

April 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 April issue of *The SEAS Monitor*. It covers my activities during the month of April. *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 postings entitled “Here’s What We’re Hearing: Anti-Semitism News Updates.” It is through these updates that we monitor global incidents of anti-Semitism. “Here’s What We’re Hearing: Jewish World News Updates” contains relevant news regarding positive efforts to promote tolerance and inter-religious cooperation.

For those of you who celebrated Passover, I hope you had a sweet, healthy, and peaceful Pesach. For those of you who celebrated Easter, I hope it was enjoyable. For those of you who celebrated other spring festivals, the same!

Please enjoy and keep in touch.

Warm regards,
Hannah

 www.state.gov/j/drl/seas/
 www.facebook.com/SERosenthal
 [@HannahAtState](https://twitter.com/HannahAtState)

EVENTS:

[Yom HaShoah Commemoration](#)
[The Rescuers](#)
[President Obama](#)
[Department of State Program Featuring Secretary Clinton and Annette Lantos](#)

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH:

[Latvia](#)
[Sweden](#)

DOMESTIC OUTREACH:

[Chicago Community Trust Fellowship](#)
[Anti-Defamation League Annual National Leadership Conference](#)

AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE:
[Intern Visit to the Holocaust Museum](#)
[Israeli Director for Combating Anti-Semitism](#)
[Incoming Canadian Chairman of ITF](#)

INTERNET OUTREACH:
[Facebook](#)
[State.gov](#)
[HumanRights.gov](#)
[Twitter](#)

EVENTS:

Yom HaShoah Commemoration

The Rescuers

To mark Yom HaShoah this year, we organized screening events of [The Rescuers](#) with our embassies in Vienna, Austria; Bratislava, Slovakia; and Bucharest, Romania. This documentary film, made by Michael King and produced by Joyce Mandell, tells the story of 13 diplomats from across the globe who were stationed in Europe during World War II. They relied on their strong moral compasses to save the lives of Jews fleeing the Nazis.

The Rescuers tour began in Vienna at the Amerika Haus on April 18. The [event](#), hosted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the U.S. Mission to the OSCE, was well received by over 100 people, including the Ambassadors of Belgium, Egypt, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Malta, Tajikistan, and Turkey, diplomats, public relations professionals, educators, and community leaders.



l-r: Michael King, Joyce Mandell, and
Ambassador Ian Kelly at the Amerika
Haus.

The film was then screened on April 19 at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, Slovakia as the opening event in the annual week-long “Fusion” Festival. The audience included many of the leading figures in the Slovak Jewish community. The film festival leader opened the showing by lighting a candle to commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day. Michael King and Joyce Mandell led an intriguing question and answer session following the screening.

The last stop of the *The Rescuers* tour was in Bucharest, Romania on April 20, where the filmmaker and producer were featured in a press conference to launch the Bucharest Jewish Film Festival. The audience of approximately 200 included the German Ambassador, the Japanese Ambassador, and the diplomatic community, among others. A Romanian Holocaust survivor commented afterwards and applauded their efforts in making the film.

President Obama

President Obama released a [statement](#) in honor of Yom HaShoah on April 19. I particularly liked this section:

“...We must resolve that “never again” is more than an empty slogan. As individuals, we must guard against indifference in our hearts and recognize ourselves in our fellow human beings. As societies, we must stand against ignorance and anti-Semitism, including those who try to deny the Holocaust. As nations, we must do everything we can to prevent and end atrocities in our time...”

President Obama also launched his [Genocide Prevention Initiative](#) at The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on April 23.

Department of State Program Featuring Secretary Clinton and Annette Lantos

The Office of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, headed by Ambassador Douglas Davidson, sponsored the Department of State’s annual observance of Yom Hashoah, featuring [Secretary Clinton](#) and Annette Lantos on April 27. Annette Lantos is the widow of the late Representative Thomas Lantos, the only Holocaust survivor to have served as a Member of Congress. In her remarks, Mrs. Lantos stressed that “indifference is the twin of evil.”

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH:

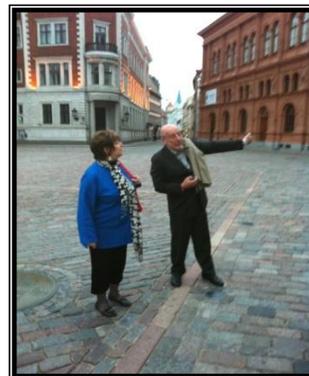
Latvia

Holocaust Remembrance Day is celebrated on July 4 in Latvia because it is the date the Germans burned down the Coral Synagogue – the main synagogue in Riga – with people

inside. Last year on that date, professors from Heidelberg University in Germany came to Latvia to ask for forgiveness because they are the descendants of university alumni who were influential in carrying out Nazi orders.

Latvia has identified 400 Holocaust Rescuers, and Yad V'Shem has honored 150 of these individuals as "righteous among the nations." Although I was happy to learn that, I was concerned about recent anti-Semitic incidents there.

Latvians who were in the Waffen SS hold annual marches on March 16 to honor those who died fighting during World War II. At this year's march, a poster of Hitler was hung at the Jewish Agency Building and the Latvian police refused to take it down when asked. The Jewish community called the Israeli Embassy to remove it, but it is very disturbing that the Latvian police failed to recognize how serious it is to hang a poster of Hitler in public.



Walking tour of Riga given by Council board member Dmitry Krupnikov



Dinner with the leadership of the Council of Jewish Communities in Latvia

While in Riga, I met with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs State Secretary Teikmanis** and officials from the **Ministry of Education** and **Ministry of Justice**. We discussed educational reform, as Latvia is attempting to bring all elements of education under the Ministry of Education's purview, and the importance of Holocaust education. While at the Ministry of Justice, I expressed my concern about the annual marches, as well as the promulgation of Nazi ideology, symbols, and glorification.

On the civil society side, I met with leading officials and students to address discrimination of all kinds, and introduced the *2012 Hours Against Hate* campaign.

I visited **Riga's Juglas High School** and spoke with the students about tolerance and integration from the American experience. I was eager to find out what Latvian youth think about societal integration, diversity, tolerance, hate crimes and anti-Semitism.

Rabbi Menahems Barkahans, Director of the Religious Community *Shamir*, gave me a tour of the Riga Ghetto and Latvian Holocaust Museum. I had dinner with the **Jewish Communal Heads** and attended lunch with NGO representatives where we discussed the causes of intolerance.

I also met with the **Israeli Ambassador to Latvia and Lithuania Hagit Ben-Yaakov** at **Ambassador Garber's** Residence. Ambassador Ben-Yaakov discussed collaboration with Yad Shem to have a children's exhibit on the Holocaust translated into Latvian so it can be brought to Latvia.

I visited the **Museum of the Occupation**, which focuses on the Soviet occupation of Latvia. It has a section with a picture of the Nazis entering Riga, and a newspaper caption reads: “Nazis greeted as liberators”. However, the museum does have a temporary exhibit up about **Rumbula** – the massacre outside of Riga where 25,000 Jews were killed in the course of two days in 1941. I encouraged them to make the exhibit permanent. I then went on to visit Rumbula before finishing my trip in Latvia.

Sweden

Raoul Wallenberg was a Swedish diplomat who rescued tens of thousands of Jews in Hungary during the Holocaust. He is the epitome of selflessness. I have long wanted to visit Sweden to honor him, and it was a timely visit to mark his 100th birthday as well as in light of recent anti-Semitic remarks by the mayor of Malmo.

I arrived in Sweden on April 23 and met with **Jewish Council member Lena Posner and Rabbi Shneur Kessleman and Katrin Dominique** from the **Jewish Community Center**. We discussed the Malmo Mayor’s comments as well as the importance of educating our youth and the value of coalition building, a very American concept. I was pleased to learn that many young people visit the Stockholm synagogue with their schools.



With the Swedish
Minister of Integration
Erik Ullenhag

On Tuesday, April 24, I attended the **Raoul Wallenberg commemoration** event at Lund University. Professor emeritus Kjell Åke Mod er, former United Nations (UN) Secretary General Kofi Annan, and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay delivered speeches about Raoul Wallenberg and Human Rights. After the event, I had dinner with Kofi Annan, Navi Pillay, and UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Margot Wallstrom.



Press Conference at the Ambassador’s
Residence

Travelling to Malmo, in southern Sweden, I met with **Mayor Ilmar Reepalu**. Reepalu concluded the meeting by stating that he will be careful with words and that he will not focus as much on Israel, will not hold Israel to a different standard than other countries, and will not hold Jews responsible for policies of the State of Israel. Later that week, I returned to Stockholm where I held a [press conference](#) at U. S. Ambassador Brzezinski’s residence to brief the press on my meeting with Mayor Reepalu.

At a roundtable in Malmo with a policy officer, a member of Malmo Against Discrimination Bureau, police officers, and representatives from Youth Against Racism, we discussed efforts to combat hatred. I learned that in 2010, Malmo adopted a strategic plan against discrimination, working through a network of NGOs to fight anti-Semitism. The Malmo Against Discrimination Bureau provides free legal advice on violations of human rights laws and Youth Against Racism runs Democracy Workshops for Malmo students.



Institute for Security and Development Policy
Conference on Anti-Semitism



At the Living History
Forum in Stockholm

In Stockholm on April 25, I was the keynote speaker for the **Institute for Security and Development Policy Conference**, “The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism–Implications for Europe and Sweden.” The panelists were: Professor Jean-Yves Camus (Political analyst and research fellow at Institut de Relations Internationales et Strategiques), Dr. Henrik Bachner (Lecturer in History of Ideas and Sciences), Dr. David Hirsh (Lecturer in Sociology, Goldsmiths College, University of London), and Dr. Mikael Tossavainen (Postdoctoral Fellow at the Kantor Center for Research of Contemporary European Jewry). I met with **Minister for EU Affairs Ohlssen**, where I stressed the need for good Holocaust education and talked about my efforts with UNESCO and UNRWA. I also met with **Minister of Integration Ullenhag**. At the conclusion of our meeting, Minister Ullenhag issued a strong [statement](#) condemning anti-Semitism and Mayor Reepalu’s continuing remarks. During a meeting with the **Minister of Religious Communities Stefan Attefall**, we discussed the rise of nationalism in Europe. Finally, I visited the **Living History Forum**, which has a government run institute whose goal is to promote tolerance, democracy, and human rights utilizing the Holocaust as a starting point.

DOMESTIC OUTREACH:

Chicago Community Trust

Darlene Oliver interviewed me for the Chicago Community Trust on April 5. We talked about what motivates me and what role faith plays in activities to advance social justice.

Anti-Defamation League Annual National Leadership Conference



At the ADL Conference

On April 30, I participated in a workshop panel, “Going Global in the Fight Against Anti-Semitism” for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Annual National Leadership Conference in Washington DC. Fred Turner, Senior Adviser to the Congressional Helsinki Commission, and Susan Heller Pinto, ADL’s Director of Middle Eastern Affairs and International Analysis, were co-panelists. The Conference attendees consisted of 120 ADL lay leaders, executive committee members, and young leadership institute participants. I discussed the six trends of anti-Semitism I am tracking and my role as Special Envoy, and stressed the importance of building coalitions, of Jews speaking about hatreds of all kinds, and of non-Jews speaking out against anti-Semitism.

AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

Intern Visit to the Holocaust Museum

I sponsored the fifth intern visit to the Holocaust Museum on April 5 for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor as well as all State Department interns. Holocaust Museum’s Senior Advisor of External Affairs, Arthur Berger, welcomed the group and gave introductory remarks before the visitors began their own self-paced tours. By popular request, more visits will be offered.

Israeli Director for Combating Anti-Semitism

My team met with Ambassador Gideon Behar, Director of the Department for Combating Anti-Semitism in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We shared the six trends we are seeing in anti-Semitism and our efforts to monitor and combat anti-Semitism and heard about his main concerns. We look forward to working together moving forward.

Incoming Canadian Chairman of ITF

My team met with Mario Silva of Canada, who will become the Chairman of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research (ITF) in 2013. We look forward to working with him, in coordination with our colleagues in the Office of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, next year.

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, click on the “Democracy and Global Affairs” tab in the white toolbar. Then, 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 find 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

Please also follow me on twitter! You can find me at:  [@HannahAtState](https://twitter.com/HannahAtState).