

The Monitor

August 2013

Dear Readers,

This is the August edition of the *Monitor*. This edition of the *Monitor* covers my activities from July 2013 to the present.

This Tisha B'Av I was quite struck by a few remarks by my Rabbi before we read from the book of Lamentations. He noted that often a person experiencing profound sorrow is also a person who is alone. As I reflect on my first three months as the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism I believe that one of our most important jobs in this office is to reassure individuals, as well as Jewish communities, that they are not alone as they are forced to confront the many manifestations of modern anti-Semitism.

The following evening I broke my fast at an Iftar meal hosted by Israel's Ambassador to the United States. Among the guests at the Ambassador's residence that evening were two Imams who had recently visited Poland on a State Department-sponsored trip to see the former Nazi death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau and speak to survivors. Both of these religious leaders expressed to me how dedicated they are to teaching their communities about the evils of anti-Semitism and the profound lessons all of us can take from remembering the Holocaust. I can't think of a better way to combat anti-Semitism than to have the active assistance of leaders from other faiths. I can't think of a better way to send the message to the victims of anti-Semitism that they are not alone than to have clergy from other faith traditions take up this fight.

I wish you a happy, healthy and a sweet New Year.

Best wishes,

Ira Forman

 www.state.gov/j/drl/seas

In this Issue

Events **3.**

[Remarks at the Anti-Defamation League’s Chicago Regional Centennial Celebration](#)

[Ambassador Oren Hosts Iftar at Embassy of Israel](#)

[Remarks at “Holocaust Studies for Educators” Program at Georgetown University](#)

[Agudath Israel Gathering at the White House](#)

At the Department of State **5.**

[Roundtable on Interfaith Dialogue and Combating Extremism at the Foreign Service Institute](#)

[Secretary Kerry’s Iftar](#)

[Meeting with the Ambassador of Turkey](#)

[Meeting with the Latino and Latin American Institute of the American Jewish Committee](#)

On the Hill **6.**

[“Extremism in Europe” Briefing for Hill staffers](#)

Training **7.**

[Foreign Service Institute](#)

[Intern Trip to Holocaust Museum](#)

[DRL Intern Brown Bag Discussion](#)

Staff Changes **9.**

Online Outreach **9.**

Events



Remarks at the Anti-Defamation League Chicago Regional Centennial Celebration

On July 8, I addressed about 250 people in Chicago to mark the ADL's centenary. In my remarks I explained our mission and reported on my first two months on the job. I also congratulated the ADL on its 100-year history of dedication to the cause of combating anti-Semitism. Working towards the vital mission to "Imagine a World without Hate," the ADL has shown itself to be a force for change, a champion of America's values, and a shield against extremism. My remarks can be found [here](#).

I also discovered that a small percentage of the audience knew there was a Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, so domestic outreach must be a part of our mission in the coming years.

I am honored to join the ADL and organizations around the world seeking peace and working toward a world that can move past hate. I reiterated that I look forward to working with ADL in the months and years to come.



Ambassador Oren Hosts Iftar at Embassy of Israel

As mentioned earlier I attended an Iftar meal hosted by Israel's Ambassador to the United States, Michael Oren on July 16. The Ambassador's residence was packed with representatives from the Muslim community in Washington as well as Jewish communal leaders. It was particularly meaningful for many of us that about one half hour after the Muslim leaders broke their day-time Ramadan fast, Jewish participants broke their Tisha B'Av fast.

Remarks at “Holocaust Studies for Educators” Program at Georgetown University



Special Envoy Forman addressing Karski Institute participants at the Department of State (photo courtesy of Rachel Levin)

On July 19, I addressed a group of American teachers participating in the “Holocaust Studies for Educators” program run by Georgetown University and the Jan Karski Institute for Holocaust Education. I shared with this group what it means to monitor and combat anti-Semitism and the role history plays in shaping how I approach our work. The Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, Douglas Davidson, also addressed this group. More information about this program for teachers can be found [here](#).

Executive Branch meeting with Agudath Israel of America Biennial National Leadership Mission to Washington



*Special Envoy Forman addressing Agudath Israel delegates (Photo courtesy of matzav.com
<http://matzav.com/pictorial-overview-of-agudath-israel-of-americas-mission-to-washington-iv>)*

On July 25, I spoke to the Agudath Israel of America Biennial National Leadership Mission to Washington in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. I expressed concern at increasing anti-Semitism worldwide, and, emphasized the importance of protecting Jewish communities under pressure around the world. Over 150 leaders from the American Orthodox Jewish community heard presentations from me and other Administration officials.

At the Department of State

Roundtable on “Interfaith Dialogue, Religious Freedom, and Combating Violent Extremism”

On July 23, I participated in a one-day roundtable on “Interfaith Dialogue, Religious Freedom, and Combating Violent Extremism,” cosponsored by the Foreign Service Institute and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. I joined colleagues in government and civil society, including religious leaders, as we shared lessons learned and discussed best practices in this critical area. I moderated a panel discussion with Oliver Wilcox, Director, Countering Violent Extremism Unit in the Department of State’s Bureau of Counterterrorism and David Hunsicker, Senior Conflict Advisor, U.S. Agency for International Development. I also had the opportunity to speak about my experiences with interfaith dialogue, including my travel with imams to Auschwitz-Birkenau this spring.

Secretary Kerry's Iftar



Secretary of State Kerry addresses Iftar dinner at the Department of State (Department of State photo)

On July 24, I attended Secretary Kerry's Iftar in the diplomatic reception rooms at the Department. The Secretary spoke, as did Farah Pandith, Special Representative to Muslim Communities. I was joined by several participants from the May 2013 International Imams Trip to Germany and Poland.



Meeting with the Turkish Ambassador

I met with Namık Tan, the Ambassador of Turkey to the United States, on August 2. I expressed my concern over anti-Semitic comments related to the recent civil unrest and urged the Government of Turkey to speak out and condemn all forms of anti-Semitism in Turkish society.

Meeting with the Latino and Latin American Institute of the American Jewish Committee



On August 1, I met with Dina Siegel Vann, Director of the Latino and Latin American Institute of the American Jewish Committee in Washington, DC, for a briefing on AJC's work in the region. We talked in particular about the communities in Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, and Venezuela and I learned that the AJC has visited Venezuela four times, most recently in 2009 after a government raid on a synagogue.

On the Hill

“Extremism in Europe” Briefing for Hill staffers

On July 12, I spoke at a congressional staff briefing on “Recent Developments in the Rise of Extremism in Europe.” I highlighted Hungary and Greece, among other countries, as important to monitor for anti-Semitism linked to extremism. In Hungary, for example, we have seen the rise of Jobbik, an openly anti-Semitic and anti-Roma party with seats in Parliament, which also has a paramilitary branch. In addition, the Hungarian government has had an uneven response to anti-Semitic incidents over the past few years; it is incumbent upon government leaders to set an example by speaking out strongly and consistently against hate and intolerance of all kinds. Greece has seen the rise of the Golden Dawn party, which also has seats in parliament and promulgates anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant acts and statements, along with a paramilitary branch. I reiterated my plans to engage diplomatically and with civil society in order to counter extremist views.

Training



Foreign Service Institute

On July 11, Stacy Davis and I team-taught a module on anti-Semitism and discussed monitoring and combating anti-Semitism with about 20 students in the Foreign Service Institute's Human Rights and Democracy class. We noted that anti-Semitism and religious freedom were covered by DRL/IRF and encouraged personnel at posts to report incidents to us and reach out for support when tackling these issues.



State Department interns visit U.S. Holocaust Museum (Photo courtesy of Rachel Levin, SEAS summer intern)

DRL Intern Visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Maintaining the tradition of exposing DRL staff to issues of anti-Semitism, I sponsored a visit on July 25 of DRL summer interns to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where they were given an introduction to the museum's mission by Dana Burns, Planning Coordinator, and then viewed the exhibits at their own pace.

DRL Intern Brown Bag Discussion

On August 8, I led a brown bag lunch discussion for DRL summer interns. I shared career advice and my impressions of work in government with this exceptional group of students. It was my pleasure to impart some of the knowledge I've picked up along the way and answer their questions. I look forward to seeing where the careers of these promising interns will take them as they finish their current work at the Department of State.

Staff Changes

Foreign Service Office Management Specialist **Karen Scott** joined the SEAS team this summer, after overseas assignments in Casablanca, Morocco; Shanghai, China; Tokyo, Japan; and Taipei, Taiwan. Karen is responsible for all of the team's administrative issues.

We were fortunate to have two fantastic **summer interns** on the SEAS team -- **Rachel Levin** recently graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and headed to Israel for the year shortly after the end of her internship. **Margaret Gibbon** returned to New York City at the end of the summer for her senior year at Barnard College before continuing accelerated graduate studies at Middlebury College next year.

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 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](http://www.state.gov/j/drl/seas) (www.state.gov/j/drl/seas). 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 *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.