studying Criminal Code amendments related to genocide and support for terrorism – September, 2018.
- Policy paper for discussion with Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police on strengthening hate crimes units and training them to understand and combat antisemitism – September, 2018.
- Open letter to Canada’s Foreign Minister recommending that combatting antisemitism be raised at the USA-hosted ministerial meeting on religious freedom – August, 2018
- Open letter to the Prime Minister requesting he publicly reject glorification of Nazi sympathizers and neo-Nazis in NATO member countries – July, 2018.
- Participation in the OSCE/ODIHR’s *Activist Forum on Preventing and Responding to Hate Crimes* in Warsaw – June, 2018.
- Policy paper for discussion with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities seeking municipal adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism – May, 2018.
- Policy paper for officials on what the G7 countries can do to combat antisemitism – March 2018 (prior to the G7 Summit hosted by Canada).
- Policy paper presented to Canadian officials on what Canada can do to counter anti-Israel bias at the United Nations, linking this to antisemitism – March, 2018.
- Testimony before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, studying amendments to laws related to terrorism – February, 2018.

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- Letter to Canadian Ministers of Justice, Global Affairs and Innovation/Science/Economic Development with proposals for action to mobilize internet service providers to combat on-line antisemitism – October, 2017.
- Testimony before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, studying systemic racism and religious discrimination, including Islamophobia – October, 2017
- Testimony before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, studying removal of outdated provisions in the Criminal Code – October, 2017
- Ongoing dialogue with the Canadian government's Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence (Public Safety Canada).
- Ongoing dialogue with the All-Party Group of Parliamentarians for the Prevention of Genocide and other Crimes Against Humanity.
- Ongoing dialogue with the Office of Human Rights, Inclusion and Religious Freedom at Global Affairs Canada and participation in the forums on the situation of religious and ethnic minorities globally.
- Participation in work of Canada's delegation to the IHRA, including funding for a B'nai Brith Canada representative to attend IHRA plenary meetings.
- Contributing to preparation of Canada's human rights report under the United Nations Universal Periodic Review, focused on recommendations to combat antisemitism.
- Participation in the federal/provincial/territorial Continuing Committee of Officials on Human Rights.