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The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lester B. Pearson Building
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

Dear Minister Freeland:

Next week, United States Secretary of State Pompeo will host a second Ministerial meeting on religious freedom. Last year, B'nai Brith Canada offered practical ways Canadian participation in the first ministerial could help advance the global fight against antisemitism. This second meeting offers Canada an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to an objective we wholly share with you - protecting and promoting the right to freedom of religion or belief for all, globally.

For B'nai Brith Canada, this includes the need to protect Jewish communities in Canada and elsewhere by speaking out against – and taking action on - antisemitism, a stubborn challenge to our society domestically, and to a large number of countries globally. We know, Minister, from your own words and those of the Prime Minister that Canada will continue to confront antisemitism whenever and wherever it appears.

B'nai Brith's [Audit of Antisemitic Incidents in Canada](#) illustrates the continuing problems faced by Canada's Jewish community. Our findings are supported by Statistics Canada's most recent analysis of police-reported hate crimes. A survey of many countries in the latest State Department *Report on International Religious Freedom* shows that antisemitism remains a reality for many Jewish communities and is growing.

The publication only weeks ago of a [study by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency](#) vividly illustrates the harassment and fears faced by youth members of the European Jewish community. This body of work only emphasizes the concerns highlighted in B'nai Brith Canada's annual *Audit*.

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In Washington, D.C., we are asking Canada's representatives to once again re-state Canada's firm opposition to all forms of antisemitism and to encourage other countries to take specific actions to address this scourge, as you and your G7 colleagues emphasized in your 2018 statement:

"We are concerned about resurgent forms of racism, xenophobia and discrimination worldwide, including antisemitism and anti-Muslim sentiment. We will work individually and collectively to combat such discrimination and ensure that diversity is recognized and leveraged as a strength for humanity."

A commitment by Canada to lead this effort will reinforce the joint statement against antisemitism delivered at the 38th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council; a statement to which Canada attached its name:

"The worrying rise of antisemitic hatred and violence, however, is not a problem for Jewish communities alone but an affront against humanity that affects the societies in which it rises and which needs to be countered by the international community as a whole."

In late June, Canada adopted a new strategy to combat racism. The Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, in announcing the strategy, stated that *"To help address resurgent antisemitism in Canada, we're adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism as part of our strategy."* **Canada should use the occasion of the International Religious Freedom Ministerial to emphasize to other participants our national commitment to the IHRA definition and encourage others to accept it.**

In conformity with B'nai Brith Canada's own ['Eight-Point Action Plan to Tackle Antisemitism'](#), we encourage Canada's representatives to raise the following issues with other participants at the Ministerial meeting and seek their agreement to these principles and actions:

- Governments must commit themselves to mobilizing all instruments available to them to confront antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and all forms of hatred and bigotry.

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- Governments have 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.
- Governments, with legislative backing, must commit themselves to supporting and strengthening anti-bias and hate crimes education programmes to help schools and communities address antisemitism and all forms of violent bigotry.
- Governments must commit themselves to using appropriate intergovernmental fora and international organizations to promote and press for legislative, judicial and educational action to fight antisemitism, and encourage the improvement of data collection of antisemitic hate crimes.
- Law enforcement agencies – including at the international level - must enhance training of personnel to more effectively monitor, assess, and respond to antisemitism and hate crimes.
- Combatting antisemitism should be incorporated by governments into the full array of human rights and democracy programming, funding, and public diplomacy efforts.
- Governments must 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; this is an essential component of combatting antisemitism.
- 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.
- Governments and legislators can be forthright in expressing to their own Muslim community leaders that they must confront and condemn language that vilifies Jewry – just as Jewish leaders must be prepared to challenge all instances of anti-Muslim hatred and bigotry.

In support of these broad aims, we specifically recommend that you encourage participating governments to undertake the following:



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1. **An acknowledgement of the principles enshrined in the 2010 'Ottawa Protocol on Combatting Antisemitism'**, specifically:

- Encouraging leaders of all religious faiths to use all means possible to combat antisemitism and all forms of religious hatred and discrimination.
- Working with universities to encourage them to combat antisemitism with the same seriousness with which they confront other forms of hate.
- Establishing an international task force of internet specialists, including parliamentarians and experts, to create common indicators to identify and monitor antisemitism and other manifestations of hate online, and to develop policy recommendations for governments, social media platforms, service providers and international frameworks to address these problems.

2. **An acknowledgement of the principles contained in the 2004 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) 'Berlin Declaration on Combatting Antisemitism'**, specifically:

- Condemning without reservation all manifestations of antisemitism.
- Declaring unambiguously that international developments or political issues, including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify antisemitism.
- Condemning all attacks motivated by antisemitism or by any other forms of religious or racial hatred or intolerance, including attacks against synagogues and other religious places, sites and shrines.

3. **A commitment by governments that they will adopt and promote greater awareness of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism** within their countries and internationally, to help educate officials, legislators, journalists and teachers regarding the contemporary manifestations of antisemitism, including Holocaust denial and diminishment.

4. **A commitment by governments to develop and implement national action plans to combat antisemitism** along the lines, as an example, of that adopted in Norway, including commitments to:

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- Appoint national coordinators on combatting antisemitism;
- Hold regular consultations with representative Jewish community organizations; and
- Prepare regular reports on the progress of implementation.

5. **A commitment by governments that they will expand their efforts to counter the terrorist threat on the Internet, to countering antisemitism and hate speech**, along the lines of recommendations in the [report on online hate speech from the House of commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights](#).

As you and the Canadian delegation prepare for the Ministerial meeting, Minister, please be assured of B'nai Brith Canada's ongoing and strong commitment to your endeavours to support and promote freedom of belief or religion.

We are separately writing the Minister of Canadian Heritage about the **need to defend Canada's adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism and to rebut criticisms of the Government's welcome decision**. We believe the International Religious Freedom Ministerial meeting offers an occasion to also do that.

Yours sincerely,



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