

January/February 2012

From the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism (SEAS)

The SEAS Monitor

Dear Friends,

I hope you are well. This is the January and February issue of “The SEAS Monitor.” It covers my activities during the months of January and February. The Monitor is a way for me to keep you informed about my work as the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism. Please click here for [previous copies](#).

I encourage you to “Like” my page on Facebook: “Hannah Rosenthal, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism.” When you “Like” a page on Facebook, it will be listed under your “Activities and Interests” tab, which can be found in your Info section. If my page is updated, the update will appear on your News Feed on your homepage.

Be sure to follow our weekly posting entitled “Here’s What We’re Hearing: Anti-Semitism News Updates.” It is through these updates that we monitor global incidents of anti-Semitism. We have also started a new initiative, “Here’s What We’re Hearing: Jewish World News Updates,” which contains relevant news regarding positive efforts to promote tolerance and inter-religious cooperation.

Please enjoy and keep in touch.

Warm regards,
Hannah

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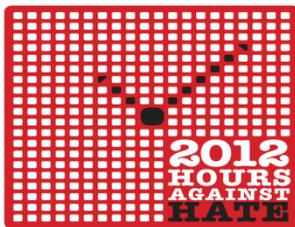
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EVENTS:

[London Olympics Approves 2012 Hours Against Hate](#)



The joint initiative I embarked on last year with Special Representative to Muslim Communities Farah Pandith – *2011 Hours Against Hate* – was approved by the London Olympic and Paralympic Games Organizing Committee to encourage greater diversity and community engagement during the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. We first presented this campaign at the Archbishop of Canterbury’s International Social Innovation and Social Action Faith Conference in November of 2011. We also met with representatives from sports organizations, interfaith groups, civil society and the London Organizing

Committee for the Olympic Games. As a result of this meeting, several of the groups with whom we met filed an application with the London Olympic Organizing Committee to have *2012 Hours Against Hate* branded with the Olympics logo as a way to get athletes and fans alike participating in combating hate and leveraging the energy surrounding the 2012 Olympics. We were thrilled to learn in early January that the application was approved.



Interfaith Dinner and Dialogue

On January 11, I had the pleasure of speaking alongside Kazakh Ambassador Idrissov and Imam Feisal at the 4th Annual Interfaith Dinner and Dialogue for Religious Leaders at Kazakhstan's Permanent Mission to the United Nations. I stressed how important it is for countries to allow all religious practices and not restrict their citizens' freedom. These dinners are good opportunities to engage with religious leaders. Ambassador Idrissov mentioned the possibility of Kazakhstan hosting similar interfaith discussions throughout the United States.

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH:

France



I was a panelist, alongside **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO)** new Special Envoy for Holocaust Education, Samuel Pizar, at their one-day Holocaust Education Conference on January 31 in Paris. We discussed the need for comprehensive Holocaust curriculum for all members of society: school children, civic leaders, military, and journalists.



Director General of UNESCO Irina Bokova opened the conference and highlighted the need for global awareness of the Holocaust. Yehuda Bauer of Hebrew University stressed that the Holocaust could have been avoided, but not in 1939 when world attention only slowly and belatedly began to pay attention to Hitler. Rather, the Holocaust could only have been avoided earlier, by a coalition of the willing who saw the writing on the walls and stood up before

it was too late. Francois Masabo of the National University of Rwanda explained that each genocide, like the one in Rwanda, is planned. It is planned through propaganda, derogatory comments that become common and acceptable, and the language of inferiority and dehumanization. These lessons must be part of our Holocaust education – the bystander who adds to a culture of hate is not a bystander at all.

Continuing my UNESCO-related discussions, I met with the U.S. Ambassador to UNESCO David Killion and Israeli Ambassador to UNESCO Nimrod Barkan to talk about joint initiatives.

I also had bilateral meetings with officials of the French Ministry of Education to discuss their Holocaust Education curriculum. I saw Father Desbois of Yahad-in Unum, whom we honored at the State Department in May, to discuss ways the United States government could be helpful in pursuing his work searching for mass graves of Jews and Roma in Eastern Europe. Father Desbois intends to begin working in the Baltic region soon.

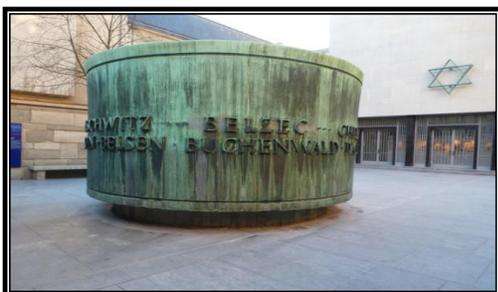
I also met with Dr. Richard Prasquier, President of the Council of Jewish Federations in France, where I heard about the community's security concerns. I met with Imam

Mohammed Azizi, Mohammed Benali, Rabbi Serfaty, and Jean-Francois Bensahel, partners of Twinning. Twinning is a project that brings Muslim and Jewish congregations and organizations together to share each other's traditions. I learned about their work bringing Jewish and Muslim youth together and sponsoring trips to Auschwitz. The U.S. Embassy in Paris arranged for a meeting with the director and coordinator of Humanity in Action, an education organization that works with youth to promote human rights. I also participated in a roundtable with prominent community and faith leaders. I learned that everyday discrimination such as employment discrimination and name calling is harder for Muslims than for Jews. But only the Jewish community is concerned both about the security of its buildings and its people.



My meeting with French Ministry of Education Officials - Laurent Wirth, Dean of History and Geography and Anne Rebeyrol, Head of the Office for Discrimination Prevention and Equality for Girls and Boys

While in Paris, I visited two very important sites. In the left photo, below, is the Shoah Memorial, the world's first Holocaust museum and memorial. In the photo on the right, there is a plaque commemorating the Vélodrome d'Hiver, the often overlooked site where, in 1942, 13,152 French Jews were arrested and held by the French police before being sent to their deaths at Auschwitz.



MEDIA:

Washington Jewish Week Interview

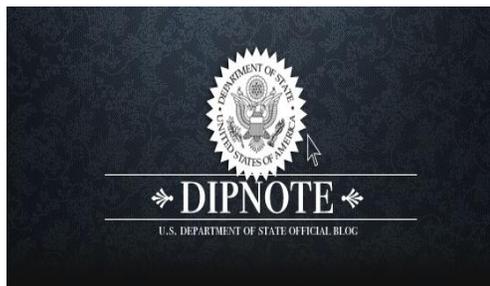
I was interviewed on January 4 for a column in the *Washington Jewish Week*, highlighting my work as Special Envoy. I spoke about my community relations-centered approach to monitoring and combating anti-Semitism and hate. I also stressed the importance of coalitions and the role which U.S. Embassies play.

CO.NX Webchat

On January 18, Special Representative Farah Pandith and I participated in a webchat concurrent with the U.S.-Brazil launch of *Teaching Respect for All* with UNESCO Director General Irena Bokova. In on-line conversations, I touted *2012 Hours Against Hate* to promote respect and address intolerance. After, Farah and I made a short video to support this new effort.

DipNote Blog

I blogged about my day at the [UNESCO Holocaust Education](#) conference in Paris on January 31. Here's an excerpt from my blog: "For just as the clouds were heavy, so too was the discussion of Holocaust education and how genocide and hatred still exist despite the global effort to teach the lessons of the Holocaust. And just as the sun poked through at the end of the day, so did the optimism that great minds can come together and tackle this problem."



DOMESTIC OUTREACH:

New York

International Holocaust Remembrance Day

The Nazi death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated on January 27, 1945. In 2005, that date was designated by the United Nations General Assembly as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The UN hosted an extensive roster of events during the week of January 23-27 focused on this year's theme, Children and the Holocaust.

I travelled to New York City on January 25 to participate in a commemoration of the Babi Yar massacre in Ukraine, sponsored by the Missions of Ukraine and of Israel to the United Nations. Following that, I attended a screening of “The Last Flight of Petr Ginz,” produced by the Documentary Film Center at Wake Forest University. It is about a 14-year-old artistic Czech boy who perished in Auschwitz at the age of 16. The UN created a [study guide](#) to accompany the film in all six official UN languages, plus Czech and Hebrew.



Babi Yar Commemoration at the United Nations

All UN member states should recognize this day and do their part to teach about the Holocaust. As part of the U.S. Government’s recognition of this important date, President Obama released a [statement](#), as did Secretary of State Clinton. You can read her statement [here](#).

Meetings with UN Agencies



I met with UNESCO’s Rochelle Roca-Hachem on January 26. We discussed our continued interest in working on Anti-Semitism and Holocaust educational issues, the appointment of Samuel Pizar as the new UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Holocaust Education, and my trip to Paris to participate in UNESCO’s Holocaust education conference.

Later I met with UN Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights Ivan Simanovic. We discussed the importance of engagement with Arab countries on issues of human rights and security and the delicate balance of protecting minorities and freedom of expression. I spoke about when legitimate criticism of Israel crosses over into anti-Semitism and my efforts to combat intolerance and hate. I also continued to push for the UNHRC to denounce hate, including anti-Semitism, consistently and publically wherever and whenever it occurs.

Georgetown University

On January 19, I kicked off the semester for Georgetown University's Program for Jewish Civilization with a talk about the six trends I have been observing in anti-Semitism. This presentation led to an invitation to be interviewed in February for the Program's webcast "Faith Complex."



Addressing Georgetown University's Program for Jewish Civilization

On February 10, I was interviewed by Professor Jacques Berlinerblau on "Faith Complex." I discussed my role and highlighted some successes in combating anti-Semitism as well as examples of anti-Semitism's increase in Europe and threats in South America. To see the interview, please click [here](#).

Florida and Wisconsin

I gave eight speeches to groups in Florida and Wisconsin, reaching over 2000 people. I presented the six trends of anti-Semitism and the importance of fighting anti-Semitism as part of our foreign policy goals. In Madison, I participated in a major high school initiative on their Human Rights Day.

On Saturday, February 11, I spoke to the congregation of **Temple Emanuel of Palm Beach** in West Palm Beach, Florida.

On Monday, February 13, the **Sun-Sentinel newspaper** and **Lynn University** co-sponsored a town hall meeting featuring me, Arthur Berger of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Andrew Rosenkranz of ADL, and Alan Goch of the *Jewish Journal*. The audience of about 500 people, including some Holocaust survivors and their families, heard about the rise in anti-Semitism around the world and the on-going need for education to prevent anti-Semitism and hate, especially as the Holocaust survivors, liberators and eyewitnesses are aging and some will not be with us much longer.

I briefed the Board of Directors of the **Greater Miami Jewish Federation**, which included 75 of the Federation’s top leadership. The meeting was followed by an event co-sponsored with the Anti-Defamation League at a local synagogue.

Going next to Madison, Wisconsin, I spoke to the **Madison Rotary Club** on February 15, followed by the **International Women’s Forum** on the 16th, and **East High School** on February 20.

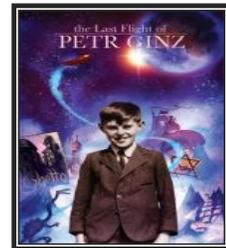


Addressing the Rotary Club of Madison

AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

The Last Flight of Petr Ginz

Having viewed *The Last Flight of Petr Ginz*, on January 6, I met with the film’s writer and director, Sandra Dickson, and her colleague Mary Dalton. The film is about a 14-year-old artistic Czech boy who perished in Auschwitz when he was 16. It was shown at the UN as part of its events for International Holocaust Remembrance Day. I plan to send the film, along with educational materials, to the State Department’s posts for programming for Holocaust Memorial Day on April 19 and in future years.



Simon Wiesenthal Center

On January 12, I met with Mark Weitzman regarding his concerns about a picture published in Lithuanian tabloid “Vakaro Zionios” on December 21. There, on the front page, was the Vilnius Rabbi, Sholom-Ber Krinsky. The headline said that Jews see no need to pay their Social Security taxes. There was no mention of Jews in the article. It created a negative impression that the Jews are robbing the people of Lithuania. I will monitor continuing developments there.

We also discussed the U.S. government's priorities for the coming year at the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Embassy of Ireland

I met Irish Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Kevin Conmy on January 12 to review Ireland's priorities for its OSCE chairmanship. Ireland plans to focus on intolerance in sports for the coming year. We discussed how that goal can be tied to other U.S. priorities, including a *2012 Hours Against Hate* partnership with the London Olympics and teaching tolerance in our schools. The DCM was open to working together to advance the tolerance agenda together this year.

Quarterly Meeting with Jewish Organizations

On January 18, I convened thirteen representatives from major Jewish organizations to update them on my activities since September. Discussion focused on the Alan Gross situation and my recent travels, including the prosecution of Nazi war criminals in the Baltics. These meetings are a way for me to keep civil society informed and learn about the concerns of Jewish communities around the world.

Speaking out about Human Rights

I hosted David Keyes of Advancing Human Rights and CyberDissidents.org and his colleague Ahd Al Heindi on January 17 for a discussion with officers from the Bureaus of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and Near East Asia Affairs about how the Department of State could amplify pro-democracy voices in the Middle East, and press for human rights and textbook reform.

U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican

I met with our Ambassador to the Holy See, Miguel Diaz, on January 20 to discuss a number of issues, including the opening of Vatican archives to scholars regarding the Church's role in WWII. I emphasized the need for the Church to make strong statements condemning anti-Semitism by church-sanctioned officials and groups. Ambassador Diaz has made strong efforts with the Vatican during his tenure to improve Christian-Jewish relations.

Training

I conducted training on February 6 for State Department officers and specialists working in the Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) bureau, which covers countries of the Middle East. Participants engaged in a discussion on anti-Semitism including blood-libel, conspiracy

theories, Holocaust glorification and denial, and anti-Semitism relative to Israel. I also shared my efforts to combat intolerance and hatred across the world and what challenges I found on my travels in the NEA countries.

U.S. - European Union Human Rights Consultations

On February 6, I led a discussion on anti-Semitism as part of the U.S. - European Union Human Rights Consultations, which took place at the State Department. Religious freedom was also on the agenda.

Hungary

I met with Gábor Csaba, the Director-General for the Americas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs out of Budapest, Hungary on February 8 to discuss U.S. strategic thinking related to the issue of anti-Semitism and religious tolerance.

On February 22, I met with Hungarian Ambassador György Szapáry to follow up on concerns about recent events in Hungary. We discussed anti-Semitism, Holocaust education, restitution issues, the Church Law, and the Raoul Wallenberg centennial anniversary. I reiterated my interest in travelling to Hungary in June to commemorate Wallenberg's contribution to Hungarians and Jews during WWII as a rescuer.

Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC)

On February 9, I met with Karl Altai (Head of JBANC), Henry Gaidis (Chairman of JBANC), and Harley Felstein (Family Services Counselor of Garden of Remembrance Cemetery), to learn about their activities to connect Baltic communities with Baltic-Americans, including Jews whose families emigrated from the region. Youth exchanges, cemeteries, think tanks and other links are being created. JBANC would like to create closer ties between Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

Ambassador of Saudi Arabia

On February 9, I met with Saudi Ambassador Al-Jubeir to discuss progress in our review of Saudi textbooks as well as a possible trip to Auschwitz this summer for Middle Eastern imams, including from Saudi Arabia. This is part of my strategy to combat Holocaust denial. In response to my giving Ambassador Al-Jubeir a copy of a book debunking the myth of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, he suggested hosting a conference on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia at the King's National Dialogue Center later this year.

Embassy of Greece

On February, 9, the Embassy of Greece's Deputy Chief of Mission Sophia Philippidou, conveyed an invitation to visit Greece from the Ministry of Education (MOE). The Holocaust is taught in schools in Greece, but the MOE introduced an extra class in a few schools and would like to work with me on the new course. The Greek Department of Justice is interested in promoting the *2012 Hours Against Hate* campaign. Since the London Olympic Committee has branded *2012 Hours Against Hate* for the Summer Games, we discussed using the Greek Olympic connection to further promote the initiative. I also raised the issue that a LAOS member of the Greek coalition government is a Holocaust denier and voiced my concern that anytime someone in leadership claims the Holocaust did not take place; it should be called out and strongly condemned.

Ambassador of Latvia

On February 9, I met with Latvian Ambassador Andrejs Pildegovics to discuss my April visit to Latvia, where he hopes that I will have the opportunity to see the progress that has been made with the Jewish community and have discussions with Latvians on a wide range of issues.

Intern visit to Holocaust Museum



I sponsored a fourth trip for State Department interns to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on February 22. Warren Marcus, an Educator of Global Classroom, introduced the group to the museum, and then the interns had a few hours to explore the museum.

INTERNET OUTREACH:

Facebook

 www.facebook.com/SERosenthal

Once you are signed into Facebook, search for my name and title: Hannah Rosenthal, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat anti-Semitism. The "Like" button is at the top of my page and has a thumbs-up symbol. The symbol disappears once you have "Liked" the page.

State.gov

Aside from following me on Facebook, I encourage all of you to visit my page on the Department of State's website (www.state.gov/j/drl/seas). You can quickly find my page by clicking [here](#). Or you can follow these instructions: Begin by going to the Department of State's homepage: www.state.gov. Then, please click on the "Democracy and Global Affairs" tab in the white toolbar. Then, please click on "Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)," and then click on "Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism" in the left vertical column. Here you will information about my office, as well as remarks, press releases, past issues of *The Monitor*, photos, and information about the *2011 Hours Against Hate* campaign.

HumanRights.gov

I also encourage you to visit HumanRights.gov, which is the U.S. government's official website for human rights related information. You can access the homepage [here](#), and you can access my personal page [here](#).

Twitter

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