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RESPONDING TO HATE: THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS ACTORS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

JULY 16, 2019

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RESPONDING TO HATE: THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS ACTORS

JULY 16, 2019

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RESPONDING TO HATE: THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS ACTORS

July 16, 2019

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC

The hearing was held at 11:00 a.m. in Room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Gwen Moore, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Gwen Moore, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin, Ranking Member, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Hon. Steve Cohen, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Hon. Sheila Jackson Lee, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Hon. Brian Fitzpatrick, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; and Hon. Richard Hudson, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Witnesses present: Father James Martin, Editor at Large, America magazine (via videoconferencing); Rabbi Hazzan Jeffrey Myers, Rabbi and Cantor, Tree of Life Synagogue; Imam Gamal Fouda, Imam, Al Noor Mosque (via videoconferencing); Radia Bakkouch, President, Coexister; Reverend Aaron Jenkins, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, The Expectations Project; Usra Ghazi, Director of Policy and Programs, America Indivisible, Mayor's Interfaith Council; and Alina Bricman, Elected President, European Union of Jewish Students (via videoconferencing).

HON. GWEN MOORE, COMMISSIONER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Ms. MOORE. Good morning, everyone. I want to welcome you to the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, or better known as the U.S. Helsinki Commission, hearing on "Responding to Hate: The Role of Religious Actors." We're so happy to be joined today by our expert witnesses, some who are appearing here before us today and some who are joining us by video. But before I begin, I do want to take the opportunity to introduce myself and another commissioner who has made his way over here already.

My name is Gwen Moore. I represent the 4th Congressional District of Wisconsin, and I am a very proud member of the commission. I want to introduce my good friend, Mr. Hudson, from North

Carolina, who is a Republican, but on these issues we are very much alike. And I want to thank you for your attendance.

We are going to start by hearing first from our witnesses who are going to join us by video. So we'll start with the Reverend James Martin, Society of Jesus.

Oh, well, there's a guy who just joined us, little known to many people but well known to all of us. He's a—you know, coming over from the other House. We're allowing him to join us here to repatriate to the House. He was a former member of the House, and now is Senator Cardin for Maryland. He's also a commissioner. He is the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

And he is very, very active in the Helsinki Commission, and does a lot of legislation on this issue. And, Senator, thank you for joining us this morning.

I just want to thank Chairman Hastings for allowing me the opportunity to preside over this hearing this morning on such a critically important matter. At 10:25 a.m. on August 5th, 2012, first responders were alerted to respond to a shooting in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Next month, we will remember the lives of six Sikh worshipers murdered 7 years ago. Six bright lights snuffed out by the cowardice and intolerance of hate-motivated violence. The Sikh and non-Sikh Oak Creek community, the entire Milwaukee area community where I am blessed to serve, and the world were horrified to learn that productive and loving members of their community were murdered in their holy place, their inner sanctum, their designated place to commune with God.

All of us have something to gain from those who look different, pray differently, and may come from a different place. And we must not wait until tragedy strikes, again and again and again, to learn the value of mutual respect. We must seize every opportunity to denounce hate-motivated violence, and in doing so we protect the value of freedom of expression, the hallmark of democracy. To have one's voice heard is the hallmark of human dignity and the very lifeblood of democracy.

This is why I count it an honor to serve as a commissioner of the United States Helsinki Commission, and to work within the tenets of the Helsinki Final Act, undergirded by principles of human rights and democracy of the 57 countries that make up the region of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. And I have spent my entire career advocating for policies, programs, and services that prioritize tolerance and inclusion. And I've led my fellow members in protests here in the very halls of Congress that have raised global awareness for victims of terror. I've introduced resolutions to recognize the crisis of intolerant violence against Native women. And one of the most prolific and influential religious actors of our time famously said—and that would be the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—that darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that.

So let us use this truth as we examine the role of religious actors. You know, we're politicians. But the role of religious actors is embedded in the history of this country and around the world. And

I am led to believe that it is time for the religious community to take its historic place in the forefront for the march of justice. And let us firmly use love and responsible policy to develop policies that will save lives and protect human rights. I am most grateful to the Wisconsinites that I represent for the privilege to be here today. And they're a shining example of how to rebuild a community after a vicious and senseless attack on a community—those folks I speak of in Oak Creek.

And I want to thank Rabbi Myers of the Tree of Life Synagogue and Imam Fouda for participating in today's hearings, as their communities, like my own, have also personally been touched by tragedy. And I want to thank the religious and faith-based leaders who have joined us here today for the solidarity they are showing in coming here, and for displaying the true strength it takes to remain resilient in the face of hate.

I am going to yield to Senator Cardin for an opening statement, if you would like.

You're always so soft-spoken on these issues. [Laughter.] Thought we would give you an opportunity to speak out for a change. [Laughter.]

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, RANKING MEMBER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. CARDIN. Well, Chairwoman Moore, thank you very much for your leadership, and to Congressman Hudson. The three of us were in Luxembourg recently for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. So we've had a chance to be together to talk about the rise of hate. I particularly want to thank the leadership in the House for holding this hearing, "Responding to Hate: The Role of Religious Actors." As Congresswoman Moore pointed out, I am the Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance within the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

We've seen such a rise of hate in America, the OSCE region, and around the world. And we've seen that, unfortunately, in houses of prayer, from Pittsburgh to Poway, Christchurch, Colombo, black churches in the South—we've seen violence when people go to pray, innocent people being murdered.

At the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly I hosted a side event. I want to thank Mischa Thompson, the staff person from the Helsinki Commission, for the extraordinary work that she's done, not just here in America but around the world to deal with these issues. Our side event was on "Countering Hate: Lessons Learned from the Past, Leadership for the Future."

We started with Dr. Erbelding of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. And she gave, I think, a rather sobering presentation. I had heard it once before, because I am a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum board. And she told us about the seeds of hate and where it can lead to. You know, bad people exist. But they can't do their evil agenda unless they have popular support. And we saw that leading up to World War II. And we saw the consequences of that. Now, I'm not trying to tell you that we are in the same vulnerable position today as we were before World War II. But many of the same situations that existed then are existing today.

And we need to deal with that. We just can't ignore those actions. I said after the tragedy in Pittsburgh, words have consequences. Public discourse that stokes fear and sharpens grievances is not public policy debate, it is not problem solving. Leaders must be held accountable for ending hate in our community by their deeds and words. We must demonstrate through our actions and through our words that our society is stronger when we stand together united against hate.

So as leaders, we have a responsibility to develop an action plan to deal with what we see in our community, in the OSCE region, and around the world. Yes, we have to start with making sure people are safe in our community. And we have to work with religious leaders to make sure people are comfortable going to their houses of prayer being safe. We need to invest in education. To me, education is the most important investment we can to—so people understand the strength of diversity. We need laws in place that make it clear we won't tolerate hate crimes. And we need to build coalitions.

I see a great coalition in front of me, this panel. We can't do this as Jews, or Muslims, or Christians. We really need to do it together, if we're going to be effective in countering the rise of hate. Coalition building is so important. We need to share best practices, what works in our community. So, Madam Chair, I want to welcome all four of our panelists.

Rabbi Myers, I decided to go to University of Pittsburgh because of the strength of the Jewish community there. My parents thought I would be safe. And I remember being welcomed in Squirrel Hill, and the importance of that to me as a young student at the University of Pittsburgh.

And to Radia, we had a chance when I was in Paris just recently to meet with the Coexisters. What an incredible group that you have brought together. And I'm going to share a question I asked and your answer. When I talked about what obstacles do you face, and one of the obstacles you faced were your own parents who were concerned about you joining together in company.

And to Reverend Jenkins, thank you for your leadership. To Ms. Ghazi, thank you for leadership on these issues. We appreciate all four of you being here and sharing your experiences so that we can help develop an action plan to stem this tide, to work together, as the chairman said, for peace, and love, and people being respected, and recognizing diversity our strength.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. MOORE. And thank you. Always on point, Senator Cardin.

And so let's proceed with this hearing. And we are so privileged to first hear from—[offside conversation]. We are not ignoring Representative Hudson. [Laughter.] He says he would much rather hear from our witnesses. But most of us—I mean, this is decrying the role that legislators have. They love to hear themselves talk.

But anyway, we are really blessed to hear from the Reverend—I bet you—I've started introducing the Reverend James Martin, Society of Jesus, for the third time. So we are really excited to hear from him. He's a Jesuit priest, author, editor at large of America magazine, and consulter to the Vatican's dicastery for communication.

Father Martin is the author of many books, including The New York Times bestseller, "Jesus: A Pilgrimage" and "The Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything." His most recent book is "Building a Bridge," about how the Catholic church can reach out more compassionately to LGBT Catholics.

He has appeared on all major media outlets, both nationally and internationally, speaking on issues of religion and spirituality, and has written for, among many other places, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. Before entering the Jesuits, Father Martin graduated from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business and worked in corporate America for several years. We do welcome Reverend James Martin via video.

FATHER JAMES MARTIN, EDITOR AT LARGE, AMERICA MAGAZINE

Fr. MARTIN. Medical treatments prevent me from joining you in person, but it's really a great honor to be with you.

On June 12th, 2016, 49 people at Pulse, a nightclub that attracted a largely LGBT clientele in Orlando, Florida, were shot and killed at what was at the time the largest mass shooting in U.S. history. In response, there was an outpouring of love and support for the LGBT community from almost every quarter in the country. One notable exception was the Catholic church, my own church.

While the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a brief, four-line statement, the words "gay" or "LGBT" were absent from it. As a thought experiment, imagine if 49 people from a particular ethnic group were massacred, and the name of that ethnic group was omitted from public statements. Moreover, in the wake of the U.S. bishops' statement, only a handful of individual Catholic bishops expressed any sympathy at all. The vast majority said absolutely nothing. Even in death, the LGBT community remains invisible to much of the church.

The Catholic church's difficulty in ministering to and even trying to understand LGBT people has led to Catholic magazines and websites that vilify them, priests who single them out in homilies as the world's worst sinners, and even statements from cardinals, archbishops, and bishops overseas siding with repressive anti-gay laws that provide for the arrest, and even execution, of gay men and women.

Why am I bringing this up? Because when it comes to the role that religious actors and organizations can play in combating hate crimes, the most effective thing they can do is to get their own houses of worship in order. Racism, sexism, and homophobia still exist in many Christian denominations—my own included. To turn to racism, we only need to recall the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's trenchant comment that the most segregated hour of the week is 11 on Sunday morning.

Last year, an African American friend of mine, a national leader in the U.S. Catholic church, told me a story. Recently, he was attending a conference at a town far from his home. When Sunday came, he searched for a Catholic church near his hotel so that he could attend Sunday mass. Happily, he located one, drove there, and entered the church. After my friend passed through the church doors a priest, seeing a large dark-skinned man, came up to him

and said: I'm sorry, you do know that this is Catholic church, don't you? Yes, said my friend, do *you* know that this is a Catholic church? [Laughter.]

The racism, sexism, and homophobia, still endemic in some Christian churches, leads to casually racist, sexist, and homophobic comments from the pulpit, as well as overtly racist, sexist, and homophobic comments made in private. Both give a silent blessing to more racism, sexism, and homophobia among Christians. Just this month, an influential far-right Catholic website published an article that opposed even gay-straight alliances in schools as part of what they call their war against LGBT propaganda.

What does such tacit support for prejudice by church leaders end up doing? It excuses hate. It fosters hate. It blesses hate. And it unintentionally encourages the violence that this hate leads to. And make no mistake, some Catholics who treat LGBT people with contempt think they are doing so with the church's blessing. Thus, these people think they're being prophetic. They don't see themselves as haters. They see themselves as prophets, because they feel the support of their churches.

Now, this is not to say that all or even most Christian churches are places of racism, sexism, or homophobia. By no means. Often it is Christian groups that lead the fight against hatred. Witness, obviously, the example of Reverend King in the civil rights movement, a true prophet whose main impetus was an overtly Christian one. In our own day, I'm proud that the Catholic church in this country has consistently stood up against the vilification of refugees and migrants, perhaps the newest victims of hatred.

But any actions or speeches that mock, stigmatize, dehumanize, or otherwise target specific persons or groups of people is completely opposed to the Christian worldview. Why? Because it legitimizes seeing a person who is different as the "other." And this is completely antithetical to the actions of the Jesus who we encounter in the gospels. In fact, Jesus reached out first and foremost to those who were seen as "other" in his time—women, tax collectors, prostitutes, Samaritans, Roman centurions, people who were sick, and on, and on, and on. Jesus is always bringing those on the outside in. He brings the outsider into his circle of friendship because, for Jesus, there is no us and them. There is only us.

So the most important thing that religious actors and organizations can do to combat hate crimes is not only to fight the hatred on the outside, but on the inside as well. How? First, by taking a clear look at how their organizations speak of and minister to members of marginalized groups. Second, by reaching out to these groups specifically to make them feel welcome to what are, after all, their churches too. Finally, by taking every opportunity to stand with them publicly, to advocate for them, to fight for them—even at the risk of losing some parishioners. Overall, they must remind their own communities, and the world, that for Jesus, and therefore for all Christians, there is no us and them. There is only us.

Thank you very much.

Ms. MOORE. That was very compelling. Really important voice.

Also, we're sharing these videos because we do think that this hearing would not be complete without hearing these voices. And

that being said, I want to proudly introduce the video of Imam Gamal Fouda, of Al Noor Mosque, who survived the Christchurch attack on the Al Noor Mosque in New Zealand. And so, let's go.

IMAM GAMAL FOUDA, IMAM, AL NOOR MOSQUE

Imam FOUDA. [Speaks in Arabic, then continues in English.] May the peace and blessings be upon our prophet and all the prophets of God from Adam and Mohammad, peace be upon them all.

Thank you very much for inviting me tonight to address your community and your members. I do much appreciate. And I just—first of all, I would like to ask Allah to put the martyrs in paradise—the highest place in paradise, those who lost their lives in the terrorist—in the terror attack in Christchurch mosque. May Allah—[inaudible]—put them in—[inaudible]—recovery to those injured.

First of all, I would like to say that that was something that no one wants to see. When you see people being killed in front of you, it is something that is—I will never forget in my life. People came for peace, came for love, to learn love, and to actually learn how to spread this love to the people around them, to their family members, and to the people in the neighborhood who actually stood beside us, and they supported us. They supported people, their neighbors. The medical team, the police, the government—it was really, really a good image of us standing together.

The power that actually came to us from the people around the world, and especially in New Zealand and in Christchurch, was actually the secret of us coming back the next Friday. And I stood in Hagley Park, and I addressed the people that love only will redeem us. And hate will never divide us. We stood together quickly.

And that is the power of New Zealand, that New Zealand set a good example to the whole world, how to actually look after your people, how to actually support all your people. And we always stand together against hate, and hate speech, and hate crimes. That is the secret of New Zealand, that the New Zealand people, and Muslims, and the Muslim community, they stand for peace, they stand for care, and love toward each other.

And you can see that in the power of the leadership. And you have seen the Prime Minister who stood together—stood against hatred. And she said that was one of the black days of New Zealand. That is the power that all communities, all governments should work with each other against hate crimes, especially on social media. That social media should be a useful tool for all of us, not a tool of brainwashing young people.

And also the Minister of Education around the world, all your educators, you need to implant the critical thinking in our children so that they know that they have to have their own self. They should not be listening and should be followers of people. They should have their own views. And they question everything around them, including hate speech on social media.

And all of us have to condemn hate speech everywhere. And we have to teach in our mosques, in our churches, in our synagogues, and all worshiping places. We have to teach love, and how to actually teach our children to see people of different color as something that is really beautiful to all. We have to stand together against

hatred and against terrorism around the world. All the people who claim—who are terrorizing people, and they spread hatred around the world—whether their religion is Islam, or Christianity, or Judaism, or faith, or no faith. Terrorism has no religion.

And we have to stand together, looking at the diversity in our communities as something that is strengthening our community. It is the secret of the power of our community to see different colors, different languages.

Thank you very much for inviting me today to speak to you. And I have lots of other things to say, but because of the time I will finish up. Thank you very much.

Ms. MOORE. And thank you.

And before we proceed with the hearing, I am so delighted that we've been joined by our friend and colleague, another Helsinki Commissioner, who hails from Memphis, Tennessee, a member of the Judiciary Committee, very active in the Helsinki Commission. And that is Representative Steve Cohen.

Good morning.

HON. STEVE COHEN, COMMISSIONER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. COHEN. Thank you. Sorry about being late. I had a meeting. But this is an important meeting, and I value the work on the Helsinki Commission. And I look forward to your testimony.

And hearing what I did hear on these broadcasts, religion can be a wonderful source of life values and spirituality that we share in common. Memphis is a city of many ministers, many outstanding ministers and rabbis. My rabbi, Micah Greenstein, was on the NAACP board, of which I was very proud. One of his predecessors, Rabbi James Wax, stood up to the only onetime Jewish mayor of Memphis, Henry Loeb, and told him that God's law was more important and that he should have worked with Dr. King, and seen to it that they were able to march and bring the sanitation workers the salaries and benefits and wages they deserved. There have been others. And the leaders in Memphis over the years have been Methodist ministers, Catholics, and Jews, and others.

But we all need to take religion and use it for good, and the common purposes and common values, and not use it to divide us, and not use it to make money, and not use it to suggest that the only way is through tithes and givings that enrich people who use religion for their own sake.

So I'm pleased that you all are here, and pleased to participate, and nobody's better on all these things than Reverend Barber. So I wish he was here too.

Thank you, I yield back.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you so much, Representative Cohen.

We are so delighted to be joined by this distinguished panel. So I want to start out with Rabbi Hazzan Jeffrey Myers, who has served as the rabbi and cantor for the Tree of Life Congregation of Pittsburgh since the summer of 2017. Rabbi Myers is a survivor of the horrific morning of October 27th, 2018, when a heavily armed gunman began a murderous rampage in the Tree of Life Synagogue. It is so wonderful to have you here in person. And my nephew wants to be a cantor. I want to make sure he gets in touch

with you. You may already know him, because he sings in every synagogue everywhere in the world that he can.

But with that, I welcome you, Rabbi Myers, to begin your testimony.

RABBI HAZZAN JEFFREY MYERS, RABBI AND CANTOR, TREE OF LIFE SYNAGOGUE

Rabbi MYERS. Thank you, Madam Chair, Members of Congress. I thank you for the privilege of testifying before you today.

I am a victim, witness, and survivor of the worst attack in a synagogue in the history of the United States, and the Jewish community has been present on these shores since 1654. Since that fateful day of October 27, 2018, I, the congregants of Tree of Life, along with two other congregations that share our building, New Light and Dor Hadash, and the city of Pittsburgh have been overwhelmed by expressions of love from across the planet. People of all faiths, colors, and sexual orientation have enveloped us is a vast, global hug that continues unabated. Their message is very clear: The acts of one person are not representative of all of humanity.

But, alas, the acts of brutality and cruelty can overwhelm us. And when coupled with incessant anti-Semitic words and dastardly deeds across the United States and around the world, we are reminded almost daily that a pernicious, ancient evil flourishes. What most Americans don't know or appreciate is the warmth and togetherness that is Pittsburgh. I can state this objectively as I too am an immigrant to Pittsburgh, having spent most of my life in the New York and New Jersey area. I live in Mr. Rogers' neighborhood, and the love and care for people of all walks of life in my city post-October 27 were typical to prior to this date, only more intense afterwards.

Religious leaders of all faiths have reached out to me, affording me a unique opportunity to get to know them and find commonalities where we can work together to better our community. The metaphor of America as a melting pot is a beautiful image, but sadly it is not true. We do not know our neighbors. We live in silos with no bridges connecting them. Many choose to live in their own private silos, not wanting others to enter their silo. Some people just don't know how to build a bridge. This is where religious leaders like me make a difference. I am a bridge builder.

When the Muslim community extended an olive branch to me, I responded by offering an olive tree. The same goes for the Roman Catholic, various Protestant denominations, the Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Baptist, AME, and so many more that I apologize if I have omitted. We have so much in common that we must work together. The modest, baby steps that we are taking mature into adult steps, hopefully yielding bushels of olives. Opportunities to partner with local government and the police department continue to grow as well. We can be the Nation's laboratory to model actions that may work throughout the country, without me minimizing the efforts of those already working to achieve these same goals.

We, as clergy and congregants, are striving to find ways beyond visiting each other's worship services to really getting to know our neighbors, to consider their needs, and to determine how we can

work together to realize positive outcomes. Please note that this was happening in Pittsburgh before October 27th, but this date and the atrocity that it brought created a new sense of urgency. We must see to it that all children in all schools throughout this country learn about their neighbors and strive to understand them in an effort to appreciate their faith, not merely tolerate them. We must provide the tools for all people to honor and respect their neighbors. And right now we as a nation are not being very successful in doing this.

Just 2 weeks after October 27th, the city of Pittsburgh held a rally at Point State Park, and I was asked to speak. It was here that I made a pledge not to use the word "hate," which I will say here only once for demonstrative purposes. The H-word, as I call it, is a four-letter word, an obscenity that deserves to be in our mental wastebaskets. If you truly must say that you H-something, just say you don't like it. H-speech is a severe choice of words that often leads to violent actions, as was the case in the Tree of Life shootings. When you don't understand your neighbor, it can lead to mistrust, fear, loathing, and H-speech, which ultimately leads you to unconscionable and deadly actions.

Our Nation right now is suffering an epidemic of uncivil discourse. People cannot hold civil conversations with their neighbors, be it in person or through social media. As our elected leaders, I call you to task for this epidemic. When you use H-speech against one another, you model uncivil discourse for all Americans. As our leaders, you are teaching us that it is acceptable to behave this way—and it's simply not. Is it any wonder that my fellow citizens speak in uncivil terms and use H-speech? You condone it and model it. It is time for a different direction.

The path toward civil discourse must start with all of you, our elected leaders. When you model civil discourse, you teach us appropriate ways to speak to one another. This does not require any legislation on your part. It requires you to think about the impact of your words for, as the Jewish tradition teaches, the most powerful weapon a human being possesses are words. They can wound, or they can heal. There is way too much wounding emanating out of Washington, DC. Who among you will be brave enough to say to the American people: I pledge that I will not use the H-word, I call upon my fellow legislators to do the same, to help restore civil discourse in America? Our eyes and ears turn to you. What will you do?

I thank you for your time and attention.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you so much for that, Rabbi. Thank you so much for sending us on a path of thinking. And we're—I'm going to engage you on just that during the Q&A period.

But right now, we are really fortunate to have a young person. We've had the sage wisdom of our elders here, but it is always—you always know you have a movement going when its intergenerational.

And so we're really happy to have Radia Bakkouch here, who's the president of Coexister in France. It's an interfaith youth-led movement that offers young people the experience of diversity in a positive way. Radia is specializing in peacebuilding, youth empowerment, and conflict transformation.

And before I yield to you, I just want to introduce a very active member of the Helsinki Commission, Sheila Jackson Lee, who is a member of the Judiciary Committee and—a senior member of the Judiciary Committee—and, of course, she hails from Houston, Texas. I want to yield to Representative Sheila Jackson Lee for just a moment.

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE, COMMISSIONER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. You're very kind. And I thank you for your courtesy, and to acknowledge my delay. It was because I was in the Judiciary Committee speaking about incarcerated persons. So I will be very focused by saying to you that I am a strong advocate, as this commission would suggest, of religious liberty, religious freedoms, and the restoration of such. And I think that that is one of our highest responsibilities in this commission, and we look forward to hearing from you to be more energized on these issues.

I'd conclude by saying at an earlier meeting I had with the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, we were talking about the conditions in the Syrian refugee camps. All of this ties together where people are oppressed, and our voices and our deeds should work to relieve them of their burdens. With that, I yield back to the gentlelady.

Thank you.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you so much, Representative Jackson Lee. We've had numbers of members come in and out as our schedules are busy. But as you all can see this is extremely important. And members are leaning into it, despite other compelling work that's here.

And so with that, Radia, we are eager to hear from you.

RADIA BAKKOUCH, PRESIDENT, COEXISTER

Ms. BAKKOUCH. I would like to thank the Members of the Congress and the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe for inviting me to testify at this hearing. My name is Radia Bakkouch. I'm 27 years old, and I've been the president of Coexister, a European interfaith youth movement, for 4 years now. I represent thousands of young people, of members of Coexister. And we are really proud and honored to be heard today.

So in France, and in Europe, there is a complex relationship with otherness and with understanding differences. While the overall trend leans toward uniformity of cultural practices, spiritual and religious identity resists this mechanism of standardization, and symbolizes taboo, fear, and ignorance. Unfortunately, hate crimes motivated by religious bias only comes second in number behind racially motivated crimes in Europe. For instance, in France, in 2018 the number of anti-Semitic attacks in France rose by 74 percent. In the past 10 years, like in Montauban and Toulouse in 2012, in Paris and its northern suburb, in Saint-Denis, in 2015, in a church in Saint Etienne du Rouvray in 2016, people were killed because of their religion and people killed in the name of their religion.

So if faith can be at the heart of tensions, for us in Coexister it can also be at the heart of the solutions. Coexister is a youth-led

interfaith organization. We gather Jews, Christians, Muslims, atheists, agnostic, and Buddhists from 15 to 35 years old. And within our organization we believe in the concept of the "faith for good," and in the practice of interfaith cooperation. In 52 European cities, Coexister has offered 10,000 young people the opportunity to experience interfaith diversity in a good way and has helped more than 120,000 students to tackle stereotypes based on beliefs.

We empower young people and give them the skills, the opportunities, and the relationships they need to build peace and prevent any type of violence and exclusions. We offer them safe space, where they can be fully themselves with others who are completely different from them, and tools also so they can act together for social justice, inclusion, mutual respect, and peace.

So what are our recommendations? Thousands of interfaith initiatives and practices exist around the world. The United Religions Initiative Network, of which we are a part of, alone already supports and connects more than 1,000 initiatives in 108 countries. Yet, in order to maximize their outreach and systemic impact, they have to be state supported.

So, the first recommendation would be to defend pluralistic societies. We need to defend, protect, and promote a pluralistic society. Citizens can prevent hate against diversity if they are able to face diversity in their daily life. Multiculturalism and communitarianism are not the only way to apprehend diversity in society. We need a mix.

The second recommendation would be to support "faith for good." Faith is a specific part of the identity, which is substantial, chosen, and can be a source of bad and good. Everyone has faith in something. It's not the prerogative of religions only. Linking the spiritual resources to actions toward peacebuilding and social justice strengthen the actions.

The third recommendation would be to practice interfaith cooperation. Faith for good is even stronger when it's used in interfaith cooperation, by bringing people that deeply disagree on their faith together, so that they can act together. We need to acknowledge that cooperating with people who are different requires time, practice, and willingness.

We need to restore the importance of relationships. And, I would say, more than relationships, friendship. We need also for a recommendation to come out of the communitarian struggles. It is important that not only Jewish people fight against anti-Semitism, not only Muslim people fight against anti-Muslim attacks and Islamophobia. We need to acknowledge all type of hate crimes that target a particular population and engage everyone so they can feel concern when any and all hate crimes happen.

The fifth recommendation would be to fight "for," rather than to fight "against." Fighting against hate is important, but fighting for peace is vital. Our purpose should not only be to diminish hate, but we need to envision what our ideal society looks like. Nonviolence is a prerequisite, but tolerance is not enough. And we say usually in Coexister that we are not a tolerant organization. We do more. We do acceptance. We do mutual understanding. We need to defend a society where active coexistence is the method for relationship.

We need—as the last recommendation—we need to also include other actors in the fight against hate. It's really important that religious actors—and I have some on my table—engage in the fight against hate crimes. But also, if you can influence the response to hate, citizens and young people are also a great lever to do so. We usually include young people when we talk about the future, but young people are the citizens of today and they need to be included today to face the challenges of our society.

Responding to hate by using faith and religious tools can be efficient and lead to a lasting peace. In Coexister, our founding intention is that peace must be taught, experimented, and be a process of consciousness. We need to learn peace, not learn how to make peace, because it will mean that we cannot prevent the conflict. We learn—we have to learn and cherish the actual peace. We would like to make peace a major learning discipline in all informal and formal educational policies throughout the world.

Thank you very much.

Ms. MOORE. Just more than we expected, Radia. I can feel the energy up here on the dais just listening to you. We need to teach peace and learn peace. We can't just expect it to evolve.

Before we hear from our next distinguished speaker, I just want to note the arrival of one of our newest commissioners, Representative Brian Fitzpatrick, from the great State of Pennsylvania. He's a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and also on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Welcome and thank you. And, again, as you can see, members are attending this hearing, you know, consistent with their busy schedules, because this is probably the most important theme that we can lean into right now, during this period of our—of our democracy, not only here but across Europe.

I'm very excited to hear from the very Reverend Aaron Jenkins, who is an ordained Christian minister, and serves as vice president of the Abrahamson Scholarship Foundation, an education nonprofit organization in Washington, DC, that provides scholarships and mentoring support to first-generation college students for all 4 years of their undergraduate education. But Reverend Aaron Jenkins is also the vice president of policy and advocacy for The Expectations Project. It's a national nonprofit organization that educates and trains faith-motivated advocates to help eliminate educational inequality in public schools. And prior to this adventure, he served as the director of the White House Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships under the Obama regime.

So, Reverend Aaron Jenkins, you can just leave your tie right there on the desk for me to gather up after we leave, after you're done with your presentation. You just leave that tie right there.

REVEREND AARON JENKINS, VICE PRESIDENT OF POLICY AND ADVOCACY, THE EXPECTATIONS PROJECT

Rev. JENKINS. I'll be happy to do so. Nelson Mandela can be left in your capable hands. [Laughter.]

It's a pleasure to testify before you this morning, to the distinguished gathering of congressional leaders, to my colleagues and co-panelists. I'm grateful to be here. What brought me here was not only the invitation to come, but it was what happened on June

17th, 2015, when Pastor Clementa Pinckney was teaching Bible study and a young man walked into the church at Mother Emanuel in South Carolina, and asked: Where is the pastor, because I want to sit beside him?

And after listening to Bible study, and after sitting amongst people who were attempting to live principles of all of our faith traditions, of loving others as they want to be loved, we would see a crime that would take the lives of Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lee Lance, Depayne Middleton-Doctor, Tywanza Sanders, Daniel L. Simmons, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Myra Thompson—also known as the Charleston nine. What happened that day would be vilified and go down in our history, just like the bombing of the four little girls in Birmingham, Alabama. But what was powerful is what took place several days later at a very routine hearing, when a judge said: I want to give the families a chance to speak, and several families said: We forgive you.

The title of our hearing today, "Responding to Hate: The Role of Religious Actors," stirred something in me, because I wondered, what does it not only look like to respond to hate crimes, but what are the ways that we can be proactive in preventing them in the first place? Working with young people in a program called Operation Understanding D.C., I spent 7 years educating Jewish, Christian and Muslim students of the African American and Jewish tradition of what would it look like to see the world and make the world that you would like to see? Often as an educator and those who know how education works, you have to give young people a goal that exceeds their grasp, because that's what gets them excited to reach for the goal.

And I think one of the goals that I have personally is to see an end to hate crimes, but more so than that, to see a transformation of communities through three important things that they need: partnership, resources, and relationships. It was in Operation Understanding D.C. that I saw the power of partnership, going to Memphis, Tennessee and having Rabbi Micah Greenstein inform my students with 18 powerful words. In the Jewish tradition, 18, l'chai, means life. And he would say to them: Do the most that you can, in the place where you are, with the time that you have. And those 18 words, for the last 25 years, have stirred young people to go wherever they're planted to do just that.

I'll tell you, when hate crimes take place what they do inside of me is that, just like that crime at Mother Emanuel Church, just like the crime at Tree of Life, it made me think: What would I have done if I were there? And then an even better question is, What could we do to prevent that from happening in the first place? One of my mentors once told me that thoughts become things, that it's the thoughts that we have that become the things that we do. So how do we become interrupters of hateful thoughts? How do we become interrupters of ignorance? And I know that one of the powerful ways that's already been mentioned is education.

As I sit with my sister to the right, Ms. Usra Ghazi, we have already worked together, even before being called here. We've worked together as Christian and Muslim, seeking ways for young adults and young leaders to find solutions to the problems that we have.

We see goals that exceed our grasp, and we reach for them. With the power of partnership here in Washington, DC. as a clergy member, I walk in communities that have experienced gun violence. And I ask the neighbors who have seen that happen two questions: How can we help, and what do you need? And oftentimes if we trust community in partnership they will tell us what they need.

One young man said: We need resources. We need a place for our children to play. We need safety. That is what we need here. And I wonder, applying it to this commission, which has reach across Europe and across oceans, I wonder and think out loud with you: What are the places and ways that we can be reactive—excuse me—what are the ways that we can be proactive instead of reactive?

The power of partnership means that I walk into a synagogue, I walk into a mosque, I walk into a Buddhist temple, invited in and learn the traditions that are there, and they become important to me. Not taking away from my Christian identity, but actually empowering it. I believe in partnership.

The second thing I believe in is the power of relationship. I've been told that the relational is transformational, and I believe that. Working in the Obama administration as the director for the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, I watched the power of relationship that when people are in need, and people have the resources that are needed to help them, it's the relationship that makes you pick up the phone, that makes you get out of bed, that makes you go to see what is the best that we can do for them.

I remember after the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting being invited to Adas Israel, where leaders from D.C., Maryland, and Virginia gathered in response to the hate crime. But the most powerful moment of that—of that visit was actually what took place outside, when there were more people outside who gathered together in solidarity with Pittsburgh, and hate crimes that had taken place all over, than could fit into the shul. And what happened next was powerful. Imam Johari Abdul-Malik, formerly of the Dar Al Hijrah Mosque here in Virginia, a local friend and clergy member in the Islamic faith, was asked to go outside and speak.

And he said: Let me start by speaking words of peace. Salam is peace in Arabic. Shalom is peace in Hebrew. And peace is peace in English. [Laughs.] By speaking those words, he reminded me that partnerships matter, but relationships are critical if we're going to see a change of goals that exceed our grasp.

The last thing I'll share is the importance of investment, training, and resources. What happens if we want to dismantle the impact of hate crimes is that faith communities are strategically placed in communities not only across the United States, but across the world, where if they are invested in properly they not only can do the work in their individual congregations but across faith communities as well, to make sure they are resourced and prepared to not only react when something happens of the H-word, as I've been told and will now adopt into my language, but they can be proactive in being instruments of peace where they are.

I've wondered, what would it look like for this committee to empower communities through investment in training and resources, such as things like sustained dialogue and things that we know that work when they're done consistently? I wonder what would happen if we took the time to listen to the needs of communities to make sure that they get what they need.

There's an African proverb that says: If you want to go fast, you go alone. But if you want to go far, you must go together. And I look forward to dialogue together with those of us gathered of thinking and discussing ways that we can go together toward peace and away from things such as H.

Thank you.

Ms. MOORE. We do want to thank you so much. Partnership, resources, and relationships.

Before we hear from our last, but not least, guest, I do want to recognize Representative Fitzpatrick, and see if he has any comments or remarks to make. Thank you for joining us.

HON. BRIAN FITZPATRICK, COMMISSIONER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I appreciate the invitation to be here. Thank you for sharing your stories. This is a very, very important, very timely discussion. As the reverend indicated, the biggest threat that faces our country, as challenging of propositions as we have with regard to health care, and energy policy, and so many things we deal with, I believe the biggest threat facing our Nation is the way that we talk to each other. And that is in every facet of our lives. The lack of civility, I think, is the biggest threat facing our country. The existence of hate is the biggest threat facing our country. So honored to be a part of this today.

Thank you.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you. Are we having a—I—[laughter]—I really want to introduce our last speaker, someone who appears to be very, very young but she's worked for over a decade across the United States. She's a senior fellow for religious freedom at the Newseum's Freedom Forum Institute. She's been a commissioner on D.C.—or, is a commissioner on D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser's Interfaith Council. She's worked at the U.S. Department of State as a policy advisor and Franklin fellow.

She's worked for the city of Boston in the mayor's office for immigrant advancement, holds a master's degree from Harvard Divinity School in religion and politics. And we don't have time for me to read all of her credentials, but we're happy to welcome Usra Ghazi as an expert on this subject. And we are going to yield to you now. And I see that you've already collaborated with one of our panelists. So if we just sort of move seats around here, we'll have this thing all solved by the end of this hearing.

USRA GHAZI, DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND PROGRAMS, AMERICA INDIVISIBLE

Ms. GHAZI. Sounds like a plan. Madam Chair, distinguished members of the commission, thank you for inviting me to speak today. The issue of hate crimes in the United States and specifically those targeting religious minorities is one of growing national

concern. At America Indivisible, where I work, we are primarily focused on the issue of racialized anti-Muslim bigotry and the ways that it impacts communities who are perceived to be Muslim, which may include Arab, black, Sikh, and South Asian Americans. As a coalition-based organization, we partner across communities to identify solutions that strengthen relationships between bigotry-impacted communities and their neighbors, and local government representatives.

One very critical way that religious actors are responding to hate crimes and discrimination is to build more effective ways to monitor and report on these events. Federal hate crime statistics consistently underreport hate incidences for many reasons, including a lack of standardized reporting processes for all states and also due to strained relationships between bigotry-impacted communities and law enforcement entities. In my own conversations with Muslim, Arab, and Sikh communities impacted by anti-Muslim vandalism, bias, and hate, many have expressed a desire to keep their heads down rather than reporting these events to law enforcement agencies.

Despite this challenge, Sikh, Muslim, Arab, South Asian, and religious communities of color are increasingly coordinating events themed "Know Your Rights" workshops and meeting with law enforcement officials within their houses of worship and community centers. Religious and civic leaders do this work with great risk to their community reputations. Those who choose to engage with such agencies risk being attacked for cooperating with a government whose chief executive antagonizes Muslims and other marginalized groups in his rhetoric and policies.

And so this takes me to my second point, about the proactive ways that religious actors are responding to hate. Due especially to the rise of hate crimes and hate speech against Muslim and Sikh Americans, these communities by necessity have had to organize outreach efforts to humanize themselves, while raising cultural and religious literacy among their neighbors and government representatives. These range from events themed "Meet a Muslim" or "Wear a Turban Day," to working with media and entertainment industry officials about misrepresentation of these groups in their media content, in addition to working with social media companies.

These communities are also building their civic health, getting more involved in elections, and running for office at record rates. We now have Muslim and Sikh mayors of American cities, as well as officials from these faiths in a range of governmental positions. These efforts help to ensure that our cities, counties and states are truly representative of the rich diversity of American communities. At America Indivisible we work with officials in city, state, and county-level governments to help grow their cultural and religious literacy, while building the civic health of bigotry-impacted communities. Developing effective ways to track and report on hate crimes is absolutely critical.

But it is also one step too late. Social science research proves that when diverse communities have strong associational ties, like working together on community projects, they are much more resilient in times of conflict. Our hope for the future is that more mayors, governors, and county officials will recognize the many ways

that religious actors are contributing to civic health—to the civic health of their neighborhoods. We would like to see more of these officials, including you all, visiting their local mosques or temples. Our communities have been shaping the social fabric of America as small business owners and professionals, as educators, or officers in the armed forces for decades and, in some cases, generations. One sure-fire way to prevent hate and build inclusion is to recognize these contributions and invest in these communities' civic health.

Thank you.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you. Thank you so very, very much.

We are going to now have a period of questions. And I will defer to my colleagues here and allow them to ask questions first. I don't—usually the chair asks questions first, but I'm not going to do it that way. I'm going to yield now to my colleague, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, because I don't want to lose people and have them miss the opportunity to ask you questions.

So, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, I'm going to yield to you to question our distinguished panel at this time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank you so very much. And let me, with a brief commentary as I express my commitment to religious liberty, let me either counter that or frame that in the context of those who are the brunt of hate. They should have the right to practice faith and individuals who are without faith should be left to their own rights and privileges, and not be brutalized, killed, in essence chased from their home, that I've seen across the world. It is also quite obvious in many of the conflicts around the world that it is conflicts on the issue of religion. Sadly, people lose their lives in so many brutal wars because of faith.

And Syria in particular now comes to mind in terms of the faith of those who are supporting Assad versus those who are not. And I would argue that we have to find a way for those of us who are in this country and who pride ourselves or claim faith as very much a part of our infrastructure to be more aggressive, both in our commentary and in our assessment. I would not like to say we go to war over religion, but there are many suggestions that you all have given.

So I'd like to just start, from you, Radia, if you don't mind me calling you that, and say specifically—and I am grateful to be a member of the Helsinki Commission and because of the wide breadth of issues, including religious freedoms but also religious justice. What biding, main focal point we should be advocating legislatively or as a commission to deal with the scourge of religious violence and hatred? And I'll just take that answer from every member of the panel.

Ms. BAKKOUCH. Thank you for this question. I would be very concrete, simple, and short. Put more, more, more inclusion and religious knowledge, and otherness knowledge in formal and informal education. And also, force people to meet with diversity. I think one of the biggest problems—like, one of the top challenges is that when you never met someone that is different from you, of course, when you meet them you can be scared. Of course, when you hear all the violence in the media or in the public sphere, you can be scared. And fear can lead to ignorance. Well, there is ignorance.

And fear can lead to violence. So force diversity. Force the social mix. Force people to meet. Force intercultural exchange. Force interfaith exchange. Force people to meet from a state to another. And that's also what I'm advocating in France.

Thank you.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Rabbi, as I yield to you, we well know that what has been said, where people are raised up on hating someone else, the different sects of Islam, for example, across the huge Islamic community that has brother up against brother, if you will, or children, girls, in Afghanistan not being able to go to school because of a religious belief—but in any event, your thoughts about how we can be more effective.

Thank you.

Rabbi MYERS. Thank you, Representative. We cannot legislate out the H-word. I don't think it's a function of law, because we have plenty of laws on the books covering a vast range of human behaviors. And as I think we can observe, our prisons are filled with way too many people who don't belong there and our prisons are punitive. I don't think they're impactful on human behavior. For years in the United States we became familiar with the acronym STEM education—science, technology, engineering, and math. It then grew to STEAM education—science, technology, engineering, arts, and math.

I submit to you that we should expand it to make it STREAM education, the "R" meaning religion. We don't know our neighbors. We need to see to it that children in all schools across the United States, public and private, learn about their neighbors, learn about the wealth and diversity that exists in the United States. This is not about parental fear that their children might be converted. This is about learning about their neighbors to appreciate the wealth and diversity that is the United States, because when you know your neighbor you're not going to just simply tolerate, because tolerate I don't think is sufficient anymore. You can respect and appreciate the beauty of your neighbor. So I think we need to move toward that.

I would submit the same thing for first year in college. There are plenty of classes that colleges demand. I think this same concept of religion is critical because one—again, students, many, attend college for the first time and have never met the diversity of the United States in the towns that they come from, and the towns that they're raised. So they need to be able to learn more about their neighbors. So I would submit to you that we should find the same thing in colleges, public and private, throughout the land.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you so very much.

Reverend Jenkins.

Rev. JENKINS. Thank you, Congresswoman. I appreciate the question. And I appreciate your asking for the concrete ways. I think—as my colleagues have been saying—I think they're best said to be legislative and non-legislative solutions. The legislative solutions, as my colleague Ms. Ghazi talked about, when you look at the hate crimes that have been reported from 2015–2017, we've seen an increase every year in the number of hate crimes that have taken place. Now, I don't actually know if it's an increase in the hate crimes or it's an increase of the awareness of hate crimes and

people actually reporting them. So I think there's some immediate short-term legislative solutions that can be built in around things of that nature.

I think—I believe in the convening power of government. I mean, this hearing is a testament to that, that where you sit and where the commission sits, not only in America but also amongst—practices shared amongst colleagues, the convening power of bringing together people of different backgrounds and the opportunity for them to provide not only testimony but insight as to what works in their communities, what doesn't work, and what the problems are. I think models like this should be both researched and also brought to scale.

I know in my own community what has transformed me personally has been that expanded exposure from a single-parent household in an urban area into being able to come to places where I've met people who were not like myself, but also the space to learn more about myself. You said something that caught my attention. We have those in our communities who are ignorant, who have not been exposed. And their ignorance is not active; it's passive. It's when it goes from active, to passive, to being informed of hate, and hate crimes that we see these things take place. And I wonder, again, if we're being interrupters and disruptors in that chain, how do we even bring in people who may be ignorant and unaware of what should take place, and create a space for them?

So I really believe in the participation within the United States of nonprofit organizations, and globally really engaging non-governmental organizations. It's been said already that we operate in silos. And I really believe the solution to many of our problems, not only in our neighborhoods and in our states but also in our world, can really come from the communities from which those problems start.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you so very much and thank you for your view. Before, Ms. Ghazi, I go to you, let me highlight, I think, some positive aspects, chairwoman. And I'm going to focus on the African American community, Reverend Jenkins. We have mixed marriages. We have AMEs married to Baptists, Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians. And I think I must boast and brag—Seventh Day Adventists—I must boast and brag on the African American community as members of the faith community, that even though we live in America and would not expect for us to rise up in violence against our neighbor who may be a Presbyterian, but still their ability to sort of work across faith lines I think is a powerful statement.

And I think possibly the State Department should find a way to use these examples of different faith representatives just working together. I think disasters are a perfect example when people of faith come together, stand alongside of each other, and stand alongside of Muslims, stand alongside of the people in—of the Jewish faith, and everybody's lifting buckets together. And just in ordinary circumstances in the African American community, you're having meetings where we have ministers with ministerial alliances. And they're in alliances with people from different faith. I think that is a good example that responds to a lot of what you've said. There needs to be an example that it can happen.

Now, I know—and some of this hatred is so intense and so different from our cultural history. But I think we can do some examples. For example, when I've traveled internationally I've seen the State Department have jazz artists to show cultural music that we have. We should also have the ability to see how different faiths work together. And I know that's not the only answer, because some of this is extreme violence that we have to address. And I think we need to address it with very firm responses internationally, the United Nations, with penalties for people who use religion to kill, to hurt, and to destroy. But I just wanted to raise that.

Ms. Ghazi.

Ms. GHAZI. Yes. Thank you, Representative Jackson Lee, for this question.

I would say that the top challenge to addressing hate in U.S. society is leadership. We need public leaders and elected officials to speak out against hate and build up a social norm against hate. We have really lost ground in this effort due to failures of leadership at the national level in the past 3 years. And then to reiterate, the issue of underreporting of hate crimes is a serious issue.

Organizations including the Arab-American Institute have conducted comprehensive reviews of policies that track and monitor hate and found that the 2016 killing of Khalid Jabara in Tulsa, Oklahoma—noted as a high-profile anti-Arab hate crime—was not reflected in Federal data. Neither were a number of 2017 attacks, including the killing of Heather Heyer during the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, the killing of Srinivas Kuchibhotla, an Indian immigrant shot to death because of his perceived national origin, and the bias-motivated stabbing of two men in Portland, Oregon.

So my point here is that we cannot effectively challenge hate if we don't have a clear understanding of how often, where, and why it happens. And so very briefly, I want to mention that last month Members of Congress introduced the Khalid Jabara and Heather Heyer National Opposition to Hate Assault and Threats to Equality, or NO HATE, Act, and a companion bill in the House was introduced. This bill proposes funding for state hate crime hotlines, permitting judges to mandate that perpetrators undergo community service or education focused on the targeted communities, and support law enforcement agencies' expansion of prevention, reporting, and training programs.

This bill will support implementation and training for the National Incident-Based Reporting Systems for law enforcement agencies that are not yet using it, streamlining the reporting process. So I want to just reiterate how important it is for us to absolutely think critically about our—the legislation that can help address hate in the United States.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank all the witnesses, Madam Chair. And let me look to the NO HATE Act. And as well, work in Judiciary on some additional focus on underreporting to complement that legislation. And just hear from all of you that our energy level, our advocacy, our work has to accelerate because the hate crime—hate incidences, and I'm chagrin of the—I deal with the FBI and others on a regular basis. And I'm chagrin that the Oklahoma killing and Heather and others—Heather Heyer and others—were not—were

underreported or not reported at all. So you have gotten our collective attention, but also we know that we must be examples when we look internationally as well, dealing with the question of hate and religion.

But thank you so very much. Thank you to all the witnesses. Madam Chair, I yield back. Thank you. Thank you for your courtesy.

Ms. MOORE. And thank you. Before I enter into my Q&A of the witnesses, I just want to provide a little context for this hearing, and not assuming that you all know a great deal about the OSCE. The OSCE is 57 membership countries across Europe. It includes the United States and Canada, the Holy See, Israel, as observers. And across the OSCE region, since 2015, with an influx of migrants and refugees, we have seen a tremendous rise of hate crimes since 2015, and hate speech. This is racism in the form of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-gypsyism, Afrophobia, Christian-phobia. Nobody catches a break when it comes to H—to the H phenomenon. The FBI's most recent H-crimes statistics report more than 7,000 H crimes in the United States alone. And we have seen 13,000 H crimes in the OSCE region.

I lay these data out, Radia and Usra, as a ponder to this question: When you talk about underreporting, although every single one of the 57 OSCE countries—every single one of them has adopted some sort of laws or language proscribing hate—it is so hard to enforce it. One of the enforcement obstacles is, for example, in France, where they don't allow you to gather data on race. Perhaps—you know, and so it makes it very difficult when there are laws that prohibit the wearing of the hijab, for example, that—so when you talk, Radia, about forcing people to engage with each other, when you talk about breaking down silos and not having this communitarian approach, how do you do that when you—when you have laws against people wearing dress that makes them comfortable?

We have heard among young people that they dare not wear these yarmulkes in public, or the star of David. And I would imagine that would be the same thing in countries where people would not display their Christian cross. How is the whole "everybody is French" culture—and you talked about this a little bit—how does that work in terms of trying to engage people with antiracist approach?

Ms. BAKKOUCH. Thank you very much for this question. It's really, like, what is at the heart of a big debate in France. First, on the question of the statistics and the numbers, it's about the history of France, it's about the Second World War. We cannot make numbers out of races, religion. Even, like, erase the word "race" in the constitution. We were against it in Coexister. And it's really difficult. In Coexister, we try to find the balance between diversity and unity. We don't want to be uniform in our—uniformized, and we don't want to be one whole bunch of humans. We want to be recognized as particular people with different and plural identities.

And I'm very concerned about all the laws against the—against women wearing the hijab. It's a very—like, it's a feminist problem also. And it's a problem against Muslims as well. We just were fighting against an amendment that was proposed by one part of

the—of some parliament members, that they wanted to forbid moms to wear the hijab when they accompanied their children to school events. That was—that's a very difficult question. That's a very complicated France that we live in. But in Coexister, that's why we try to create a lot of safe spaces where people can totally be themselves.

And we don't care about what you wear, what you—and what you want to express. We want you to wear what you want to wear. We want you to express the faith you have. We want you. But with the goal of trying to build unity. We have to—like, our common ground in Coexister is that we all are young people. And we also—like, the other common ground here that we want to build an inclusive, peaceful, and just society. But everything else, we're really proud of our differences. And we're trying to work with the government and with the Parliament so they will not enforce more of this kind of law.

And as a last point, about laïcité, which is, like, the French word for secularism—laïcité is really instrumentalized because at the beginning in the law it's a beautiful principle—it is. It's about freedom of speech, freedom of consciousness, freedom of beliefs. It's about being all equal, and it's about the state not to say anything or to criticize anything about our faith. We defend laïcité in this—our school intervention, in our work every day. But there is this misconception about the fact that laïcité is here to erase religions. But this is not the case. This is not what is in the law today.

So that's where—because when we are invited then by government or by Parliament, they say: What do you want as law enforcement? We say, please do not change the law. That—we want to defend it as it is in the text, as it is. And, like, in the constitution they say that the French Republic is like—I mean, is secular. And we want to defend it as it is in the law.

Thank you very much.

Ms. MOORE. And so are there good data on hate crimes? There couldn't be in France. You know, if you're—you know, you're attacked because you're an African, you know, a black French person, that just is not recorded anywhere. Is that——

Ms. BAKKOUCH. Well, we don't—like, it is not a law for a state, like, for the national governmental statistic institution to make this kind of data. But we—like, we have the CNCDH [Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de L'homme]. It's the national commission for human rights that report all the hate crime—all the H-word crimes in France regarding faith, religion, race, and everything.

Ms. MOORE. Oh, you do?

Ms. BAKKOUCH. Yes. We do have that. But it's an independent administration. The thing is that the state, the government, cannot do that kind of statistics because the thing is we, like, we don't want—if we have the horrifying thing to have a very extremist and violent party in power in France, we don't want them to have our data on our ethnicity, race, religion. So that's why it's separated.

Ms. MOORE. So how do you deal with any kind of inequality? I mean, if there are women—if there are people of color who are not getting the same opportunities educationally, or otherwise—those data are not collected either, right?

Ms. BAKKOUCH. No.

Ms. MOORE. On discrimination? Okay—let me not just use all the time here. I want to ask Usra, Ms. Ghazi, sort of the same thing. You know, there is this notion that somehow the hijab is a—is a source of oppression. You don't seem to be too oppressed this morning. [Laughter.] But that women are wearing it because men make them wear it. And that, I guess, the assumption is that you could just take the hijab off and be as comfortable. And I just want you to lean into how Muslim women view the discrimination and prejudice about wearing hijab.

Ms. GHAZI. Thank you, Representative Moore, for this question.

I don't know if there is one way to answer that question, because of the great diversity within Muslim communities and within Muslim women, and the variety of ways that they may choose, and reasons why they may choose, to cover to a certain extent or not.

In my own family, I grew up being the only—I have two other sisters. And neither my sisters nor my mom growing up covered their hair. I went through a spiritual awakening, if you want to call it that, when I was in junior high and high school. And from very early on dealt firsthand with the kinds of prejudice and discrimination that women across the world face when they are attacked based on how they appear, or their decisions about how to clothe their own bodies.

And so I have a very specific perspective on this issue based on my own lived experience that might not be the same as my sisters' or my mother's experiences. That said, I think that there has been increasingly a lot of—a lot more common ground built across Muslim American women, and as a result of the work of Muslim women-led institutions, not just in the United States but all over the world. And so for anyone who's interested, there are plenty of organizations out there now and inspiring women who talk in interesting and meaningful ways about what draws them to cover and dress the way that they do. And if anyone's interested in a more artistic form of that, look up the Hijabi Monologues. That is a performance designed after the Vagina Monologues, but performed at, you know, campuses and in communities across the world, that gets into those stories.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you so much for sharing that.

Rabbi Myers, I was so inspired by your testimony. And the trauma of being an actual survivor, and the ability to come and continue to do your work, and to be a cantor, is just—your resilience is just inspiring to all of us. And then your resolve not to empower H in your own life is inspirational. I can tell you that I have—that I am so glad—and I'm going tell Senator Cardin when I next see him, about your testimony, where you specifically ask us to look at that word, "tolerance." He is the Special Rapporteur for Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance. And I literally, on the 5th of July, said: You know what? We ought to swap out that word, "tolerance," because that means putting up with something. It does not really lend itself to where we're trying to head. And that is respecting people for where they are and who they are.

And so I—you know, the big takeaway, for me, from your testimony is really it's time to—if you think about what Ms. Radia said—you know, we got to learn peace. We have to teach it. It

doesn't come automatically. And we can start by our language. So I just want to thank you for that. And just—maybe you can share just briefly with us how you sort of came to this "aha" moment about not empowering—about the importance of words, and word choices.

Rabbi MYERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

As you were speaking I was thinking that perhaps we need, like, a new theme song. And immediately came to mind, it's got to be Aretha Franklin.

Ms. MOORE. Yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Rabbi MYERS. She's the one. She's the one.

Ms. MOORE. [Laughs.]

Rabbi MYERS. During those initial 2 weeks after having done all of those funerals and unlimited numbers of press interviews and so forth, most of what I was speaking at that time I didn't really have a chance to write down. I think the combination of just no time, no sleep, no quiet moment—it was just divine inspiration. When the rally was called for, which was not even 2 weeks after October 27th—like November 5th or 6th, I think it was—and I was invited to participate, I honestly had no idea what I wanted to say.

And I'm standing there amidst all the other participants in the tent just thinking: Okay, God, what do you want me to say? Because as I would say literally every morning in my prayers, the 121st Psalm, "I lift my eyes to the heavens. Where does my help come? My help comes from God, maker of heaven and Earth." Okay, God, what do you want me to say? Give me the right direction. Give me the right words. Maybe I can figure out the right order of it.

And some divine inspiration at that moment is, it was about that word. There are many manifestations of the H-word, whether it's violence in the Tree of Life or Mother Emanuel AME, or in the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, or in Texas. That's one manifestation. Beating up someone on the street because of their sexual orientation is another manifestation. Putting a noose in an African American worker's locker at his place of employment is another manifestation. Painting swastikas is another. There are so many.

Those are the actions. Actions don't just happen from a vacuum. There's a source from the action. And for me, it's the words. So imagine for a moment you have this beautiful lawn at your home, and you see in the middle of the lawn this massive weed. Most of us are just going to take the weed and grab the top and give a yank. Inevitably, we get the greens. It's going to grow back, because you just got the greens. Some of us give it a yank, and maybe get half of it with root and you hear that annoying snap and go, ah, I didn't get the whole thing. And it continues to grow.

So we need to carefully excise that weed out. So the greens are the manifestation. That root that's deep in there has to be carefully taken out. To me, it's our words, our language. And we just have to be more careful in our thoughts. And as I've said many times before, so I can give a shout-out to my mother, if you don't have nothing nice to say about someone, say nothing. Such a simple American adage. Why can't we just return to those simple times where think about what you're going to say, and if you can't think of the right thing just don't say it?

Ms. MOORE. Well, thank you so much, Rabbi Myers. My brother was a member of that temple probably before you came, in Pittsburgh. And his son, my nephew, Jason McKinney [sp], he—I'm going to make sure that you meet him, so that he can practice being a cantor in your presence.

So the power of life and death is in the tongue. Thank you so much for being here, Reverend. You were very inspirational in your comments. And we want to thank you for your work too, Reverend Jenkins. You say thoughts become things. Thoughts become things. And you talked about the difference in partnerships and relationships. And I just want you to sort of expand on that a little bit, because I thought that was so profound. That must be some sermon that you've given in the pulpit.

Rev. JENKINS. Not yet.

Ms. MOORE. Not yet, but it's going to be.

Rev. JENKINS. You know it is.

Ms. MOORE. Partnerships versus relationships. Let's hear it. Practice sermon.

Rev. JENKINS. Oh, practice sermon? Well—no. The—I really believe in things that work on the micro level and then scaling those to practice at the macro level. There's a group here called the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington. It's a collection of 12 religions. It includes Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrianism. There were religions I was exposed to I had never heard of before. And of the many things they do, they do things around Dr. King's birthday, bringing together multiple religions and those that are non-religious as well. They also bring together folks and empower young people. The Book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 4, verses 9 through 12 talks about the power of two versus one. And it closes in saying the cord of three strands is not easily broken.

The way this has been explained in my life is that there are elders, people we walk with, and young people we can pour into. And when I think of partnership, I think of what are those spaces that we intentionally create that brings together those groups, that allows for meaningful interaction, that allows for knowledge to be shared, that allows for comrades to be made, and then allows for us to pour that into young people who need to have that given to them? I think of that when I think of my work in the Obama administration amongst the faith community partnerships. A number of my colleagues, including myself, created toolkits that were used and utilized for a number of areas. I know Homeland Security created a toolkit that was useful in terms of helping religious communities deal with the real threat of security threats.

You know, we see the world as we like to see it, but we also have to live in the world that we currently have, until it becomes the world that we want it to be. The way it's said in scripture, it says: Be as wise as a serpent, but as harmless as a dove. So I think the power of partnership and relationship means that I show up to places, whether they cook like me and look like me, or they do not, right? And I also bring someone with me, so that they can also get that expansion of their thinking.

But the specific piece to that—I think that's critically important—is that when we see something working, it's our importance—it's our responsibility to take what's working, whether it's

multiple religions coming together, whether it's informing houses of worship on how to protect themselves if they ever face—God forbid—the things that we've seen happen. Whether it's giving a training on how to engage the LGBTQ community—there's an organization here called the National Black Justice Coalition, led by a colleague and friend, Mr. David Johns. He's testified before Congress when it's come to children taking their lives because of being bullied because of their sexual orientation.

Those issues go across religious lines. They go across race lines. And I think that we know that they exist. And I think for us, it's gathering folks together like this who can pinpoint what are the things that are working? And then with where you sit, Madam Chairwoman, how do we amplify those things that work, and then get that information into the hands not only across the country but, from where you sit, globally, they can reach the world.

Ms. MOORE. And I just want to ask one more question of Ms. Ghazi before we conclude.

You talked a lot—you said just your—the tone of your voice changed in answering a question.

You said, what would it take to eliminate the social norm that we just have all this division and racial chaos. You talked about leadership. And so I just want to—leadership on a political level? On the civil society level? Where do you think that this leadership ought to emanate? Who should have the greatest responsibility for leading us?

Ms. GHAZI. Well, I am a local government nerd. And I feel so incredibly lucky to be a woman that looks like me, that has had opportunities to serve in local government—both in Boston and now as a commissioner for Mayor Bowser's Interfaith Council. And so I think that I have a lot of—I give a lot of respect to local government officials who are often in the field and working hand-in-hand with community organizations. But there is a bit of a top-down—a need for top-down setting the norm of what inclusion and countering hate should look like in the United States.

And it pained me incredibly after the attack on the Muslim community in Christchurch that there are officials in elected office in the United States who refused to name Muslims as the victims of the attack. And so I so appreciate the Rabbi's comments about language. When we so dehumanize a community that we are afraid to even name them in a tweet, or in a statement, or an announcement, in even sharing our thoughts and prayers after a tragedy like that, that pains me and that troubles me.

But I will say that if you want to identify some of the leading trailblazers in building inclusion and countering hate in American society when it comes to leadership, we ought to look at the leaders at city, state, and county levels who are doing incredible work setting the tone and being a model for that.

And very briefly, I'll mention that in terms of local government here in Washington, DC, last year Mayor Bowser signed legislation to expand protections against clear displays of hateful symbols. And so the Community Harassment Prevention Emergency Amendment Act of 2018 makes it unlawful to display symbols of hate, such as swastikas, nooses, a burning cross, on public property or anybody else's property. Additionally, Mayor Bowser formed the

Interfaith Preparedness and Advisory Group, which is a joint effort that brings together the Mayor's Office of Religious Affairs—yes, our mayor has an office of religious affairs; it's incredible—the Metropolitan Police Department, and the District's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency to facilitate collaboration with the District's faith-based communities.

So there is a lot here in Washington, DC, and also in cities and towns across the country our locally elected officials are doing to counter hate. And I think it behooves all of us to pay attention to their work.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you so much. One really important question. You just can't do this stuff without staff. And I'm going to introduce them come heck or high water before we end this hearing. But can you just all tell me how your initiatives are funded? The good reverend did mention that you need resources. I took note of that, that you know all these lofty——

Rev. JENKINS. That was the third point.

Ms. MOORE. You know, you need ideals, and leadership, and—but you need money too.

So can you share with us how you're funded? Just down the line.

Ms. BAKKOUCH. So we have—we are 11 full-time staff in Coexister. And we have a budget of near a million euros a year. And we are—we have three parts on our budget—public, private, and self funding. We have, like, less than 10 percent public funds, but we are working very hard to work, again, to partner with the state. We have a large part of private funding from family foundations, companies foundations that are working with us to, like, scale our impact. And we have also a self-funding part. We are selling books and a lot of money comes back to us. And we also sell consultancy trainings for companies. But as, like, not funding by the foundation, but really doing work for them. And it's—that's why we're also, like—we're a nonprofit, but we also are a social business. And we—oh sorry, maybe about the U.S.—the U.S. Embassy in France funded us on one project, the Interfaith Tour. It's our international project.

Ms. MOORE. Rabbi.

Rabbi MYERS. Madam Chair, I'm in the unique position because I'm the rabbi of a synagogue. That's my calling. So there isn't, shall we say, outside funding that perhaps some of the other NGOs might have in that regard. That doesn't exist. Opportunities to speak around the country on these comparable tropes, when they exist I go because these NGOs will bring me in to speak. But me personally, I came here on my own dime.

Ms. MOORE. Well, if they can get a plane ticket together and a hotel room, you'll come and speak to people and inspire them? That's good to know.

Reverend.

Rev. JENKINS. Thank you for the question. I in my day job work at The Expectations Project. We're a national education nonprofit. So that is private grants and the philanthropic community. In my private life, whether the church I attend—you talked about church ministries—the nonprofits that I'm a part of, really we're very dependent upon individual giving and, again, the philanthropic community that provides funding. And then with things like this, so

much like the Rabbi, is self funded to make sure to be present to be a part of opportunities such as this.

Ms. GHAZI. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

And I'm happy to share a few thoughts. I'm really glad that you asked this. We at America Indivisible are 100 percent funded by charitable contributions, primarily from individual donors and small family foundations. And we greatly appreciate this support. However, we want to and need to do more. Our programs are scalable and could be implanted across the country if only we had the resources to do that kind of work nationally. And so we welcome the support from donors, and anybody interested to support our work and learn more at AmericaIndivisible.org.

I will say one last point, and that is we absolutely encourage government agencies at all levels to invest in funding opportunities that strengthen the civic health of all Americans and promote inclusive policymaking. I do, however, want to make a clear note that funneling these funds through security-focused agencies inadvertently reinforces tropes about our communities as security risks. So any such funding, if it truly about inclusion, should not be coming from budgets tied to security and policing.

Ms. MOORE. Well, thank you so much.

We actually have one more speaker. And our speaker will be joining us by way of video from Belgium. She wanted to be here, but she's in Belgium. Alina Bricman is the elected president of the European Union of Jewish Students, where she represents over 160,000 young Jews in international organizations, community—Jewish communities and other civil society organizations. And so we welcome by video Alina Bricman.

ALINA BRICMAN, PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN UNION OF JEWISH STUDENTS

Ms. BRICMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and distinguished committee members. It's an honor to speak before you today. My name is Alina Bricman. I am the chair of the European Union of Jewish Students, a 40-year-old umbrella organization of national Jewish student unions across Europe. We operate in 35 countries and represent over 160,000 young Jews—about 10 percent of Europe's Jewish population.

We represent them to the European Union institutions, the United Nations Human Rights Council, the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, other international bodies, Jewish communities, civil societies, the youth sector, and as of now the U.S. Congress. EUJS calls for religious pluralism, recognizes the value of interfaith and intercultural dialogue, and speaks the language of universalism—united in our belief that Jewish rights are human rights and human rights are Jewish rights.

On the 4th of July, as the United States was celebrating its Independence Day, we were taking note of an important milestone, the first ever EU-wide report on the perceptions and experiences of young Jews in Europe, a report by the European Commission and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, drawn up by the Jewish Policy and Research Institute at our request. For the first time, we had data to back up what we intuitively knew and paint the sourced picture about who young Jews is Europe really are.

The report showed troubling results. Forty-four percent of young Jewish Europeans experience anti-Semitic harassment. So almost one in two young Jews, which is 12 percent higher than their elders. Eighty percent of young victims do not report harassment. Forty-five percent of young Jewish Europeans choose not to wear, carry, or display distinguishable Jewish items. Forty-one percent have considered emigrating. And 85 percent have been targets of anti-Israel bias. Also, only 17 percent think governments are effective in their work to combat anti-Semitism.

These numbers are worrying, and they represent broader global trends. However, what we also got to see is the passionate and engaged attitude these young people hold toward the world. Eighty-one percent of the young Jewish Europeans consider the strength of their Jewish identity to be high. They also understand the issues faced by other communities and feel a part of a bigger movement. Eighty-one percent believe racism is a problem, and 74 percent perceive an increase specifically in anti-Muslim hatred.

The task before us, and yourselves especially, is to understand how to best mobilize this enormous social capital, how to best help these 81 percent of young Jews, for instance, who say their identity is strong, to make positive change in society. So we propose three things. Number 1, invest in education. From the highest levels of political decisionmaking, a strong commitment to anti-racist education must come forward. This also trickles down to ministries of education, policymakers, university bodies, and eventually teachers and students. Anti-bias training, a better understanding of contributions of migrants to the social fabric, and a positive, celebratory approach to diversity are key.

Number 2, support civil society initiatives. Civil society is at the front of intercultural dialogue, bringing to life original and constructive solutions. Funding, as well as visibility and cross-party political support should be made ready to them.

And finally, depoliticize anti-Semitism and depoliticize racism. Engage responsibly in the public arena. Anti-Semitism, racism, and extremism are not left or right issues; they show their ugly reach across and outside of the political spectrum. Anti-Semitism is a complex phenomenon, best described by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition and its examples. Governments should work to mainstream this definition and align their discourse to it, without instrumentalizing such important topics as the Israel and Palestinian conflict, immigration, or Holocaust remembrance.

I can assure EUJS is ready to be a trustworthy partner in the fight against intolerance, and there are so many amazing civil society initiatives. We are ready to contribute our fair share. We only need the political support to do it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished committee members. It's an honor to speak——

Ms. MOORE. Wow. Out of the mouths of babes.

Education against anti-racism, anti-Semitism, anti-bias. Supporting civil society. You know, this is—this is a bottom-up approach that is indispensable to our democracy, is enabling funding, resourcing civil society. And depoliticizing racism and anti-Semitism. It's not a Democrat or Republican initiative.

I want to thank each and every one of you here for your amazing testimony. I found it enlightening. And I want to thank the staff of the Helsinki Commission for their always good work.

First in recruiting this excellent panel, none of whom we would have met personally without their pursuit of you. Want to first thank Mr. Alex Johnson, who is chief of staff of the Helsinki Commission staff. Thank you. Just wave. Just give a shout-out, Alex Johnson. Dr. Mischa Thompson is one of our head researchers. Ms. Nida—I'm sorry, a very elderly young woman who just celebrated her, like, 23d birthday or something. [Laughter.] Michelle Ngirbabul, who's over there by the door. And Izmira Aitch, who's on my staff but leans very heavily into the Helsinki process.

Thanks all of you again. I think our visitors are hanging around for a couple of minutes if you just have a burning question that you need to ask. Thank the videographers and everyone who made this an excellent, excellent hearing. Look, there's our photographer. [Laughter.]

Thank you so much. And with that, this hearing is concluded. And also, before I hit this gavel, thank Mr. Hastings once again for giving me the privilege of chairing this event. [Sounds gavel.]

[Whereupon, at 12:57 p.m., the hearing ended.]

A P P E N D I X

PREPARED STATEMENTS

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Last month marked the four-year anniversary of the horrific shooting that took nine lives at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Emanuel A.M.E. has played a key role in major periods of American history, including the antebellum South and the civil rights movement. Founded in 1816, the church has survived tragedies spanning from arson attempts to a devastating earthquake. Yet it was on June 17th during a Wednesday night Bible study that changed the church, and our nation, forever.

Three years ago, 49 people were killed in my home state of Florida at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, in what was at that time the worst mass shooting in the history of our nation. So many of us remain shaken by this horrific attack on the LGBTQ community and that such violence has continued targeting different communities and faiths.

Tragically in the last year, houses of worship in Pittsburgh, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and in the San Diego area became the sites of even more attacks, driven by outright bigotry, hatred, and a lack of humanity. In the same vein, a failed attempt to enter and attack a historically black church led a perpetrator to shoot two African-American grocers at a nearby store in Kentucky. Sadly, only ten days following that attack, three black churches in Louisiana were lost to arson harkening back to times in our recent history where black churches were routinely targeted during our countries' civil rights struggle.

In these moments of tragedy, we have seen how religious leaders and civil society organizations such as interfaith institutions can play an integral part in preventing violence and healing their communities. We are honored to have Rabbi Myers with us here today from the Tree of Life Congregation, a vibrant Reform Jewish Synagogue.

As a leader in his community, Rabbi Myers took an oath to act following the horror which took place in his sanctuary—an oath to speak out not only for his own community, but also when others were targeted. A day after the Christchurch mosque attacks in New Zealand, Rabbi Myers' congregation raised $45,000 to support the victims of the Christchurch attacks. When asked why, his congregation said the following: "We feel compelled to come to the aid of those communities, just as our Jewish community was so compassionately supported only a few short months ago by people around the world of many faiths."

When religious actors speak out to condemn violent acts, their words can carry a wide-ranging and powerful impact. Their actions are a testament to how interfaith partnerships can benefit us all.

The protection of our social institutions including places of worship from hate-motivated violence must be taken seriously. Violent

attacks targeting minority, ethnic, and religious communities are spreading at a fast space, and we all must take swift action to reverse these disturbing trends. No one should fear expressing their constitutional right to practice their faith in this country.

I have the honor of being Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, a U.S. government agency created to ensure countries throughout North America and Europe abide by the human rights and other commitments agreed to more than four decades ago enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act. While we have made significant strides with these bedrock principles, much work remains to be done.

At the Helsinki Commission, we express our resolve to protect human rights at home and advance societies that are safe, inclusive, and equitable. And we will continue to work with the international community to ensure governments, law enforcement, and all communities have the best resources available to prevent and respond to hate crimes that target our citizens no matter how they pray, look, love, or where they are from.

It is for this reason that I have supported greater cooperation between the U.S., European governments, and multilateral organizations including the European Union and the OSCE in developing joint initiatives to address prejudice and discrimination in our societies. I am currently working with Congressional appropriators and the State Department to see that initiatives our Commission advocated for over a decade ago, such as the OSCE's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Unit, are well-funded and able to address the concerns of *all* vulnerable communities, from addressing anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim bigotry to racism and xenophobia.

One effort, now in its eighth year supported by the State Department and implemented by the German Marshall Fund called the Transatlantic Inclusion Leaders Network has brought together over 200 young elected and civil society leaders from diverse communities to build the foundations for a shared future whereby race, disability, gender, orientation, religion, ethnicity, and other differences are valued. I am pleased that some of our alumni recently joined the European Parliament, sit in this very Congress, and occupy Ministerial and other leadership positions across the OSCE region.

While these young elected leaders who represent the future of our democracies are but one solution, I look forward to hearing additional thoughts on what we, Members of Congress, the OSCE, civil society, religious actors, and young people—our future—can do to effectively respond to attempts to erode peace and security in our societies.

Let us remain steadfast in ensuring and protecting the human rights of all in our country and across the globe. I welcome your testimony. Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. GWEN MOORE, COMMISSIONER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

At 10:25 am on August 5th, 2012, first responders were alerted about a shooting in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Next month we will remember the lives of six Sikh worshippers murdered seven years ago. Six bright lights snuffed out by the cowardice and intolerance of hate-motivated violence. The Sikh and non-Sikh Oak Creek community and the world were horrified to learn that productive and loving members of their community were murdered in their holy place, their inner sanctum, their designated place to commune with God.

All of us have something to gain from those who look differently, pray differently, and speak differently. We must not wait until tragedy strikes to learn the value of mutual respect. We must seize every opportunity to denounce hate-motivated violence. In doing so, we protect the value of freedom of expression. The freedom of expression is the hallmark of democracy. To have one's voice heard is a hallmark of human dignity and the very lifeblood of democracy. This is why I count it an honor to serve as a commissioner of the U.S. Helsinki Commission. The OSCE emboldens the democratic efforts of those who stand for justice both at home and abroad.

I have spent my career advocating for policies, programs, and services that prioritize tolerance and inclusion. I have led my fellow members in protests here in the very halls of Congress that have raised global awareness for victims of terror. I have introduced resolutions to recognize the crisis of intolerant violence against Native women. One of the most prolific and influential religious actors of our time famously said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." Let us use this truth as we examine the role of religious actors in responding to hate. Let us firmly use love and responsible policy to develop policies that will save lives and protect our most precious right to religious freedom.

I am most grateful and proud of the Wisconsinites I represent in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. They are a shining example of how to rebuild a community after a vicious and senseless attack on a community. I want to thank all of the religious, and faith-based leaders who have joined us today. I want to thank them for the solidarity they show in coming here. I also want to thank them for displaying the true strength it takes to remain resilient in the face of hate.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, RANKING MEMBER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

In recent years there has been an unfortunate rise in hate crimes not only in Europe but in the United States of America. We have seen a rise in anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim acts, and anti-migrant and anti-refugee sentiments. Addressing these issues have been my priority as Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. As Senator, my priority legislation efforts have always included civil rights and human rights.

Hate is unacceptable, and the safety of vulnerable communities is of the utmost importance. We must underline the importance of coalitions to ensure their protection because it is not only the most vulnerable in our societies who are in danger when we fail to act, but the very foundations of our democracies. United, we are stronger. And when various stakeholders come together, we can build capacity within government and international institutions to effectively counter the rise in hate.

There are many things we can do collectively to make a difference, and a group we cannot do this without are our religious actors and interfaith institutions. The witnesses in this room today are on the frontlines of developing action plans to combat hate in their communities. Radia Bakkouch, President of Coexister, is with us today to offer her insights and experience in this field. I had the honor of meeting Radia and her colleagues in Paris in May. Radia's organization promotes diversity, social cohesion, and active coexistence—aimed at empowering minority communities and tackling intolerance in France. I look forward to hearing her views on how we can share information and best practices between civil society organizations, government institutions, international organizations, and of course, in Congress alongside our other esteemed panelists.

Efforts in the U.S. Congress have focused on addressing hate in our societies, and numerous legislative initiatives have been introduced in the 116th Congress. I introduced a bill in 2017 to ban religious, racial and discriminatory profiling by law enforcement. I have also held hearings focused on combating anti-Semitism and racism. In fact, last week at the 28th Annual Session on the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Luxembourg, I hosted a U.S. side event entitled "Countering Hate: Lessons from the Past, Leadership for the Future" that addressed the rise in hate-based incidents we have been witnessing across the OSCE region and beyond.

We called for parliamentarians from across the 57 OSCE participating States to adopt an action plan to counter bias and discrimination and foster inclusion and discussed what we are doing in our own countries to address the problem of hate and intolerance. We heard from Dr. Rebecca Erbelding of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, who emphasized that we must not ignore early warning signs from the past which are rising to the surface in the present. Sadly, we are past early warning signs of hate-based incidents as evident from the recent tragedies from Pittsburgh and Colombo to Christchurch.

The collaborative spirit I witnessed at the OSCE PA hearing denotes our efforts to work together and tackle this unacceptable

problem. We have heard of successes from projects like the OSCE's Words Into Action project to increase education on anti-Semitism and coalition building against hate from Michael Link, OSCE parliamentarian and former director of the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), however, much remains to be done and a greater focus on deeds rather than words and what actions are needed to create a comprehensive effort between government institutions, criminal justice systems, civil society actors, and international organizations.

We are here today to hear from the witnesses in the room. They understand the very foundations of our democracies are in danger. I look forward to hearing their recommendations on how we all can collectively change some of the disturbing trends we are witnessing such as attacks on places of worship, to push back on ugly ideologies and actions, and find concrete ways to build safer communities who do not have to live in fear. I look forward to hearing how we can all work together to ensure human rights and civil rights for all.

Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FATHER JAMES MARTIN, EDITOR AT LARGE, AMERICA MEDIA

Thank you for inviting me to speak today. I regret that some medical treatments prevent me from joining you in person. But it's a great honor to be with you.

On June 12, 2016, 49 people at Pulse, a nightclub that attracted a largely LGBT clientele in Orlando, Florida, were shot and killed in what was at the time the largest mass shooting in US history. In response, there was an outpouring of love and support for the LGBT community from almost every quarter in the country.

One notable exception was the Catholic Church, my own church. While the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a brief four-line statement, the words "gay" or "LGBT" were absent from it. As a thought experiment, imagine if 49 people from a particular ethnic group were massacred, and the name of that ethnic group was omitted from public statements. Moreover, in the wake of the U.S. Bishops' statement, only a handful of individual Catholic bishops expressed any sympathy. The vast majority said absolutely nothing. Even in death the LGBT community remained invisible to much of the church.

The Catholic Church's difficulty in ministering to, and even trying to understand, LGBT people has led to Catholic magazines and websites that vilify them, priests who single them out in homilies as the world's worst sinners, and even statements from cardinals, archbishops and bishops overseas siding with repressive anti-gay laws that provide for the arrest and even execution of gay men and women.

Why bring this up? Because when it comes to the role that religious actors and organizations can play in combating hate crimes, the most effective thing they can do is to get their own houses of worship in order.

Racism, sexism and homophobia still exist in many Christian denominations, my own included. To turn to racism, we only need recall the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s trenchant comment that the most segregated hour of the week is 11 AM on a Sunday morning.

Last year, an African-American friend of mine, a national leader in the US Catholic community, told me a story. Recently, he was attending a conference at a town far from his home. When Sunday came, he searched for a Catholic church near his hotel so that he could attend Mass. Happily, he located one, drove there and entered the church. After my friend passed through the church doors, a priest, seeing a large, dark-skinned man, said to him, "I'm sorry. You do know that this a Catholic church, don't you?"

"Yes," said my friend. "Do *you* know that this is a Catholic church?"

The racism, sexism and homophobia still endemic in some Christian churches lead to casually racist, sexist and homophobic comments made from the pulpit, as well as overtly racist, sexist and homophobic comments made in private. Both give a silent blessing to more racism, sexism and homophobia among parishioners. Just this month an influential far-right Catholic website published an

article that opposed even gay-straight alliances in schools, as part of what they called their "war" against "LGBT propaganda."

What does such tacit support for prejudice by church leaders end up doing? It excuses hate. It fosters hate. It blesses hate. And it unintentionally encourages the violence that this hate leads to. And make no mistake: Some Catholics who treat LGBT people with contempt think they are doing so with the church's blessing. Thus, these people think they are being prophetic. They don't see themselves as haters. They see themselves as prophets. Because they feel the support of their churches.

This is not to say that all or even most Christian churches are places of racism, sexism or homophobia. By no means. Often it is Christian groups that lead the fight against hatred. Witness, obviously, the example of Rev. King in the civil rights movement, a true prophet whose main impetus was an overtly Christian one. In our own day, I'm proud that the Catholic Church in this country has consistently stood up against the vilification of refugees and migrants, perhaps the newest victims of hatred.

But any actions or speech that mock, stigmatize, dehumanize or otherwise target specific persons or groups of people is completely opposed to the Christian worldview. Why? Because it legitimizes seeing a person who is different as the "other." And this is completely antithetical to the actions of the Jesus whom we encounter in the Gospels. In fact, Jesus reached out first and foremost to those who were seen as "other": women, tax collectors, prostitutes, Samaritans, Roman centurions, people who were sick, and on and on.

Jesus always brings those on the outside in. He brings the outsider into his circle of friendship.

Because for Jesus there is no us and them. There is only us.

So the most important thing that religious actors and organizations can do to combat hate crimes is not only to fight hatred on the outside, but on the inside as well. How? First, by taking a clear look at how their organizations speak of, and minister to, members of marginalized groups. Second, by reaching out to these groups, specifically to make them feel welcomed into what are, after all, their churches too. Finally, by taking every opportunity to stand with them publicly, to advocate for them, to fight for them, even at the risk of losing some parishioners.

Overall, they must remind their own communities and the world that for Jesus and therefore for all Christians, there is no us and them. There is only us.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RABBI HAZZAN JEFFREY MYERS, TREE OF LIFE SYNAGOGUE

Members of Congress, I thank you for the privilege of testifying before you today. I am a victim, witness and survivor of the worst attack in a synagogue in the history of the United States, and the Jewish community has been present on these shores since 1654. Since that fateful day of October 27, 2018, I, the congregants of Tree of Life (along with two other congregations that shared our building—New Light and Dor Hadash) and the city of Pittsburgh have been overwhelmed by expressions of love from across the planet. People of all faiths, colors and sexual orientation have enveloped us in a vast global hug that continues unabated. Their message is very clear: the acts of one person are not representative of all of humanity. But alas, the acts of brutality and cruelty can overwhelm us. And, when coupled with incessant anti-Semitic words and dastardly deeds across the United States and around the world, we are reminded almost daily that a pernicious, ancient evil flourishes.

What most Americans don't know or appreciate is the warmth and togetherness that is Pittsburgh. I can state this objectively, as I too am an immigrant to Pittsburgh, having spent most of my life in the New York and New Jersey area. I live in Mr. Rogers' neighborhood, and the love and care from people of all walks of life in my city post-October 27 were typical prior to this date, only more intense afterwards. Religious leaders of all faiths have reached out to me, affording me a unique opportunity to get to know them and find commonalities where we can work together to better our community.

The metaphor of America as a melting pot is a beautiful image, but sadly, it is not true. We do not know our neighbors. We live in silos, with no bridges connecting them. Many choose to live in their own private silos, not wanting "others" to enter their silo. Some people just don't know how to build a bridge. This is where religious leaders like me make a difference: I'm a bridge builder. When the Muslim community extended an olive branch to me, I responded by offering an olive tree. The same goes for the Roman Catholic, various Protestant denominations, the Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Baptist, AME, and so many more that I apologize if I have omitted. We have so much in common that we must work together. The modest baby steps that we are taking will mature into adult steps, hopefully yielding bushels of olives.

Opportunities to partner with local government, and the police department, continue to grow as well. We can be the nation's laboratory to model actions that may work throughout the country, without me minimizing the efforts of those already working to achieve these same goals. We—as clergy and congregants—are striving to find ways beyond visiting each other's worship services, to really getting to know our neighbors, to consider their needs, and to determine how we can work together to realize positive outcomes. Please know that this was happening in Pittsburgh before October 27, but this date—and the atrocity that it brought—created a new sense of urgency. We must see to it that all children in all schools throughout this country learn about their neighbors,

and strive to understand them, in an effort to appreciate their faith, not merely tolerate them. We must provide the tools for all people to honor and respect their neighbors, and right now, we as a nation, are not being successful in doing this.

Just two weeks after October 27, the city of Pittsburgh held a rally at Point State Park, and I was asked to speak. It was here that I made a pledge not to use the word "hate," which I will say here only once for demonstration purposes. The H word, as I call it, is a four-letter word, an obscenity that deserves to be in our mental waste baskets. If you truly must say that you H something, just say that you don't like it. H speech is a severe choice of words that often leads to violent actions, as was the case in the Tree of Life shootings. When you don't understand your neighbor, it can lead to mistrust, fear, loathing and H speech, which ultimately leads you to unconscionable and deadly actions.

Our nation right now is suffering an epidemic of uncivil discourse. People cannot hold civil conversations with their neighbors, be it in person or through social media. As our elected leaders, I call you to task for this epidemic. When you use H speech against one another, you model uncivil discourse for all Americans. As our leaders, you are teaching us that it is acceptable to behave this way, and it's simply not. Is it any wonder that my fellow citizens speak in uncivil terms and use H speech? You condone it and model it. It is time for a different direction. The path towards civil discourse must start with all of you, our elected leaders. When you model civil discourse, you teach us appropriate ways to speak to one another. This does not require any legislation on your part. It requires you to think about the impact of your words, for as the Jewish tradition teaches, the most powerful weapon a human being possesses are words. They can wound or they can heal. There is way too much wounding emanating out of Washington, D.C. Whom among you will be brave enough to say to the American people: "I pledge that I will not use the H word. I call upon my fellow legislators to do the same, to help restore civil discourse in America?" Our eyes and ears turn to you. What will you do?

I thank you for your time and attention.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RADIA BAKKOUCH, PRESIDENT, COEXISTER

I would like to thank Congressman Hastings, Senator Cardin, the members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe for inviting me to this hearing. My name is Radia Bakkouch, I am 27 years old. I graduated from Sciences Po Paris in International Relations. I have been president of Coexister, the European interfaith youth movement, for four years. I am a peace activist and a reflective practitioner and I am honored to be here today.

In France, there is a complex relationship with otherness and with understanding differences. While the overall trend leans towards universalism and the uniformity of cultural practices, spiritual and religious identity resists these mechanisms of standardization, and symbolizes tabou, fear, ignorance. Unfortunately, hate crimes motivated by religious bias only come second in number, behind racially-motivated crimes. For instance, in 2018, the number of antisemitic attacks in France rose by 74%. In the past 10 years, like in Montauban and Toulouse in 2012, in Paris and its northern suburb in 2015, in a church in Saint Etienne de Rouvray in 2016, people were killed because of their religion and people killed in the name of their religion.

If faith is at the heart of tensions, it can also be at the heart of the solution. Coexister is a youth-led interfaith organization gathering Jews, Christians, Muslims, Atheists, Agnostics, Buddhists, from 15 to 35 years old and within our organization, we believe in **the concept of the "faith for good"** and in **the practice of Interfaith cooperation**. In 52 European cities, Coexister has offered to 10,000 young people to experience interfaith diversity in a good way and has tackled stereotypes of 120,000 students. We empower young people and give them the skills, the opportunities and the relationships they need to build peace and prevent any type of violence and exclusion. We offer them safe spaces where they can be fully themselves, with others who are completely different from them, and tools so they can act together for social justice, inclusion, mutual respect and peace.

What are our recommendations? Thousands of interfaith initiatives and practices exist around the world. The United Religions Initiative network alone already gathers more than 1,000 initiatives in 109 countries. Yet in order to maximise their outreach and systemic impact they have to be State-supported.

1. **Defend pluralistic societies**

We need to defend, protect and promote a pluralistic society. Citizens can prevent hate against diversity if they are able to face diversity in their daily life. Multiculturalism and communitarianism are not the only ways to apprehend diversity in society.

2. **Support "faith for good"**

Faith is a specific part of the identity that is substantial, chosen, and can be a source of bad and good. Everyone has faith in something, it is not the prerogative of religions only. Linking the spiritual resources to actions toward peacebuilding and social justice strengthen the actions.

3. **Practice interfaith cooperation**

Faith for good is even stronger when it is used in interfaith cooperation, by bringing people that deeply disagree on their faith together. We need to acknowledge that cooperating with people who are different requires time, practice and willingness.

4. **Come out of the communitarian struggles**

It is important that not only Jewish people fight against antisemitism, Muslim people fight against islamophobia, etc ! We need to acknowledge all type of hate crimes that target a particular population, and engage everyone to feel concerned by hate crimes.

5. **Fight "for" rather than fight "against"**

Fighting "against" hate is important, but fighting "for" peace is vital. Our purpose should not only be to diminish hate. It needs to tend towards an ideal model. Non violence is a prerequisite but tolerance is not enough. We defend a society where active coexistence is the method for relationships.

6. **Include other actors in the fight against hate**

Religious actors can influence the response to hate but citizens and young people are a great lever also. We usually include young people when we talk about the future, but young people are the citizens of today and they need to be implicated today to face the challenges of our society.

Responding to hate by using faith and religious tools can be efficient and lead to a lasting peace. In Coexister, our founding intuition is that peace must be taught, experimented, and a process of conscientization. We need to learn peace, not learn how to make peace, because it would mean we can not prevent the conflict, but learn and cherish actual peace. We would like to make peace a major learning discipline in all informal educational policies throughout the world.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REVEREND AARON JENKINS, VICE PRESIDENT OF POLICY AND ADVOCACY, THE EXPECTATIONS PROJECT

Good Morning. My name is Aaron Jenkins and I am honored to speak before you today for this important hearing entitled, "Responding to Hate: The Role of Religious Actors." I am an ordained Christian Minister and serve at New Solid Rock Church Ministries in Landover Hills, MD. I am the Vice President of Policy and Advocacy at The Expectations Project—an education focused, non profit organization that is dedicated to engaging faith actors to address issues of education inequities in public school education throughout the United States.

I want to thank the Commission Members, my co-panelists and those joining us in this chamber and electronically for today's critically important discussion. What brought me to this space was really work that began in my youth. As a high school junior (many years ago) I joined an interfaith dialogue program for African American and Jewish high school students that engaged participants in a three part program of: Cultural and popular education immersion, Experiential education and travel, and Public speaking and facilitation skill set training.

The overall goal? A trained group of youth leaders focused on working on the elimination of racism, anti-Semitism and all forms of prejudice and discrimination. It was a multilevel program that was initially founded by the late Congressman William Gray and George Ross—the program is called Operation Understanding. My participation in the Washington, DC version, Operation Understanding DC (OUDC) fundamentally shifted my life to seek to understand before being understood and expanded my interest in the elimination of hate in its various forms.

I would later become a staff member for this organization, which allowed me to spend seven years educating and training young people to facilitate a similar shift in their lives and thinking. This position allowed me the opportunity to come to Capitol Hill for a gathering of Jewish and African American Congressional members organized by Congressmember Hastings. That event, similar to this hearing, provided my students with a chance to address decision-makers on lessons from this rich experience to address the issue of combating hate in systemic ways.

I have seen first hand the power of community engagement, dialogue and the impact of programming and the participation of faith actors to combat deeply entrenched societal ills. I believe that faith communities serve an important role not only in response to hate crimes but are positioned by responsibility to their traditions and placement in the community to be proactive instruments of action. I believe in the power of faith communities to impact hate in three ways:

1. The power of partnership: In Washington, DC, I am a part of a network of Christian clergy members called "Peace Walks DC." The group of clergy work in communities in Washington, DC that have been impacted by gun violence, underinvestment and other economic, political and social issues. Every Friday, members of this

group walk in neighborhoods in either Ward 7 or Ward 8 to meet with community members and ask questions such as, "What do you need? What does your community need?" and "How can we pray for you?" Participants include government agencies, an anchor faith actor institution from that community and volunteer congregations members from around Washington, DC. Training occurs for all participants. The host? The Peace Fellowship Church of Washington, DC, is based in Ward 7, one of the communities that receives outreach. To combat hate crimes, multi-level partnerships that are community focused must occur. Partners across religious, non profit/non governmental, governmental and trusted community voices, are critically important to addressing hate crimes wherever they occur.

2. The power of relationship: I believe that "The relational is transformational." When the horrific shooting occurred at the Tree of Life Synagogue, a service and rally were organized by a local Jewish Congregation, Adas Israel. The rapid, organized response of this gathering met a need of the community to show support and to heal. The synagogue was packed to capacity. Inside, the leadership of this tri-state area in Washington, DC, congregants from various faith traditions and visitors. Outside, hundreds more persons that could not enter. As I entered the building, I saw my colleague and friend, Imam Johari Abdul Malik. He was later asked to speak the outside crowd and started his remarks by saying "Peace" in Arabic, Hebrew, and English. How did he know to do that? This was not his first time speaking to an interfaith crowd. He drew from past experiences to connect. Any plan to address hate must engage faith actors within their faith traditions and across faith traditions in respectful and meaningful ways. We cannot wait until the next hate crime happens. These relationships should be cultivated and actively engaged for both reactive and proactive use.

3. The power of investment, training and resources: "We need things for the kids to do. We need a new basketball court. We need a new recreation center." These are a few of the responses I received as I have worked with Peace Walks this year as a facilitator and community engagement participant. How did I know to ask these questions? Training. I both received training and am a volunteer trainer. To respond to hate crimes, faith leaders benefit from these three things: Training, Investment and Resources. Communities in need, that have experienced hate crimes and other atrocities, know what they need. We must trust them and listen to them. We know that there are many needs of communities where culprits of hate crimes come from, communities where hate crimes occur and communities where places of need in those community exist. If we are going to be proactive in the dual work of disarming those that mean to harm others and helping communities in need, we must go to them, we must listen to them and we must act in them wherever they exist. We must take time to listen to the needs shared and the needs observed and we must take action to provide what is needed.

I close with the words of someone whose name is often invoked when discussing issues of human rights, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. His last book was entitled, "Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?" This is a fitting question for our discussion today. May we move away from the chaos of hate to the necessity of community action. Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF USRA GHAZI, DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND PROGRAMS, AMERICA INDIVISIBLE

Chairman Hastings, Co-Chairman Wicker, distinguished Members of the Commission, thank you for inviting me to speak today. The issue of hate crimes in the U.S., and specifically those targeting religious minorities, is one of growing national concern. At America Indivisible, we are primarily focused on the issue of racialized anti-Muslim bigotry and the ways that it impacts Muslim communities and those perceived to be Muslim, which may include Arab, Black, Sikh, and South Asian Americans. As a coalition-based organization, we partner across communities to identify solutions that strengthen relationships between bigotry-impacted communities and their neighbors and local government representatives.

One very critical way that religious actors are responding to hate crimes and discrimination is to build more effective ways to monitor and report on these events. Federal hate crimes statistics consistently under report hate crime incidents for many reasons, including the lack of a standardized reporting process for all states, and also due to strained relationships between bigotry-impacted communities and law enforcement entities. In my conversations with Muslim, Arab, and Sikh communities impacted by anti-Muslim vandalism, bias, and hate, many have expressed a desire to keep their heads down rather than reporting these events to law enforcement agencies. Despite this challenge, Sikh, Muslim, Arab, South Asian, and religious communities of color are increasingly coordinating "Know Your Rights" workshops and meetings with law enforcement officials within their houses of worship and community centers. Religious and civic leaders do this work with great risk to their community reputations. Those who choose to engage with such agencies risk being attacked for cooperating with a government whose chief executive antagonizes Muslims and other minorities in his rhetoric and policies.

This takes me to my second point, about the proactive ways that religious actors are responding to hate. Due to the rise of hate crimes and hate speech against Muslim and Sikh Americans, these communities by necessity have had to organize outreach efforts to humanize themselves while raising cultural and religious literacy among their neighbors and governments. These range from "Meet a Muslim" or "Wear a Turban" days to working with media and entertainment industry officials about misrepresentation of these groups in their media content. These communities are also building their civic health, getting more involved in elections, and running for office at record rates. We now have Muslim and Sikh mayors as well as officials from these faiths in a range of other governmental positions. These efforts help to ensure that our cities, counties, and states are truly representative of the rich diversity of American communities.

At America Indivisible, we work with officials in city, state, and county-level government to help grow their cultural and religious literacy, while building the civic health of bigotry-impacted communities. Developing effective ways to track and report on hate crimes is absolutely critical, but it is also one step too late. Social science

research proves that when diverse communities have strong associational ties, like working together on community projects, they are much more resilient in times of conflict. Our hope for the future is that more mayors, governors, and county officials will recognize the many ways that religious actors are contributing to the civic health of their neighborhoods. We would like to see more of these officials visiting their local mosques or temples. Our communities have been shaping the American social fabric as small business owners and professionals, as educators or officers in the armed forces for decades, and in some cases, generations. One sure fire way to prevent hate and build inclusion is to recognize these contributions and invest in these communities' civic health.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALINA BRICMAN, PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN UNION OF JEWISH STUDENTS

Thank you Mr Chairman, distinguished Committee members. It is an honor to appear before you today. My name is Alina Bricman, I chair the European Union of Jewish Students, the 40 year old umbrella organization of national Jewish student unions across Europe. We operate in 35 countries and represent over 160,000 young Jews—10% of Europe's Jewish population. We represent them to the European Union institutions, the UN Human Rights Council, the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and other international bodies, Jewish communities, civil society, the youth sector, and as of now—the US Congress.

EUJS cultivates pluralism, recognizes the value of interfaith and intercultural dialogue and speaks the language of universalism, driven by a belief that Jewish rights are Human rights and human rights are Jewish rights.

On the 4th of July, as the United States was celebrating its Independence Day, we were taking note of an important milestone: the first ever EU wide report on the perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among *young* Jews—a report by the European Commission and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, drawn up by the Jewish Policy Research Institute at our request. For the first time, we had data to back up what we intuitively knew and to paint a sourced picture about who young Jews in Europe are.

The report showed troubling results:

- 44% of young Jewish Europeans experienced antisemitic harassment—so almost 1 in 2 young Jews, which is 12% higher than their elders.
- 80% of young victims do not report harassment to the police or any other authority
- 45% of young Jewish Europeans choose not to wear, carry or display distinguishable Jewish items in public because they are concerned about their safety
- 41% have considered emigrating because they did not feel safe living in Europe as a Jewish person
- 85% are targets of anti-Israel bias
- Also, only 17% think Governments are effective in their work to combat antisemitism.

These numbers are worrying, and they represent a broader global trend.

However, what we also got to see is the passionate and engaged attitude these young people hold towards the world:

- 81% of the young Jewish Europeans declared the strength of their Jewish identity to be high;
- They also understand the issues faced by other communities and feel part of a global community: 81% of young Jewish Europeans believe racism is a problem in their countries and 74% perceive an increase specifically of anti-Muslim hatred

The task before us and you today is to understand how to best mobilize this enormous social capital: how to best help these 81% of young Jews, for instance, who say their identity is strong to make positive change in our society.

THREE THINGS:

1. Invest in education: From the highest levels of political decision making, a strong commitment to antiracist education must come forward. This ought to trickle down to ministries of education, policy makers, university bodies and eventually teachers and students. Anti-bias trainings, a better understanding of contributions of minorities to the social fabric and a positive, celebratory approach to diversity are key.

2. Support civil society initiatives: Civil society is at the forefront of intercultural dialogue, bringing to life original and constructive solutions. Funding as well as visibility and cross-party political support should be made ready to them.

3. Depoliticize antisemitism and racism and engage responsibly in the public arena: antisemitism, racism and extremism are not left or right issues, they show their ugly reach across and outside of the political spectrum. Antisemitism is a complex phenomenon, best described by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition and its examples. Governments should work to mainstream this definition and align their discourse to it, without instrumentalizing such important topics as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, immigration or Holocaust remembrance.

I can assure you, EUJS is ready to be a trustworthy partner in the fight against intolerance, as are so many amazing civil society bodies and individuals: we are ready to contribute our fair share—we only need the political will to support it.



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