

COMMUNAL SECURITY COMMITTEE

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING ON 20-22 MARCH FOR THE PERIOD OF NOVEMBER 2022 – MAY 2023

Background and Mission

This committee was initiated to facilitate, streamline and monitor the progress of the activities and processes regarding the assistance to the communities around the world in the field of Security and Crisis Management.

The CSC also serves as a mechanism to deal with any issues that may arise.

The CSC meets regularly and promotes comprehensive security solutions in the different regions of the Jewish communities worldwide.

Committee Members

- **Mary Kluk**, Chair of WJC Communal Security Committee; WJC Vice President; President, South African Jewish Board of Deputies
- **Haim Ben Yakov**, Chief Executive Officer, Euro-Asian Jewish Congress
- **Anna Bokshitskaya**, Russian Jewish Congress, Executive Vice-President; WJC Representative in the Russian Federation
- **Claudio Epelman**, Latin American Jewish Congress, Executive Director
- **Ariel Isaak**, Latin American Jewish Congress, Commissioner for Community Security
- **Ariel Muzicant**, European Jewish Congress, Interim President; WJC Vice President
- **Ophir Revach**, Security and Crisis Center (SACC) by European Jewish Congress, Chief Executive Officer
- **Amir Shaviv**, WJC American Section, representing WJC North America

WJC Staff

- Rotem David, WJC Operations, Coordinator
- Betty Ehrenberg, WJC North America and WJC American Section, Executive Director
- Ernest Herzog, WJC Operations, Executive Director; WJC representative in the Balkans
- John Malkinson, WJC Chief Operating Officer
- Laurence Weinbaum, WJC Israel, Executive Director

Significant matters dealt with during the period of November 2022 – May 2023

- The **crisis in Ukraine** and the region
 - The current focus is in **providing aid** to those who need it within Ukraine who did not or could not flee, through relief funding and humanitarian aid mostly through VAAD of

Ukrainian Jews. Within this aid, help to the elderly is central as this population is not easily moved and this aid provides a real lifeline.

- The crisis in Ukraine for over a year has been a **trigger to increased antisemitism**, as economic crisis hits across Europe, arguing Jews are involved exposing communities to more attacks. The committee addressed next possible steps in dealing with this.
- The **Jewish refugee's** situation in other communities in the area is another issue, and members of the committee are discussing with governments in Europe through the local communities, as budgetary concerns are significant and require cooperation with local authorities.
- In Russia the **security situation is extremely challenging** and the RJC are working to make Jewish life easier.
- **Rising antisemitic rhetoric** by influencers, particularly in North America has brought a wave of antisemitic assaults, harassment, and vandalism. Together with antisemitism connected to Israel, especially on campuses in the US, this wave of hate is concerning. Numbers are extremely troubling as they **double each year**. A lingering issue is the **under-reporting or lack of classifying** incidents as antisemitic, yet positive coordination with local authorities in the US are key and show increased support.
- **Campus harassment** against Jewish students coming from the far-left, pro-Palestinian and BDS could have a long-term effect on American Jewry in years and decades to come. This is another concerning matter brought to the committee.
- The **input of local authorities** is key and is promoted by all committee members, and as seen in Europe it has stepped up in the last decade. While there is global surge from far-right, far-left as well as Islamic Jihad threats, there are less successful attacks and manifestations of hate. The guard should not be let down, on the contrary. The communities and their respective authorities across Europe do remain on high alert, especially around holidays of different faiths.
- **Diplomatic efforts** on the ground by all participants are crucial to keep the fight against antisemitism front and center, pushing for the adoption and implementation of the IHRA definition, countries developing national strategies on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life.
- **Developments in Israel** have been a major concern to the communities as incidents develop and bring backlash to the diaspora. The committee raised the local tensions due to the suggested **judicial reform** that causes troubling reaction across many parts of the population. It was emphasized while criticism and opinions in this time is something that is important to express, certain terminology needs to be carefully used to avoid harming other efforts in the support of Israel. The tensions have been giving more ammunition to antisemites, far left and BDS, which affects the communities.
- Outstanding relationship and collaboration with the new **US Special Envoy Ms. Deborah Lipstadt**, were underlined to the committee members who were invited to conversations with her and additional envoys for combatting antisemitism in the framework of the WJC SECCA.

- In Latin America, preparations for the **Maccabiah** were discussed with emphasis on the security challenge it poses as multiple thousands of participants are expected to be in Buenos Aires.
- WJC work of **targeting extremist** events such as Lukov march in Bulgaria, Day of Honor in Hungary, as well as the targeting of smaller **manifestations of far right and neo-Nazi groups** was reported to the committee. The Intel Team sets it as a priority to **alert** the communities on any major activities of extremists and propose or assist in counteraction. Major activities took place in Hungary, Sweden, Poland, Ireland, Austria, Germany, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia.
- In understanding the strength behind the **far-right interconnectivity** WJC continues enhancing the interactive mapping aimed at showing how extensive the far-right networking is listing individuals, organizations, and events from across Europe. Another **interactive mapping** project under development will collect data and **expose major BDS players** in the field. The map is planned to be released for the use by Jewish communities in the course of 2023.