



ERADICATE HATE GLOBAL SUMMIT

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Israel
By the Eradicate Hate Global Summit Board of Directors
October 18, 2023

The Eradicate Hate Global Summit was born of the attack on October 27, 2018 at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue, which led to the tragic deaths of eleven innocent worshippers from three different congregations – Dor Hadash, New Light and Tree of Life. This was the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in U.S. history. Other worshippers, as well as first responders who had bravely answered the call for help, were seriously wounded. The carnage was so severe that the interior of the synagogue was said to resemble a battlefield and brought even law enforcement officers to tears.

Just twenty days shy of the fifth anniversary of the Pittsburgh synagogue massacre, the world was shocked by the brutality of the attack by Hamas terrorists in Israel. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, who just two weeks earlier had delivered an inspiring keynote address at our 2023 Summit, described the nature and extent of the attack's savagery in stating that "hundreds of innocent men, women and children were unspeakably, brutally murdered and thousands more injured" and that "more than 150 were torn from their homes, pulled from their cars and off the streets, seized from a concert in the desert and taken hostage." It was, he said, "the worst terrorist attack" in Israel's history.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken found it difficult to describe the photos and videos that he had seen of this attack on Israeli civilians: "It's hard to find the right words. It's beyond what anyone would want to imagine, much less, God forbid, experience. A baby, an infant, riddled with bullets. Soldiers beheaded. Young people burned alive. I could go on, but it's simply depravity in the worst imaginable way."

The Board of Directors of the Eradicate Hate Global Summit condemns these unspeakable acts of Hamas and mourns the terrible losses suffered in Israel. We also are deeply concerned about the civilian residents of Gaza, many of whom are facing displacement, deprivation, and the risk of death while unwillingly playing the role of human shields, and we worry about what might yet come – in the Middle East, in other parts of the world, and here at home. The FBI is tracking increased threats against both Jewish and Muslim Americans, and Director Christopher Wray warned that the attack in Israel could inspire violence in this country. Tragically, this week also brought the horrible news of the killing in Illinois of a six-year-old Palestinian-American boy who was stabbed twenty-six times, reportedly for being Muslim.

Our recent Summit included many moments of somber reflection and sadness and was grounded in a regretful realism about the spread of hate and the horrors of hate-fueled violence. However, that gathering also was characterized by the unwavering recognition that determined people, with hope and peace in their hearts, banding together to share ideas and take action, will make a difference in this critical, ongoing struggle against hate.

What all of this means, among other things, is that we must redouble our efforts and strengthen our resolve to do all that we can do, working together, to advance the Summit's mission of reducing hate-fueled violence in all of its forms. The horrible Hamas attack and what it has produced add new urgency to the efforts. Our working groups, each of which is poised to contribute to meaningful progress in advancing our overarching goal, have important work to complete. It also is a reminder for each of us to be attentive and proactive to what is happening around us – responding to mis/disinformation, watching for the “red flags” of imminent anti-Semitic or other identity-based attacks, and intervening in appropriate ways before such attacks occur.

In our foundational white paper, we quoted the following words of Nelson Mandela: “No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin or his background or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” Even though many of us embrace that inspiring thought, the terrorist attack in Israel stands as a stark reminder that, looking at the world around us, love needs a helping hand. Let us continue working together to provide that essential help.