



November 5, 2018  
27 Heshvan 5778

## **GREETINGS FROM YAAKOV HAGOEL, VICE CHAIRMAN, WORLD ZIONIST ORGANIZATION:**

Hello everyone,

With your permission I would like to start with a moment of silence in memory of those who were murdered at the anti-Semitic attack in Pittsburgh. Please rise for a moment of silence.

Welcome:

Consul General, my good friend, Ambassador Dani Dayan;

President of the American Zionist Movement, Richard and his dear wife Phyllis;

Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, Vice Chairman of the New York Board of Rabbis;

Joining us soon, Congressman Eliot Engel;

CEO of the World Zionist Organization, Eli Cohen;

Herbert Block, Executive Director of the American Zionist Movement;

Staff of the American Zionist Movement; Also with us today is Ofir Dayan, which I am proud to say that we grew up in the same youth organization - Betar; Members of the board of the AZM and distinguished guests:

In every generation, they rise up against us to destroy us. Yes the hatred towards the Jews came here as well, to the Land of the Free. By the way, not only recently, in the last week, we are witnessing a progression in which in the last decade, every year, there are more anti-Semitic attacks than the previous one. Not only in Europe but also here in the United States. Most of us have forgotten that some four years ago, in Overland Park Jewish Community Center that same *ma'sugana*, crazy guy, anti-Semite shot at 2 Jewish Community Centers and three people were killed. Their only thing was, that he thought that they were Jewish. That same massacre in Pittsburgh proves to us all one important thing that we all know, for some reason we tend to forget - We are one people, in the eyes of the anti-Semites as well, there is no differentiation between one Jew to another, between right wing and left wing, between reform and orthodox, between a conservative to a democrat, between husband, wife or children, not even between an Ashkenazi to a Sephardic Jew.

Anti-Semitism proves to us all, for the last thousands of years, since the days of Queen Esther that Thank G-d we are one people, one Nation, a special one, and we are all in this fight together.

Distinguished guests, with your permission I would like to read to you a few quotes from the last few days, regarding this issue, and I quote,

“This evil anti-Semitic attack is an assault on all of us, it is an assault on humanity; we must stand with our Jewish brothers and sisters to defeat anti-Semitism. The scourge of anti-Semitism cannot be ignored, cannot be tolerated and cannot be allowed to continue. It will require all of us working together to extract the hateful poison of anti-Semitism from our world.”

We all know that these words were spoken by no one other than the president of the United States of America, Donald Trump. The United States of America was, is, and will continue to be the people of Israel's most natural and strategic ally of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. Although anti-Semitism is deep inside the sickened mind of those who hate us and it's been there forever. In Europe, police officers are escorting Jewish

students to school. In most parts of Europe Rabbis are calling to take off the yarmulkes, the kippahs off the heads of the Jews. In Belgium and in France mezuzahs are taken off of the doorposts of homes. It is not the anti-Semites who are doing so, but the Jews because of the anti-Semites.

Honestly, I am not afraid of a mass massacre of Jews. I do not believe that a second Holocaust will take place. The first reason, thank G-d, the Jewish people have a Jewish State in the land of Israel for the last 70 years. But I am afraid that this mean anti-Semitism hurts our spirit, it harms our Jewish identity, it harms our will to maintain freedom of worship and I have no doubt, and I am saying this with great sorrow, we will witness an increasing amount of percentage of assimilation because I have no doubt that if you are afraid of being a Jew, if you are afraid if wearing a kippah, if you are afraid to put a mezuzah in the outside doorpost of your home, at the end of the day you or your children will no longer be Jewish and this is the responsibility of each and every one of us who sit here in this hall today. The responsibility of our safety as Jews, in countries in which Jews live is the responsibility first and fore of the local governments of those countries, because we are loyal citizens of the countries in which we live in and they must keep us safe. It does not mean only by police, not only military, it means also education, advocacy, and there's a lot more to do in this context. There is a lot more to do here in the United States as well, when it comes to resolutions, and no less important than that is law enforcement, because the fact that we have written rules and regulations, while they are not being enforced in this context we have much more to do.

However, let's not run away from our responsibilities. Our responsibility is to keep ourselves as one united people, nation and safeguard our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren as Jews and first and foremost is to strengthen our Jewish identity and strengthen the Jewish pride and I do tell you we are missing, we are lacking, by the way we are, lacking that as well, those who live in Israel. We also have a lot to work on in this context and I say upon all of us we as Jewish organizations and mainly the Zionist Federation of the United States need to lead this issue and strengthen this issue purposely at this hard time.

Anti-Semitism, as I mentioned, unites all of us with no differentiation of views and beliefs, no politics, we must fight this sickening phenomenon as one united people. First and foremost what we are doing here today, raise awareness; fight anti-Semitism online, on each talk back, just like Richard had said, Zero Tolerance. Every talk back or comment that we see that harms the people of Israel and the State of Israel, by the way I do not see any difference between the two of them. Anti-Semitism is anti-Semitism is anti-Semitism. We must react on every single thing like that, we are used to not reacting, we must continue reacting, because there is a slippery slope here because once we do not react on something easy it gets worse and worse and eventually at the end of the day, Jews are being murdered. As I said we must strengthen the Jewish identity, we must influence regulations and resolutions on anti-Semitism and also their enforcements. By the way not only regulations on anti-Semitism but xenophobia in general, we don't want to safeguard only ourselves, mainly we would like to safeguard this world that we are live in, we would like to see this world so each person will be able to live according to his beliefs, to his religion, all of the above is only our small part in our fight against this phenomenon. Together the Israeli government, the World Zionist Organization, The American Zionist Movement and all the rest of the Jewish organizations will support the students.

By the way, you know that here in the United States, in the past five years, many of the Jewish students changed their last names when it comes to social media. They changed names to names that were not affiliated with Judaism, out of concern. You can check it with your grandchildren, your children. These things do happen.

In conclusion, we must raise our heads up with Jewish pride and we must use Zero Tolerance on any anti-Semitic incident.

Am Yisrael Chai, Long Live the Jewish People!

Thank you very much.