



# human rights *first*

American ideals. Universal values.

June 3, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

The Group of Seven Summit in Germany on June 7-8 is an opportunity for you to emphasize the importance of the Trans-Atlantic Alliance and the common values of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law that underpin it and the G-7. I respectfully urge you to highlight in your public remarks and private meetings the imperative to confront current threats to those values in Europe, in particular the rise of antisemitic violence and racist, extreme political movements.

Antisemitic violence in Europe has reached alarming levels. Increases in the number of recorded incidents and of Jews leaving Europe reveal an unmistakable negative trend. A “classic” fascistic antisemitism persists across the continent, while political movements that use antisemitic—along with xenophobic and racist—rhetoric are growing in several countries. Antisemitic and/or racist far-right parties from more than a dozen countries scored well enough in 2014 elections to send representatives to the European Parliament.

This “classic” antisemitism is now converging with a newer, virulent incarnation that has taken root among some disenfranchised citizens and immigrants of Muslim heritage. Hatred among a small minority of this population has led to violence—and to recruiting opportunities for extremist groups.

These two forms of antisemitism do not exist in isolation. Neo-fascist parties are gaining influence on the strength of their xenophobic message. They demonize Muslims, creating divisions that Islamic extremists exploit. And Islamic extremists demonize Jews. This pernicious, self-reinforcing cycle endangers the human rights not only of Jews but of other minorities as well.

Still shaken from the economic crisis, European governments cannot afford to be complacent or complicit in this trend. Without aggressive action, antisemitism and its purveyors will continue to weaken European democracies and undermine the EU itself. This is a critical issue for the United States; in the face of Russian aggression and other threats, the strength of the Trans-Atlantic Alliance is more important than ever. It is no surprise that the Kremlin has supported racist, anti-EU, far-right movements in Europe, which have in turn supported the annexation of Crimea and opposed EU sanctions against Russia.

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This is a new generation of problems facing Europe, and it requires a new sense of urgency. At the G-7 Summit, you can help to generate that sense of urgency and reverse the trend of antisemitism by urging European leaders to confront:

- increasing need for security of Jews and Jewish sites;
- nationalistic and racist political forces;
- the lack of integration, as well as extremism and radicalization, impacting Muslim immigrant communities;
- the breakdown of governance and creeping authoritarianism following the Russian model; and
- a lackluster government response to hate violence.

I hope you will also use your platform to encourage civil and political forces in Europe—beyond Jewish communities—to forge coalitions to confront these interrelated problems. No community should stand alone in the face of racism and hatred.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Elisa Massimino  
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honorable John Kerry, Secretary of State  
The Honorable Susan Rice, National Security Advisor