

The Monitor

July 2013

Dear Readers,

This is the July edition of the *Monitor*. It is also the first edition of the Monitor that we have released since I became the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism. This edition of the *Monitor* covers our activities from May 2013 to the present. Interim Special Envoy Ambassador Michael Kozak did a stellar job during his eight-month tenure and I am very grateful for all of his efforts.

We are proud to announce that SEAS launched a new Twitter account @AntiSemitismGov. We will be using this account to share updates from the field and as a forum to discuss anti-Semitism with the public. I also encourage you to “Like” the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Facebook Page. This page covers everything going on in our bureau, including my updates as the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism. The Bureau’s Facebook page is www.Facebook.com/StateDRL.

Thank you for your continued interest and support of our work.

Best wishes,

Ira Forman

 www.state.gov/j/drl/seas



State Department Photo

In this Issue

Events **3.**

[Lost Music of the Holocaust Multi-media Program](#)

[International Imams Trip to Germany and Poland](#)

[Israel Trip](#)

[Travel to Belgium for Raoul Wallenberg Commemoration](#)

[OSCE Conference in Berlin](#)

[American Jewish Committee *Global Forum*](#)

At the Department of State **9.**

[Foundation for Ethnic Understanding](#)

[Meeting with the Spanish Ambassador to the Jewish Community](#)

[Meeting with the Estonian Ambassador to the U.S.](#)

[Meeting with the Hungarian Ambassador to the U.S.](#)

[Meeting with Jewish Organizations](#)

On the Hill **11.**

[Meeting with Senator Ben Cardin \(D-Maryland\)](#)

[Civil Society's *IRF Roundtable* Holds Second Annual IRF Event](#)

Training **11.**

[Foreign Service Institute](#)

[Intern Trip to Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)

Events

Department Multi-Media Program on the Lost Music of the Holocaust



Ambassador Douglas Davidson, Bret Werb, Julia Fromholz, and Dahlan Robert Foah (State Department Photo)

On June 18, I hosted a multi-media event at the Department to commemorate the artists who continued to create music while incarcerated in Nazi death camps. Holocaust survivor Annette Lantos (widow of Congressman Tom Lantos) was among the 125 attendees, who included diplomats, NGO representatives, academics and others. The program received extensive media coverage, including a wire service piece by Agence France Presse that was picked up by international media outlets from Singapore to Spain. Bret Werb, Music Curator at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, gave the keynote address. We watched a documentary film montage featuring the music and musicians of the Holocaust, which concluded with a message of support from Dr. Judea Pearl of The Daniel Pearl Foundation. The lively panel discussion was moderated by Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues Douglas Davidson, with a distinguished group of panelists, representing a broad range of expertise. In addition to Mr. Werb, the panelists included Julia Fromholz, Special Assistant in the Office of the Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, who discussed the Atrocities Prevention Board and its work to prevent future genocides and other mass atrocities in the 21st century; and

Dahlan Robert Foah, Co-Producer and Music Director of the Atlanta-based NGO “Creativity in Captivity.” The event concluded with the U.S. premiere of a set of piano variations composed in the Dachau concentration camp by Polish POW Leon Kaczmarek. The pianist was 17 year-old Nicholas Biniacz-Harris, grandson and great-grandson of Schindler’s List Holocaust survivors. An excerpt from his performance can be viewed [here](#). An article about the program appeared on the Department’s DipNote blog on June 19. My remarks can be found [here](#). A blog entitled “A Meditation on Remembrance” by the World Jewish Congress’ Menachem Rosensaft, which appeared in The Washington Post, was published on June 25.

International Imams Trip to Germany and Poland



U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, Ira Forman, and Imam Mohamed Magid, President of the Islamic Society of North America, listen to a description of the inhumane living conditions in the wooden barracks for prisoners at Auschwitz II-Birkenau. Thousands of inmates were crowded into the former horse stables with four or more prisoners forced to share each bed. Fuel was rarely, if ever, provided for the furnaces in the barracks. Conditions were so poor that Nazi SS Guards would often refuse to even enter the structures. (State Department Photo)

Immediately after my May 20 swearing in ceremony with Secretary of State John Kerry, I boarded a plane for Warsaw and joined a group of international imams and Islamic scholars from nine different countries visiting historic Holocaust sites. The State Department supported the trip with funding and Ambassador Michael Kozak also participated. It was my first visit to the Auschwitz and Birkenau camps. Seeing these places had a profound effect on all of us. Sometimes reaction was instantaneous, as many wept when faced with Holocaust victims’ personal effects like shoes or toothbrushes that could have belonged to any of us or our children. The imams knelt and prayed at a wall where hundreds were executed by firing squad. Other reactions were formulated after careful reflection, like the [statement](#) signed by every

participating imam condemning Holocaust denial and all forms of anti-Semitism. I was very moved, not only by seeing the gruesome Nazi death camps, but also through conversations with survivors and seeing the reactions of the imams. If I needed any sort of wake-up call about the serious nature of my responsibilities in monitoring and combating anti-Semitism, this trip certainly provided it.

Israel Trip



Opening session of the Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism
(Photo courtesy of Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Continuing to my second international stop, I visited Israel during the week of May 27, primarily to attend the Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism (May 28-30). At the conference, I participated in the Working Group on Anti-Semitism in the guise of Delegitimization and Anti-Zionism and spent valuable time meeting diplomats, non-governmental organization representatives and Jewish community members from around the world. Outside of the conference, I met with Israeli and Palestinian Authority officials, the Israel Religious Action Center, and the head of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In my meeting with the Palestinian Education Minister, we discussed the importance of engaging in dialogue so that schoolchildren will have good examples of creating connections among people. I raised concerns about the portrayal of Jews in educational material and social media, and learned that a comprehensive review of Palestinian textbooks is coming up by the Palestinian Authority. I also met with the Director General for the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, who participates in the Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land. We talked about interfaith relationships, particularly focusing on Jewish-Catholic relations. I plan to continue my predecessor's outreach to other faith communities.

On the margins of the conference, I participated in media interviews, resulting in a story on my appointment in The Jerusalem Post.

I especially appreciated the opportunity to meet many key Jewish community members from countries like Venezuela and Hungary, plus NGO representatives, including from the Aladdin Project, to talk about recent experiences and create connections for future collaboration.

Travel to Belgium for Raoul Wallenberg Commemoration



Special Envoy Forman speaks with a “Hidden Child” Holocaust Survivor following a program in Brussels commemorating Raoul Wallenberg (State Department Photo)

I visited Brussels June 11-12 to deliver remarks on combating anti-Semitism as part of a commemoration of Raoul Wallenberg, held at the Kazerne Dossin Memorial, Museum, and Documentation Center on Holocaust and Human Rights in Mechelen. Sweden organized the event, with participation by Belgium and the embassies of Hungary, Israel and the U.S. Following my remarks and a presentation by Ambassador Gideon Behar, Director of the Department for Combating Anti-Semitism at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Sweden’s Ambassador to Belgium, Ulrika Sundberg, moderated a question and answer session. The event was open to the public, and because of the focus on education, there was strong participation by school teachers. One walk-in guest was a “Hidden Child” during the Holocaust. She identified

herself during the question period and thanked me for commemorating the heroism of people who helped others during the Holocaust.

In addition, I met with Belgian Jewish leaders, NGOs, and government officials about their perception that anti-Semitism in Belgium is rising, particularly among Muslim youth. Although the number of complaints received by the quasi-governmental Center for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism has remained relatively constant at about 55-60 per year, the Center's Director Jozef De Witte told me that the Jewish community was feeling more threatened in recent years, partially as a result of growing anger in the Muslim community over the situation in the Middle East, which often serves as a pretext for anti-Semitic speech or acts. A roundtable of leaders from the Brussels and Antwerp Jewish communities told me that the atmosphere has grown worse in recent years: religious Jews are reluctant to wear the kippah on public transport for fear of verbal or physical violence, secular Jewish families who never previously considered sending their children to Jewish schools are now doing so because of the hostile climate in many urban public schools, and the resolve of political elites to combat anti-Semitism seems half-hearted to them. This, they argue, is due in part to the fact that such a large portion of the electorate is Muslim (around 400,000-600,000 as compared to 40,000 Jews). Despite this, Jewish leaders acknowledged that the Government of Belgium had taken an important step last year by publicly apologizing for the Belgian State's role in the deportation of an estimated 25,000 Jews in World War II, a measure which opens the way for more Holocaust education programs in schools.

OSCE Conference in Berlin



Talking with Greek OSCE representative about Golden Dawn and other issues affecting the Jewish community in Greece
(State Department Photo)

In Berlin on June 13, I addressed a conference held by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) titled “Addressing the Security Needs of Jewish Communities in

the OSCE Region: Challenges and Good Practices.” I also participated in a press conference with four other panelists from the conference. Bringing together government and law enforcement officials with Jewish community leaders from the OSCE region is particularly valuable as it allows Jewish communal leaders and government representatives to share best practices for protecting the community. For me it was extremely helpful to understand the type of security pressures Jewish communities face in Europe, and to hear people express great concern over growing levels of anti-Semitism in certain European countries.

American Jewish Committee *Global Forum*



(Photo courtesy of American Jewish Committee)

On June 4, I had the honor of addressing a crowded room of more than 100 at the American Jewish Committee’s annual *Global Forum* in Washington on “Stemming the Tide: Confronting the Rise of Global Anti-Semitism.” I discussed global trends in anti-Semitism and what our office is doing to combat its spread. My remarks can be found [here](#). The evening before, Secretary Kerry addressed a plenary session of the Global Forum. His remarks are [here](#).

At the Department of State

Foundation for Ethnic Understanding



Talking with leaders and participants at the roundtable (Photos courtesy of BJ Holtgrewe)

On June 4, I participated in an open discussion at the Department with Muslim and Jewish leaders from Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. These religious leaders were participating in a trip to the U.S. sponsored by the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding. I was joined by Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Countries Rashad Hussain and the Deputy Special Representative to Muslim Communities Adnan Kifayat. The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding brought the group to Washington to learn about interfaith activities. I shared with the group my experiences in joining the trip of imams and Islamic scholars to Poland.



Meeting with the Spanish Ambassador to the Jewish Community

I met with Alvaro Albacete, Spain's Ambassador at Large for Relations with the Jewish Community and Organizations, on June 5. The Spanish government is working on two new pieces of legislation – one to grant Spanish nationality to descendents of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492 and another to classify Holocaust denial as a hate crime. Ambassador Albacete is proposing a conference on anti-Semitism in November, and invited our office to participate.



Meeting with the Estonian Ambassador to the U.S.

I met with Estonian Ambassador Marina Kaljurand on June 20 to discuss Estonia's actions to combat anti-Semitism. We discussed the long and sometimes painful history of the Jewish community in her country and, she cited Estonia's efforts to build stronger relations with the Jewish community. She informed us that Jewish institutions in Estonia do not require special security measures. We also discussed the issue of veterans' parades and the wearing of Nazi-era uniforms.



Meeting with the Hungarian Ambassador to the U.S.

On June 28, I met with the Ambassador of Hungary, György Szapáry, to discuss actions the Hungarian government is taking to combat anti-Semitism. The Ambassador emphasized education, particularly about the Holocaust, as the key to changing hearts and minds, which is crucial for a long-term solution to this issue in Hungary. The Hungarian officials also highlighted Hungary's active relationship with and political support for Israel. I recognized the actions the Hungarian government has taken thus far to combat anti-Semitism, such as hosting the World Jewish Congress in May, and also shared my concerns about anti-Semitic statements—particularly coming from one of the opposition parties, Jobbik. We also discussed the very troubling problem of Jobbik forming para-military type organizations. The Ambassador expressed his desire to maintain a strong bilateral relationship as his government moves forward in dealing with anti-Semitism.

Meeting with Jewish Organizations

I look forward to hosting my first quarterly meeting in September to report on my recent trips to Belgium, Germany, Israel and Poland and to discuss how we can work together to further our mutual goals.

On the Hill

Meeting with Senator Ben Cardin (D-Maryland)

On June 27, I met with Senator Cardin, Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, to let him know of my interest in working together to combat anti-Semitism in the OSCE region and around the world. Senator Cardin expressed his strong support for my mission, and noted his concern about the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe over the past several years. I look forward to meeting with other Members of Congress to introduce myself and work with them on combating anti-Semitism.

Civil Society's IRF Roundtable Holds Second Annual IRF Event on the Hill: Discussion of Partnerships between Civil Society and Government

On June 27, I joined Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Suzan Johnson Cook and DRL Deputy Assistant Secretary Jane Zimmerman in a meeting bringing government and civil society representatives together to discuss how we could work together to advance international religious freedom. DAS Zimmerman underscored the importance of civil society in the policymaking process, while Ambassador Johnson Cook highlighted the Department's commitment to using a broad range of diplomatic and programmatic initiatives to advance religious freedom globally and the renewed mandate for the Secretary's Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society.

Training

Foreign Service Institute

The SEAS team and I taught modules on monitoring and combating anti-Semitism at the Foreign Service Institute's classes on Human Rights on July 11. Earlier in the year a SEAS team member presented a module on anti-Semitism to a group of diplomats whose onward assignments were in Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus. These classes enable State Department personnel to better recognize anti-Semitism and highlight tools for combating it when detected.

Intern trip to Holocaust Museum

The previous Special Envoy, Hannah Rosenthal, instituted periodic visits to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as a way to educate our interns and newly-arrived staff. We are currently organizing a summer intern trip to the Museum on July 25, where they will receive an introduction to the museum's mission and view the exhibits at their own pace.

Online Outreach

 [Facebook.com/StateDRL](https://www.facebook.com/StateDRL)

Once you are signed into Facebook, search Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. The “Like” button is at the top of the page and has a thumbs-up symbol. The symbol disappears once you have “Liked” the page.

State.gov

I also encourage all of you to visit our page on the [Department of State’s website](http://www.state.gov) (www.state.gov/j/drl/seas). You can also 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 our office, as well as remarks, press releases, past issues of *The Monitor*, and photos.

HumanRights.gov

You can also visit HumanRights.gov, which is the U.S. government’s official website for international human rights related information.