

Jonathan Greenblatt
CEO and National Director



October 8, 2023

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Merrick Garland
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Attorney General Garland:

As the unprovoked war against Israel escalates, we request the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Justice (DOJ) provide increased support to Jewish communal institutions across the nation.

We have seen time and time again that tensions in the Middle East often lead to an increase in antisemitic incidents targeting Jewish institutions and Jewish individuals in America. As ADL (Anti-Defamation League) documented in our Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, during the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Gaza, there was a surge of antisemitic incidents in the United States and around the world as the crisis unfolded. For the entire month of May 2021, 387 antisemitic incidents, including assaults, vandalism, and harassment, were tabulated by ADL. The lion's share of 297 incidents occurred between May 10 – the official start of military action – and the end of the month, an increase of 141% over the same period in 2020 (123). The incidents took place at and around the approximately 200 anti-Israel rallies held across the U.S. since May 16. Although many of the rallies remained peaceful and did not include antisemitic language, some speakers, signs and chants included messages that attacked Jews and Zionists or trafficked in antisemitic tropes. A large majority of American Jews identify as Zionists or hold a connection to Israel to be an important part of their religious, social or cultural identities.

While we have no indication of specific domestic antisemitic threats related to the recent terrorist attacks in Israel, if the past is a guide for the future, the coming days and weeks could be a precarious time for the American Jewish community. We call on the U.S. Government, particularly its law enforcement agencies to take swift concrete steps to protect our communities.

In addition to increased law enforcement vigilance at Jewish institutions, we further request that you significantly ramp up resources to monitor and prevent hate and biased based crimes specifically targeting the Jewish community in the short term.

Given precedent and the severity of the escalating violence, we believe these precautions are warranted. We stand ready to work with you to ensure the safety of Jewish and all vulnerable communities.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Greenblatt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jonathan" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Greenblatt".

Jonathan Greenblatt
CEO and National Director