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**THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY
TASK FORCE TO COMBAT
ONLINE ANTISEMITISM**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last several years, there has been an alarming increase in antisemitic incidents across the globe, with many originating online. As social media posts do not stop at international borders, members of the national legislatures of Australia, Canada, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States have come together across party lines to launch the Inter-Parliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Antisemitism. The following report outlines the activities of the Task Force throughout the past several months, including meetings with technology experts and civil society groups. It also presents a preliminary series of recommendations and an overview of related legislation and other efforts taking place in the countries represented in the Task Force.

International lawmakers to push social media giants on online anti-Semitism

Bipartisan task force of lawmakers from US, Israel, Australia, Canada and UK hear recommendations for actions they can take to address issue, hold big tech accountable

By **JACOB MAGID**

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An inter-parliamentary task force to combat online anti-Semitism convenes its first session over Zoom on November 10, 2020. (Screen capture/Zoom)



Fighting anti-Semitism online requires a global effort

Opinion by members of the Inter-Parliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Antisemitism

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Editor's Note: (The Inter-Parliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Antisemitism is made up of a multiparty group of lawmakers from Israel, the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK. The views expressed in this commentary belong to the authors. View [more opinion](#) at CNN.)

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last several years, there has been an alarming increase in antisemitic incidents across the globe. Today, the apparent majority originate online. As social media posts do not stop at international borders, members of the national legislatures of Australia, Canada, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States have come together across party lines to launch the Inter-Parliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Antisemitism.

Members of the Task Force include: Member of Knesset Michal Cotler-Wunsh (Blue and White, Israel), Member of Parliament Anthony Housefather (Liberal, Canada), Member of Parliament Marty Morantz (Conservative, Canada), Member of Parliament Randall Garrison (NDP, Canada), Former Member of Parliament and President & CEO of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre Michael Levitt (Liberal, Canada), Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz (Democrat, United States), Congressman Ted Deutch (Democrat, United States), Congressman Chris Smith (Republican, United States), Congressman Mario Díaz-Balart (Republican, United States), Member of Parliament Josh Burns (Labour, Australia), Member of Parliament Dave Sharma (Liberal, Australia), Member of Parliament Andrew Percy (Conservative, United Kingdom), and Member of Parliament Alex Sobel (Labour and Cooperative, United Kingdom). It is anticipated that members of the New Zealand Parliament will be joining the Task Force following the issuance of this interim report.

The launch of the Task Force follows campaigns working to expose online antisemitism, including the July 2020 #NoSafeSpaceForJewHate campaign that served as a global call to action to combat the virulent antisemitism that goes unaddressed or inadequately addressed on social media platforms.

The Task Force began its work with the following goals:

- Establishing consistent messaging and policy from Parliaments and legislatures around the world in order to hold social media platforms, including Twitter, TikTok, Facebook, and Google, accountable.
- The adoption and publication of transparent policies related to hate speech.
- Raising awareness about antisemitism on social media platforms and its consequences in order to acknowledge the tremendous responsibility that comes with the power the platforms hold.
- Emphasizing that if one minority cannot be protected by hate speech policies, then none can be. This Task Force therefore serves as a means for protecting all minority groups from online hate.
- Underscoring that the fight against antisemitism is a non-partisan consensus in democratic countries.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force has significant work to do in the coming months and will in the future issue a full set of final recommendations. In the interim, based on its work in Fall 2020 - Spring 2021, the Task Force provides the following preliminary recommendations:

- National, State/Provincial, local governments as well as social media providers should adopt a clear definition of antisemitism, for without first defining a problem, we cannot combat it. As the international consensus definition, established after 20 years of democratic processes and adopted by nearly 30 countries, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition is recommended.
- Social media platforms should enhance transparency regarding algorithms, how content is removed, what content is removed, and what tools are used to direct users to certain sites or redirect users away from hate and/or harms and provide regular quarterly reports on these issues. It is important that social media actually be a marketplace of ideas.
- Legislators should consider ways to make the online space safer for all that respects their respective national laws, including through an independent oversight body / regulatory process where appropriate.
- Legislators and social media platforms must recognize the danger of disinformation online and that antisemitism is an example of other forms of disinformation online, and should therefore both be considered within the wider conversation of online extremism.

FRAMING OF THE PROBLEM

Online antisemitism is part of the larger hate and disinformation campaign seen on both mainstream and dark-web platforms. Research shows that antisemitic tropes, memes, and rhetoric are often incorporated in other online conspiracy theories and disinformation campaigns. The case of online antisemitism therefore presents an important opportunity for elected officials to examine the problem and create policy recommendations that can be utilized in the broader context of addressing online hate and disinformation.

In addition, the hate seen online is not just harmless chatter relegated to dark corners of the internet – it often spills onto the streets, and dangerous propaganda can quickly transcend the geographic borders of any country. Combating this global hatred, therefore, requires a global solution.

For example, TikTok users encounter antisemitic comments despite the company's claims that it "stands firmly against anti-Semitism and doesn't tolerate hate in any form." Twitter has refused to flag recurring tweets from Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei calling for the elimination of the only Jewish state in the world. According to Twitter, Khamenei's posts simply amount to "foreign policy saber-rattling on political economic issues." Google has not made it clear how it plans to prevent its algorithm from producing horrific and offensive search results on Jews and the Holocaust. Additionally, Facebook announced it will remove Holocaust denial on its platform and will refer users to an informational website with content about the Holocaust when users search for Holocaust denial content. However, numerous pages remain that distort or deny the facts of the Holocaust, according to a study by the Markup.

The Task Force looks forward to working with and/or continuing to work with the platforms in the next stage of its work. We applaud the advances that some platforms have made, but note that all still have significant work to do in order to address online antisemitic content.

SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENTS WITH EXPERT GROUPS

On December 16, 2020, the Task Force met with technological and social media expert organizations to understand the challenge of online antisemitism in more detail and the possible solutions that can address it.

Network Contagion Research Institute

Joel Finkelstein, Director and Co-Founder of the Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI), a “neutral and independent third party whose mission it is to track, expose, and combat misinformation, deception, manipulation, and hate across social media channels,” presented the Task Force with detailed examples of online disinformation that can be used to predict “spillovers” into the real world. NCRI research shows that conspiratorial depictions of Jews are found in extremist communities online, often camouflaged as conspiracy theories about individuals, and that these theories are advanced during elections and key political points (such as domestic terror). Using data, the organization is able to show how individuals are “hot-boxed” on extremist platforms that then spillover onto mainstream social media platforms, and eventually into the real world, as seen in the case of QANON and the January 6, 2021 Capitol Hill riots.

NCRI recommends governments create a “Center for Disinformation Defense” (CDD), a third party institution dedicated to monitoring and reporting on disinformation on the web. This CDD would work with government agencies, law enforcement, and civil society, utilizing the data it collects to predict and help address disinformation and prevent violent spillovers.

Centre for Countering Digital Hate

Imram Ahmed, Founding CEO of the Centre for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), a “not-for-profit NGO that seeks to disrupt the architecture of online hate and misinformation,” presented Task Force members with details regarding “frequency bias” on social media. Ahmed highlighted the current problem with social media serving as an “unrestricted flow of information, with fake and real information mixing together,” arguing that this is “deeply problematic for our societies.” CCDH argues that social media platforms must help users identify disinformation trends and conspiracy theories, allowing users to understand if they are looking at information presented by real people or bots. In his presentation to the Task Force, Ahmed also highlighted the importance of either government pressure or legislation that would affect the platforms’ “bottom lines” as the key way to ensure change in the online space.

The Social Dilemma

Task Force members also spoke with Jeff Orlowski, Director of the Netflix film the *Social Dilemma*. Orlowski described the financial incentive that social media companies have to keep you engaged for as long as possible by showing you content that you want to see, emphasizing that in order to affect this, this financial incentive needs to be altered. Orlowski furthered that without regulation, the platforms do not have incentive to limit content, or disinformation and hate online.

SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENTS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

On November 11 and November 24, 2020, the Task Force hosted virtual briefings with civil society organizations from Australia, Canada, Israel, the UK, and the US. The briefings covered the state of online antisemitism, how community groups are responding, and recommendations for what legislators should do to address the issue.

Recommendations by Australian Civil Society

Executive Council of Australian Jewry

Alex Ryvchin, Co-CEO of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, highlighted the role conspiracy theories play in antisemitism in Australia, online-offline extremism, and the presence of antisemitic bullying in Australian schools. Ryvchin emphasized the presence of online extremist communities and networks, and the fear of spill-over into the offline space targeting Jewish communities. Ryvchin called for increased monitoring of online rhetoric as vital to combatting this hatred.

Community Security Group

Justin Kagan, CEO of the Community Security Group (CSG) noted the recent growth of antisemitic rhetoric online and the connection to COVID-19 conspiracy theories targeting Jews. He also emphasized the use of social media for both inspiring offline hate and for recruitment to extremist networks. According to the group's report "A CSG Analysis of Reported Antisemitic Incidents in Australia 2019," "Incidents of online antisemitism, particularly on social media, have maintained a steady bearing on the overall antisemitic incident total in 2019. CSG logged 55 antisemitic social media incidents in 2019, constituting 12% of the annual total, which is a 38% increase compared to antisemitic social media incidents in 2018." The report adds that "Nearly two thirds of these incidents were directed against Jewish organisations with 37 reported incidents. Fifty-five of these incidents were Abusive Behaviour, 3 were threats and 1 included mass disseminated literature."

Online Hate Prevention Institute

Online Hate Prevention Institute's CEO Dr. Andre Oboler referred to antisemitism on social media as "antisemitism 2.0" and how the online space "normalizes the hate." Dr. Oboler discussed the use of coded messaging on mainstream platforms by extremist actors that AI cannot pick up on without the oversight and intervention of outside monitoring mechanisms. Further, in its December 2019 report "[Hate and Violent Extremism from an Online Subculture](#)," the Online Hate Prevention Institute presents a series of recommendations to platforms/industry, government officials, legislators, and civil society, among others.

For Lawmakers, the Online Hate Prevention Institute recommends:

- "Laws and policies designed to prevent the spread of extremist material...be flexible enough to cover content consisting of a link which directly or indirectly will lead to the material."
- "Governments...consider law reforms to create a system of sanctions that could be imposed on companies outside their jurisdiction who, after suitable notice, continue to provide unlawful content inciting hatred or violent extremism to users in that country, in breach of the country's law. Such law reform could also create sanctions that impose penalties for any company within the country's jurisdiction who engage in business with a company on the sanctions list."

The organization also recommends that industry and government work together to:

- Report "serious hate speech, that which makes threats of violence or incites either violence or hatred, should be immediately reported to authorities."
- Remove, create a log of other forms of hate speech, and inform users when a platform takes action against them and warn repeated breaches that a report could be made to authorities... "Where platform sanctions prove ineffective at altering behaviour, the history of breaches and IP address of the user should be referred to authorities."

Recommendations by Canadian Civil Society Organizations

Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs

In his presentation to the Task Force, Richard Marceau, Senior Government Advisor from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) outlined his organization's perspectives on this issue in the context of the Task Force's work.

In his remarks, Marceau noted that from 2020 onwards, there is no effective combating of antisemitism that is not based on the IHRA definition, referring to IHRA as "the yardstick for what we should use and use it for defining and recognizing hatred."

Marceau also noted that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights released their report on online hate in June 2019. He explained that this was a very well thought out report and that CIJA supports the findings. He further stated that in Canada, there can be limits to rights and freedoms, like speech, if they are justifiable in a free and democratic society.

Marceau concluded with his third point, noting that antisemitism should be a focus on any policy on online hate. These policies must be made up of a coalition of all those targeted. The Canadian Coalition to End Online Hate was created, with more than 30 member groups, has allowed CIJA to move further and faster. Marceau quoted the late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, noting that “Jews cannot fight antisemitism alone, the victim cannot cure the crime, the hated cannot cure the hate.”

Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center

In presenting to the Task Force, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC) Director of Policy Jaime Kirzner-Roberts noted that “the internet is an unprecedented tool for sharing knowledge and engaging in free expression, debate, and dissent but it also provides new and equally unprecedented opportunities to spread antisemitism and hate, to radicalize people into extremist ideologies, to recruit members into hate organizations, and even to promote violence against Jews and others groups.” Kirzner-Roberts underlined FSWC’s call for governments to take urgent action to confront antisemitism and hate online, highlighting three areas of priority:

1. The need for governments to strengthen legal tools at their disposal to effectively combat hate speech and hate group activity online;
2. The need for governments to develop clear guidelines and expectations for platform providers like social media, search engines, and hosts in both preventing and responding to cases of hate speech as well as hate-motivated disinformation and misinformation;
3. The need for governments to invest in broad-based data collection and research programs on online hate to develop a better understanding of the problem and to further the development of an effective policy response to online antisemitism and hate.

B'nai Brith Canada

In its presentation to the Task Force, B'nai Brith's CEO Michael Mostyn argued that "combating antisemitism begins with understanding its origins and how it manifests itself online," highlighting that "misinformation and hate speech on the internet has often led to physical, psychological and political harm toward Jewish communities."

In its testimony, B'nai Brith Canada asked the Task Force to consider:

- "Antisemitism as a human rights issue, not a religious freedom issue.
- The right to freedom from hatred because of one's religion must exist on the same plane as the right to freedom of expression.
- Many of antisemitism's contemporary manifestations relate to a hatred and demonization of the State of Israel that exceeds the boundaries of legitimate policy criticism.
- Defining the problem for a global audience is a key step in combating antisemitism. Widespread adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism, including its illustrative examples, will make more meaningful responses possible.
- International collaboration is important and must be based on clear national strategies. No government alone can stop the global scourge of online antisemitism. A clear legal and policy framework – domestically and internationally – is required to bring coherence to efforts to take down hate.
- Countries should consider the creation of a forum similar to the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council, to convene social media platforms, civil society, and other stakeholders in developing and implementing codes of conduct to address harmful speech. Direct redress by citizens is equally important. Citizens must be able to challenge providers and platforms directly on their experiences with antisemitism. This must include a right of responses to those complaints."

Recommendations by Israeli Civil Society Organizations

Fighting Online Antisemitism

Fighting Online Antisemitism (FOA) was founded at the beginning of 2020 with the aim of addressing the problem of online hate and antisemitism on social media platforms. Their task is to "ensure and verify the quick removal of antisemitic content online, and to prevent its further dissemination." FOA trains dozens of volunteers to monitor antisemitic content in several languages and on seven social media platforms.

FOA presented the following recommendations to the Task Force:

1. “Establishing an international network of trained volunteers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who will monitor online platforms daily. Timely removal is only possible if hundreds of trained volunteers, speaking different languages, monitor platforms across different time zones.
2. Save all reported content in a secure online database to ensure the Task Force can provide concrete evidence of antisemitic content to back their demands from social media platforms.
3. Increasing discourse with social media platforms, for the purposes of raising their awareness to the problems and removing more content.”

Social Lite Creative

Emily Schrader, Research Fellow at the Tel Aviv Institute and CEO of Social Lite Creative, emphasized that governments and parliaments around the world must “work to develop mechanisms that hold social media companies accountable for identifying antisemitic content (both classical antisemitism and modern, according to the IHRA definition)” and that the platforms must commit to “educating about the hatred found on their networks and to sharing the data on a quarterly basis of how prevalent the content is and what the companies responses have yielded.” She also emphasized that “Governments must consider passing legislation that includes serious legal ramifications for companies which refuse to comply” with issues such as transparency.

Anti-Defamation League

Carole Nuriel, Executive Director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in Israel, highlighted her organization’s research and findings on the subject of online hate and antisemitism. ADL’s research on the US election shows, for example, that a large number of tweets questioned the loyalty, honesty, ideology, and faith of Jewish incumbent politicians, making up 48 percent of all tweets labeled as problematic. The organization notes that there appears to be a concerted effort at trying to portray Jewish incumbents as less patriotic and more dishonest, due in part to their Jewish background. ADL furthers that many of these tweets also claimed that Jewish incumbents are Communists and Marxists in hiding, claimed dual loyalty of lawmakers, or questioned their Jewish faith if they were seen photographed next to Muslims.

ADL recommends that social media companies:

- “Develop strong policies and create distinct rubrics for different forms of hate targeting marginalized and minority groups: social media companies must develop decision-making rubrics for their content reviewers and AI tools that are tailored to the needs of different identity-based groups. These rubrics should cover a comprehensive set of tropes and phrases that are used to target different identity groups.”

- “Collect and share data on identity-based hate: Developing ways to counter online hate requires that we know which groups are targeted, the extent to which they are targeted, and the nature of the attacks. Without this information, it is impossible for platforms, researchers, and civil society to address these problems in a way that is informed by empirical evidence.”
- “Improve both manual and automated processes for classifying hate: In addition to creating better rubrics for specific forms of hate speech, social media platforms should assume greater responsibility to enforce their policies and to do so accurately at scale.
- “Run Informational Interventions on the platform: Companies should experiment with a new set of features that help users navigate the world of disinformation. They can do this through interventions that provide accurate information on candidates and identity-based groups to safeguard the democratic system.”
- “Expand tools and services for targets of hate: At present, Platforms are doing little to nothing for targets of hate. Platforms should offer far more services and tools for individuals facing or fearing online attack, including assisting with tracking and capturing information, providing resources, and creating better customization options to mitigate harm.”
- “Design to reduce influence and impact of hateful content: social media companies should redesign their platforms and adjust their algorithms to reduce the prevalence and influence of hateful content and harassing behavior.”

For lawmakers, ADL recommends:

- “Dedicate resources to studying the impacts of online hate.”
- “Incorporate informational interventions in election campaigns.”
- “Use the bully pulpit to encourage greater transparency from social media companies.”

Recommendations by British Civil Society Organizations

Antisemitism Policy Trust

Danny Stone, Chief Executive of Antisemitism Policy Trust (APT), highlighted the intersection of misogyny and antisemitism present in the UK that targets female Jewish politicians, and called on the Task Force to look at this type of “intersectional abuse.” Stone also mentioned the UK’s Online Harms Bill (see below) that would “introduce a regulator into the online space” and work with civil society to ensure it is well informed and all encompassing. He added that the new statute would include a “duty of care” on part of the platforms, and command them to “look after their users.” This could include terms and conditions that should be specific and meaningful and in the UK, will be underscored by “codes and practices” that set regulatory standards. These could include search bars and algorithms that direct people away by harm. Stone also discussed how the legislation could include “individual level liability” for senior management of social media companies and how the “harms” must be determined and defined by policy makers and not by the platforms. APT, in their report “Online Anonymity Briefing” further argues that “anonymity” of users should be reviewed in order to “to limit anonymised users abusing their services, including harassing others.”

Community Security Trust

Danny Morris, Senior Researcher and Policy Analyst at the Community Security Trust (CST), noted in his remarks that online antisemitism is playing a “bigger and bigger role” in documented antisemitic incidents in the UK and that online discourse reflects the increased antisemitic public discourse. Morris emphasized that Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube represent only a small fraction of online antisemitism, whereas extreme fringe networks have no community guidelines and exhibit the most extreme forms of antisemitism, including support for “far-right terrorists, far right terrorist attacks, and calls for others to carry out attacks against Jewish and other minority communities.” Morris stated that any solution to address online antisemitism will “have to be transnational” and that policy makers have to “think of this problem like a balloon: when pressure is exerted in one area, air moves to an area of less resistance. The same is true for antisemites and extremists online.”

Recommendations by American Civil Society Organizations

American Jewish Committee

In her remarks, Holly R. Huffnagle, American Jewish Committee’s (AJC) US Director for Combatting Antisemitism, opened by noting the progress made in the space of combatting online antisemitism, stating that “several years ago, tech companies took an absolutist position that their platforms were to be a ‘open marketplaces of ideas.’ Yet the best ideas did not rise to the top; instead, their platforms became breeding grounds for violence and extremism. Amid this realization and national outcry, social media giants began to expand their definitions of hate speech and began to moderate content and take it down.”

AJC’s report *The State of Antisemitism in America*, notes that “one in five American Jewish adults (22%) have been the target of an antisemitic remark online or through social media in the last five years. Of this group, 62% said they had been the targets of antisemitic remarks on Facebook, 33% said they had experienced antisemitism on Twitter, 12% on Instagram, and 10% on YouTube.” AJC further finds that “in the last two years, 24% of American Jews have avoided posting content online that would identify them as Jewish or reveal their views on Jewish issues.”

AJC presented four recommendations to the Task Force:

1. Ask tech platforms to follow a universal standard of what antisemitism is.
 - “All sources and forms of antisemitism today, whether from the far-right, far-left, from religious extremists, including Islamist extremists—and still from Christian anti-Judaism, Holocaust denial, and conspiracy theories exist simultaneously on the internet. This has been called ‘digitization of antisemitism.’”

- “Given the diversity of antisemitic sources online, the task force can encourage the platforms to map the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism onto their policies. This will allow artificial intelligence and human moderators to be more effective in either removal or content demotion of all forms of antisemitism.”
- “Ensure third-party fact checkers and trusted flaggers are also adequately trained to recognize the different manifestations of antisemitism using the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.”
- “In addition, understanding the complexity of contemporary antisemitism must consider different language and cultural differences. Moderators who are not fluent in English need to be trained in their own language to understand policies related to antisemitism.”

2. Demand tech transparency.

- “Ask tech platforms to be transparent in the drafting of policies, algorithms, and moderation systems and that they abide by a set of core principles that will earn public trust.”
- “Ask platforms to correct the algorithms which allow hateful communities to cross-pollinate and grow; instead, ask them to create algorithms to promote content which counters antisemitism and improves the media literacy of their users.”
- “Ask for moderation systems to be improved and harmonized. Seek an increased number of human content moderators and ensure the moderators are accurately and equally implementing the policies and community standards.”
- “Ask social media companies to openly share data with fact-checking initiatives to quickly dismantle conspiracy theories—many of which are rooted in antisemitism—and act on the recommendations to flag and remove content.”

3. Create an inter-parliamentary system to gather and share new data quickly.

- “Convene an international group of data scientists, tech experts, and scholars who can research and assess various platform algorithms: Are the algorithms still actively promoting hateful content? How can algorithms prevent previously removed content from reappearing? Answers to these questions will empower the taskforce to recommend technical changes instead of listening at face value to the platforms’ own defense of their algorithms and policies.”

4. Focus on non-mainstream platforms.

- “Antisemitic radicalization is happening on non-mainstream platforms.”
- “Antisemitic and racist websites...are no longer hosted in the United States, but have gone to outside hosting domains with less restrictions. Extremism is a business and antisemites are easily finding new hosts who want their business.”

The Simon Wiesenthal Center

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, Director Global Social Action Agenda at the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC), highlighted the ability for “social media giants to interfere in political processes” giving the example of Twitter’s censorship of some politicians and not others. Rabbi Cooper noted that this shows that the platforms do have the tools to make changes to the content on their platforms, but they only do this when they are pushed to do so. In the US, the SWC argues that the conversation must center around regulation.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY STATE OF AFFAIRS

Australia

Australia made headlines in February 2021 over a law that “Amends the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 to establish a mandatory code of conduct that applies to news media businesses and digital platform corporations when bargaining in relation to news content made available by digital platform services.” Effectively, the law will require digital platforms to negotiate formal payment agreements with Australian news outlets regarding the sharing of news content.

Australia’s Parliamentary Committee on Intelligence and Security is also currently holding an Inquiry into extremist movements and radicalism in Australia. This was prompted, in part, by recent arrests of right-wing extremists planning to commit attacks, including against Jewish people and institutions, and warnings from Australia’s security agencies ASIO and the Australian Federal Police regarding the growing threat of right-wing extremism, especially online.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry’s annual antisemitism reports confirm these concerning trends. There has also been a clear and noticeable increase in online radicalization and antisemitism surrounding conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 pandemic and anti-vaccination conspiracies.

The Parliamentary Inquiry into extremist movements and radicalism in Australia is a timely opportunity to examine further legislative tools that can help law authorities and security agencies crack down on online antisemitism and other forms of extremism.

Another legislative proposal at this time is the recently-introduced Online Safety Bill 2021, which was designed to increase the legislative powers of Australia’s e-Safety Commissioner and other authorities to crack down on online abuse, harmful “trolling,” and the ability to take down other online material such as that which depicts violence or child abuse.

Canada

In 2019, the Government of Canada adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism on a government wide basis. This now forms a key component of Canada's anti-racism strategy. In the same year, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights held hearings on online hate and released their report on online hate in June 2019. As referenced above in CIJA's presentation, the report was well received by Canada's leading Jewish organizations and an alliance of other organizations that had banded together to ask for action on this issue.

The Prime Minister has issued mandate letters to different Members of Cabinet assigning them various instructions to tackle online hate. In his mandate letter, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has been asked to:

- Create new regulations for social media platforms, starting with a requirement that all platforms remove illegal content, including hate speech, within 24 hours or face significant penalties. This should include other online harms such as radicalization, incitement to violence, exploitation of children, or creation or distribution of terrorist propaganda.

In a supplementary mandate letter, the Minister of Canadian Heritage was asked to:

- Work with the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to take action on combating hate groups and online hate and harassment, ideologically motivated violent extremism, and terrorist organizations.

In his mandate letter, the Minister of Justice was asked to:

- Develop options for legal remedies for victims of hate speech.
- Work with the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to combat online hate and harassment.

In a supplementary mandate letter, the Minister of Justice was asked to:

- Work with the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to take action on combating hate groups and online hate and harassment, ideologically motivated violent extremism, and terrorist organizations.

In his mandate letter, the Minister of Public Safety was asked to:

- Work with the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to combat online hate and harassment, and continue to invest in resources to counter the rise of ideologically motivated violent extremism and terrorist organizations.

In a supplementary mandate letter, the Minister of Public Safety was asked to:

- Work with the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to take action on combating hate groups and online hate and harassment, ideologically motivated violent extremism, and terrorist organizations, including to ensure the RCMP and Canadian Security Intelligence Service are equipped to combat this growing threat.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage will shortly be tabling legislation to address requirements for social media platforms to remove illegal content, including hate speech. Members of the Task Force and various groups that have come before the Task Force have met with both the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Justice to provide them with information and recommendations on these issues, including the recommendation above related to a regulator/oversight body.

The Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage which will review the legislation, has already held hearings with social media platforms, such as Facebook, over the last number of months to discuss these issues as well as the issue of sharing of news content as Canada has also announced it will be considering the Australian, French, or other models to address news articles shared on social media platforms.

Groups of Parliamentarians have also held information sessions, including with some experts heard by the Task Force, to frame the issue and prepare for the flurry of upcoming anticipated legislation. Canada is also watching the discussions before the US Congress related to Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (see below).

On June 23, 2021, Canada's Minister of Justice tabled Bill C-36 in the House of Commons. The bill is designed to empower Canadians with an additional remedy to combat online hate speech and provide tools to create safer spaces online and offline. The Bill proposes to add a definition of hatred to Section 319 of the Canadian Criminal Code and create a new peace bond designed to prevent hate propaganda offenses and hate crimes. It also proposes to amend the Canada Human Rights Act to define a new discriminatory practice of communicating hate speech online and to improve the complaints process to empower individuals to seek remedies for hate speech. The bill responds to the mandate letter commitments above to develop options for legal remedies for victims of hate speech and is part of a broader package of measures the Government has announced it will put forward to combat hate speech, hate crimes and other harmful conduct online. The bill has not yet been debated in the House.

Israel

From July 2020 to February 2021, Israel's Knesset's Immigration, Integration, and Diaspora Affairs Committee held a series of four hearings with policy representatives from Twitter, Facebook, Google, and TikTok to discuss the presence of antisemitism on their platforms and what efforts the companies were taking to address it. The July 2020 hearing with Twitter representatives most clearly articulated the problem of double standards in how the company addresses hate generally, compared with antisemitism specifically. During the hearing, International Lawyer Arsen Ostrovsky asked Twitter's representative as to why the company flags Tweets by President Trump and not those of Iranian leadership that call for the mass murder of Jews. In response, Twitter claimed that certain Tweets violate Twitter's policy, while others are "foreign policy saber rattling." This issue of double standards was again highlighted in a February 2021 Knesset hearing with Twitter representatives.

In addition to the issue of double standards in the application of the platforms' policy meant to address online hate, the Knesset hearings also raised the issue of the importance of having a clear and consistent definition of antisemitism as part of any social media policy to combat hatred, for without first defining the problem, the platforms will not be able to combat it. The IHRA working definition of antisemitism was proposed as a definition that should be used by the platforms, given its consensus and widespread acceptance by nearly 30 countries and countless institutions around the world.

In February 2021, the Ministry of Strategic Affairs and Ministry of Diaspora Affairs presented a joint report to the Knesset's Immigration, Integration, and Diaspora Affairs titled "[The Hate Factor: Government of Israel Policy for Combatting Online Antisemitism](#)." The report calls for social media platforms to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism and to increase their transparency about both the amount of online antisemitism they find and how these issues are being addressed. Specifically, it makes six recommendations for social media companies:

1. Increased endorsement of community standards in multiple languages.
2. Remove accounts convicted of promoting antisemitic hate speech.
3. Training of content moderators with increased transparency as to their training.
4. Increased efforts to identify and remove accounts for inauthentic coordinated behavior which encourages hate speech.
5. Address the issue of "hate commerce" by creating global policy standards for the sale of items, including Nazi memorabilia and those Holocaust denial.
6. Increased transparency in allowing the public to access data on hate speech.

In addition, the report calls on the Israeli government to commit to:

- Greater monitoring of social networks for antisemitic hate speech.
- Ongoing examination of international regulation and enforcement of hate speech to ensure Israel is up to date.
- Government-to-Government cooperation
- International cooperation and regulation against extremist social media platforms.
- Building of international coalitions.

Finally, the Government ministries commit to working together to achieve the following goals of hate speech monitoring:

- Monitoring hate speech according to the IHRA definition of antisemitism.
- Monitoring and identifying content published by propagators of antisemitism on social media.
- Monitoring antisemitic hate speech in specific languages, including alerting social media platforms to the gaps in policy enforcement in languages with higher antisemitic hate speech prevalence.
- Monitoring viral campaigns in inauthentic accounts that seek to promote hate speech.

The United Kingdom

On December 15, 2020, the British Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport and the Home Office published a joint paper, the "[Online Harms White Paper](#)," outlining a proposed policy approach to address online hate and other challenges. According to the report, "This White Paper...puts forward ambitious plans for a new system of accountability and oversight for tech companies, moving far beyond self-regulation. A new regulatory framework for online safety will make clear companies' responsibilities to keep UK users, particularly children, safer online with the most robust action to counter illegal content and activity."

The report outlines a "vision" for maintaining a "free, open and secure internet" and "freedom of expression online," while at the same time ensuring "An online environment where companies take effective steps to keep their users safe, and where criminal, terrorist and hostile foreign state activity is not left to contaminate the online space" and where "rules and norms for the internet that discourage harmful behaviour." The report also proposes a "global coalition of countries all taking coordinated steps to keep their citizens safe online."

Furthermore, the British government proposes creating new statutory duties to ensure companies take responsibility for the hate on their platforms and that an independent regulator be created to oversee compliance, based on a risk-based approach. The report adds that the regulator will have certain powers, including the ability to issue fines or impose liability on members of senior management of companies if they fail to comply as well as "broader responsibilities to promote education and awareness-raising about online safety, and to promote the development and adoption of safety technologies to tackle online harms."

The United States

In the US, much of the debate surrounding online antisemitism is tied to the broader discourse on Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, a piece of legislation intended to foster the continued development of the internet long before any of what we see as the modern internet had been developed.

While the original intent of a hands off approach to let this new technology grow helped the internet rapidly expand, the limitations of the 1996 law in providing safeguards against hate speech and other dangerous behaviors online are now apparent. Under the framework of 230, “[n]o provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider.” On one hand, today some argue that the law abdicates responsibility of the social media platforms and must therefore be reformed in such a way that ensures freedom of expression while at the same time addressing hate, disinformation, and more. On the other hand, many also credit the law for providing the necessary space for success of the social media platforms and in creating a public forum for individuals to share their thoughts.

While there is support among Democrats and Republicans in the US for making some changes to Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, there are varying approaches as to how to achieve such reform and the intended goals. For example, there is legislation currently being drafted that would specifically target “dangerous algorithms” and hold platforms accountable for algorithms that amplify or recommend content that leads to offline violence.

