



Press Release

December 12, 2017

We Must All Fight anti-Semitism

The anti-Semitic attacks of the past few days make it appallingly clear that hatred of Jews is alive and well in Sweden. We read about death threats in Malmö, as well as attempts to burn down synagogues both there and in Gothenburg. Many of us live in fear, and few of us have the courage to wear Jewish clothing or adornments in public. The threats are coming from a number of different sources. Neo-Nazis take to the streets, urged on by xenophobic currents that have made their way into the Parliament. The recent verbal and physical assaults have been by individuals with roots in the Middle East, having grown up in an environment that often teaches and fosters anti-Semitism. While their crimes have been triggered by President Trump's announcement of his intention to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the toxic mix of religion and politics is all-too evident.

It is hardly a contradiction to insist that hatred and violence of this type is wholly inexcusable while pointing out that it draws sustenance from the kinds of provocation that American policy has unleashed.

Criticism of the colonization of the homeland of the Palestinian people is not anti-Semitic. Israel is a country inhabited by Jews, Christians and Muslims. We who have close ties to Israel are opposed to its policy of occupation and agonize over restrictions on the rights of the Arab population proposed by government leaders there. When Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman advocates for a boycott of Arab businesses, he is engaging in unadulterated racism and moving the country one step closer to outright ethnic cleansing. Promoting peace and combating hatred requires acknowledgement of the right of both the Jews and the Palestinians to a national homeland.

As a member of a far rightwing government, Lieberman does not speak for world Jewry. His blatant persecution of Arab citizens can never justify attacks on Jews in Israel, Sweden or anywhere else.

Every Swede who is interested in achieving a just peace in the Middle East is duty-bound to stand up against anti-Semitism and encourage dialogue among Muslims, Christians and Jews

in our country. Racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are all born of fear and ignorance. Whether spoken, written or acted upon, their manifestations must be called out and denounced by all of us.

Gothenburg and Stockholm

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