

# Rising antisemitism abroad becoming dangerous for Jews

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WASHINGTON—Antisemitism is becoming so prevalent abroad that in many places it is dangerous for Jews to reveal their identity publicly, experts told the U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom in a virtual hearing on systemic hatred March 18.

Deadly terrorist attacks, revisionist history understating or denying the Holocaust, public bullying of Jewish school students, and thinly veiled codewords inciting violence characterize trending antisemitism, a panel of experts and bipartisan representation from Congress told USCIRF commissions in the hearing.

Southern Baptist U.S. Sen. James Lankford, (R-Okla.), encouraged USCIRF for its diligence in addressing the issue.

“There’s a generation that still has no idea the Holocaust ever occurred. And there’s a whole generation of social media keyboard warriors that are out there trying to tell people the Holocaust never happened,” Lankford said. “We have got to continue to be able to speak the truth and ... challenge the antisemitic rhetoric that continues to rise on the left and on the right.”

Sen. Jackie Rosen, (D-Nev.), who [co-founded](#) with Lankford the Senate Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Antisemitism, joined Lankford in pointing out progress made and lingering concerns. Elevating to the rank of ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, appointed in December 2025 as special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism, proves Congress’ sincerity, Rosen said.

USCIRF Chair Vicky Hartzler pinpointed the severity of antisemitism and the pressing need to address and correct the trend that continues to prove deadly for Jewish communities internationally.

## **Increased attacks on Jews evident**

“In recent years, civil society organizations have documented an alarming uptick in attacks targeting Jews in Europe, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and elsewhere merely for their religious identity,” Hartzler said, pointing out in particular the [December 2025 attack](#) that killed 15 people during a Hanukkah celebration on Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia.

“This month alone, we have seen attacks on three synagogues in Toronto, two Jewish institutions in the Netherlands, a synagogue in Belgium, and a foiled attack on Jews in France,” Hartzler said.

“Antisemitism, put simply, is the hatred of Jews,” Hartzler said. “It stems from negative stereotypes and holds Jews as collectively responsible for societal and political ills.”

In addition to terrorist attacks at public Jewish events and synagogues, Jews in some communities are refused service in restaurants, chased in the street by instigators intending physical harm, and intimidated into using non-Jewish names and avoiding cultural and religious items that identify them as Jewish, commissioners and panelists said.

## **Antisemitism must be collectively addressed**

Antisemitism is a stress test for democracy, must be collaboratively attacked, and is included in a panorama of hatred that encompasses many societal groups, USCIRF commissioners and panelists said.

“Protecting freedom of religion or belief for Jews should be a key priority for governments fighting discrimination and intolerance on the basis of religion,” USCIRF Vice Chair Asif Mahmood said, also pointing out societal responsibility.

“Policies to combat antisemitism protect Jews first and foremost, but in reality, they protect religious freedom for all people,” Mahmood said.

“Freedom of religion or belief is a universal freedom. A restriction on any single person’s freedom of religion or belief is a restriction on everyone’s freedom of religion or belief. Combating antisemitism, therefore, matters to Jews and non-Jews alike,” he said.

Ernest Herzog, executive director of operations at the World Jewish Congress, quoted WJC President Ronald Lauder, in emphasizing the importance of cooperation and collaboration.

“The best way to fight Muslim hate is when Christians and Jews do it. The best way to fight antisemitism is when Christians and Muslims do it,” Herzog said. “The best way to fight anti-Christian beliefs is when Muslims and Jews come together to do it. Victims should not be fighting the hate against [themselves] alone, and they cannot win in this fight.”

## **Antisemitic trends**

Among trends in antisemitism globally, panelists and commissioners cited:

- Deceptive and ambiguous language in the public square that insults and verbally attacks Jewish communities without explicitly stating the religious and ethnic group.
- Inadequate data collection that overlooks antisemitism. “Governments have downplayed or outright denied their historic complicity in the Holocaust, venerated historical figures

responsible for the systemic murder of Jews, and dragged their feet on restoring stolen Jewish property to their rightful heirs,” said USCIRF Commissioner Rachel Laser. “Governments in Eastern Europe, including but not limited to Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, raise particular concerns.”

- Government-approved textbooks that slander Jews, including in Qatar, where textbooks teach falsely that Jews identify Ezra as the son of God, and in Egypt, where textbooks describe Jews as “treacherous” and “traitors.”
- In Colombia, governmental leaders regularly use rhetoric that normalizes antisemitism, accusing Israel of genocide in the war with Hamas, comparing the Jewish nation to Nazis, and denying Jews are God’s chosen people identified in Scripture.

The U.S. must actively fight antisemitism globally as well as at home, commissioners and panelists said, recommending among other initiatives that the U.S. government fight antisemitism by protecting and promoting democracy globally, and countering other forms of hatred.

“Without robust rule of law, without fundamental freedom of speech, press, protest, [and] association, you cannot protect religious freedom for individuals or communities,” Rabbi David Saperstein, former ambassador at large for International Religious Freedom, said, “nor implement the fundamental civic application of religious freedom that no one’s right as a citizen should ever depend upon their religious identity, religious practices, or peaceful religious practices.”

The full recording of the hearing, “The Endangerment of Jews: The Rise of Antisemitism Abroad,” is posted on USCIRF’s website at [uscirf.gov/events](https://uscirf.gov/events).