

May 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 May issue of *The SEAS Monitor*. It covers my activities during the month of May. *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.

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:

[The Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service Roundtable](#)

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL:

[Winnipeg](#)
[Rome](#)

DOMESTIC OUTREACH:

[Congressman Engel](#)
[AJC Global Forum](#)
[Milwaukee's Cream City Foundation](#)

MEDIA:

[2012 Hours Against Hate](#)
[Tony Blair Faith Foundation Video](#)
[Interview with *The Jewish Hour*](#)

AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

[Venezuelan Jewish Community](#)

[Germany's Special Representative for Relations with Jewish Organizations](#)

[Quarterly meeting with Jewish Organizations](#)

[Secretary General of the Austrian National Fund](#)

STAFF CHANGES

INTERNET OUTREACH:

[Facebook](#)

[State.gov](#)

[HumanRights.gov](#)

[Twitter](#)

EVENTS:

The Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service Roundtable

I participated in a discussion entitled "Active Remembrance: Experiences and the Future" to mark 20 Years of the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service (Gedenkdienst) on May 23. The Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service is an alternative to Austria's compulsory national military service whose participants serve at major Holocaust memorial institutions throughout the world. The event, at the Embassy of Austria, was hosted by Austria's Ambassador to the United States, Hans-Peter Manz. Participants included Holocaust survivors, current and former Memorial servants, U.S. Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues Douglas Davidson and representatives from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. We discussed how to keep the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service program relevant as survivors and witnesses are passing away. The young people who are part of the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service program were impressive, giving me hope for the future.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL:

Winnipeg

The U.S. Consulate in Winnipeg, Canada, hosted me on May 7 for a videoconference about my activities and my observations about anti-Semitism in Canada. Religious leaders, academics, and public policy makers from Ottawa and Vancouver as well as Winnipeg participated in a lively discussion. I also met with Canadian Museum for Human Rights CEO Stuart Murray and got a tour of the building site. Later that evening, I delivered the Canadian Institute for the Study of Anti-Semitism's [inaugural Shindelman Family Lecture](#) to a large audience at the Fort Garry Hotel.

Rome

I have wanted to visit Rome since I was first appointed Special Envoy. My timing in going to Rome was great, as I arrived on the same day that Cardinal Kurt Koch, who heads the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, was delivering the fifth annual Pope John Paul II [Lecture on Interreligious Understanding, "Building on Nostra Aetate: 50 Years of Christian-Jewish Dialogue."](#) He spoke about the significance of Nostra Aetate in emphasizing the Jewish roots of Christianity and how Jews have an ally in the Catholic Church in our shared struggle against anti-Semitism.



I met with Cardinal Koch and his staff two days later to discuss the desire of our government and Jewish communities to see the Vatican's Holocaust-era archives opened, as survivors are aging and passing. Without committing to a specific date, the Cardinal's staff told me that the Vatican is working diligently to open the archives, which they noted contained some two million folders of 1-1000 pages that first needed to be catalogued. Following the lecture I had dinner with the Cardinal and staff from the Vatican, as well as interreligious leaders. Dinner was hosted by the Russell Berrie Foundation.



During my time hosted by the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, Miguel Diaz, and his terrific staff, I also had the chance to meet with Father Philipp Renczes, Director of the Bea Centre for Judaic Studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University. Cardinal Bea was a critical part of developing Nostra Aetate and prominent in the ecumenical movement. The Center that is named for him has regular academic exchanges. I met with Israeli Ambassador to the Holy See Mordechai Lewy to hear his views on the Vatican's Christian-Jewish dialogue

initiatives, and also with Angelica Berrie, President of the Russell Berrie Foundation, and Rabbi Jack Bemporad, director of the John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue, whose organizations co-sponsored the May 16th lecture by Cardinal Koch. We talked about the possibility of creating a “think tank” of high-ranking members of various faith communities to issue statements whenever acts of intolerance occur.

The rest of my time in Rome was dedicated to meeting with Italian government officials, Parliamentarians, and Jewish community leaders. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I met with Under Secretary Marta Dassu. We discussed the resurgence of nationalism in Europe. She mentioned that anti-Semitism is coming from the new far right in Italy and noted problems with minority integration, including how combined anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments have been prevailing.

I also met with the Under Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior, Carlo De Stefano, and his colleagues Angela Pria, who heads the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, Massimo Bontempi, Deputy Director of the Counter-Terrorism Office, and other officials. I learned that Italy closely monitors anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia. While they do not consider anti-Semitism to be a great problem in Italian society, it was noted that anti-Israel sentiment has served to unify groups on the extreme right and left. The Ministry of the Interior is also working to train police in monitoring and combating anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination.



In my meeting with Anna Piperno of the Ministry of Education, I learned that the Shoah is a mandatory subject in high school, with requisite training for teachers and trips to Yad VaShem for teachers and bringing students to Auschwitz.

At Rome’s Grand Synagogue, I met with Riccardo Pacifici, the President of the Roman Jewish community. He shared his community’s views on the opening of the Vatican archives and beatification of Pope Pius XII as well as stories of family members’ rescues during the Holocaust by members of the local Catholic Church and families. I also met with David Gerbi, a representative of the World Organization of Libyan Jews, who is working to preserve a synagogue and cemetery in Tripoli so that Libyan Jews can visit their roots.



During my meeting with Parliamentarian Fiamma Nirenstein, she shared her view that anti-Semitism is relatively mild in Italy, and that she always finds an ally in the Vatican for fighting contemporary anti-Semitism. One of her political colleagues, Mara Carfagna, the former Minister for Equal Opportunity, embraced the *2012 Hours Against Hate* campaign. I look forward to hearing news of it from Rome.

DOMESTIC OUTREACH:

Congressman Engel

I met with Congressman Eliot Engel on May 9 to discuss a briefing to the Anti-Semitism caucus. He has developed coalitions with South America, Ukraine, and Albania. Congressman Engel discussed what he has observed on his travels, which were very similar to mine. Our staff are coordinating a date for the briefing.

AJC Global Forum

At the 2012 American Jewish Committee's Global Forum, Advocacy in Actions, I discussed my observations of anti-Semitism around the world during a session entitled "Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism."

Milwaukee's Cream City Foundation

On May 29, I spoke to Milwaukee's Cream City Foundation, which is a NGO focused on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community (LGBT) issues. I discussed how unanswered intolerance can lead to horrific events and how hatreds of LGBT individuals and Jews overlap and need to be fought together.

MEDIA:

2012 Hours Against Hate

In May, the Greek Olympic Committee and the NGO Olympic Truce participated in the *2012 Hours Against Hate* campaign, acknowledging its unique role in Olympic history by offering the U.S. Ambassador to Greece the opportunity to carry the Olympic Flame. Following the lighting of the Olympic Flame in Ancient Olympia on May 10, Ambassador Daniel B. Smith carried the flame through the nearby town of Lechena. As the Ambassador carried the flame into town, he was warmly received by the Mayor, the municipal band, local and

national media, and dozens of local residents. "It was a great honor for me to participate in the Relay and to pass on the Olympic Flame, which symbolizes peace and friendship amongst people and countries," said Ambassador Smith.



Ambassador Daniel B. Smith, joined by his son Erik, participates in the 2012 Olympic Torch Relay, following the Lighting of the Olympic Flame in Ancient Olympia.

Tony Blair Faith Foundation Video

Special Representative to Muslim Communities Farah Pandith and I taped "[My Friend of a Different Faith](#)" video on May 11 for a campaign by the Tony Blair Faith Foundation to highlight the rich diversity of faiths and cultures in the world and to showcase interfaith friendships and positive relationships between people of different religions. We discussed our interfaith friendship and how it inspired us to launch the *2012 Hours Against Hate* campaign.

Interview with *The Jewish Hour*

I was [interviewed](#) by Herschel Finman for the radio program, *The Jewish Hour* (WLQV 1500 AM – Detroit) on May 11. The 20-minute interview covered my position as the Special Envoy, my recent trip to Sweden, including my meeting with Malmo Mayor Ilmar Reepalu, and the ramifications of that meeting.

AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

Venezuelan Jewish Community

On May 2, I met with David Bittan, the president of the Venezuela Jewish Community (CAIV), and his colleagues, who compose the leadership of the CAIV, to discuss anti-Semitism in Venezuela.

Germany's Special Representative for Relations with Jewish Organizations

I met with Ambassador-at-Large Victoria Zimmermann von Siefert on May 3 to discuss anti-Semitism in Europe and anti-Semitic trends in Germany. Ambassador Zimmermann invited me to visit Buchenwald and Bad Arolsen, the home of the International Tracing Service (the largest collection of Holocaust-era documents and archives) with her this summer.

Quarterly meeting with Jewish Organizations

On May 10, I hosted a quarterly meeting to discuss the [Human Rights Report](#), which was released on May 24. Anti-Semitism was covered in 70 country reports. I also shared information about my travels, including meetings with Jewish leaders and government officials, programming for U.S. embassies around *The Last Flight of Petr Ginz*, and the 2012 *Hours Against Hate* campaign and the London Olympics. I am interested in hearing more about events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the massacre at the Munich Olympics.

Secretary General of the Austrian National Fund

I met with Hannah Lessing, the Secretary General of the General Settlement Fund of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism, on May 23. We talked about how to commemorate and impart the lessons of the Holocaust after all the direct survivors, witnesses, liberators, and rescuers die and we are unable to learn from them first-hand.

STAFF CHANGES:

We had to say good-bye to outstanding colleagues Elena Green, Adela Levis, and Julia Hozakowska this month. Debra Eichenbaum is approaching her first Presidential Management Fellowship rotation to the Department of Homeland Security, starting in July. New staff is coming soon, so stay tuned. If you would like to get in contact with us please contact [Stacy Davis](#), [Olivia Hilton](#), [Victoria Wolf](#), and/or [Kendra Young](#).

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).