

An Appeal to our American Friends

**By Roger Cukierman, President of CRIF
(Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France).**

Today in France, seventy years after the Holocaust, anti-Semitism is again a fatal reality. On January 9th 2015, Yoav Hattab, 22 years old, Yoan Cohen, 23 years old, Philippe Braham, 45 years old, and François-Michel Saada, 63 years old, were assassinated in a kosher store in the east of Paris. They died because they were Jewish, just like the children of a Jewish school in Toulouse less than three years earlier.

Today, despite their patriotism, and even under police and army protection, French Jews fear for their safety, their integrity, their dignity, and their future.

Many Americans already know this. Many of you have written to ask: “*How can we help you?*” Here is an answer: you can help us defuse the hate where it moves most freely—on the Internet.

On the Internet anti-Semitic ravings, rooted in centuries-old myths (the Rich Jew, the Powerful Jew, etc.) go unchecked. On the Internet disparagement and resentment spread like a virus. On the Internet jihadist groups recruit their combatants under the cowardly cover of anonymity.

On Google, two clicks bring to the screen conspiracy theories, according to which there were no Jews ever killed in Auschwitz, nor planes in the sky on September 11th in New York, nor terrorist attacks in Paris in January 2015. On YouTube, typing a single keyword triggers anti-Semitic rants of extraordinary violence. On Twitter, thousands of times a day, one sees the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* republished in 140-character versions. On Facebook, invitations with time and place go out for “*Jew Bashing*.” And such horror gets “*liked*” with impunity.

PROOF

These Internet service providers, search engines, video-hosting services are American. They are subject to American laws. We need the United States; we need you to convince them to set a limit to this swarm of hate.

Of course, freedom of speech is a core American value. The First Amendment, respecting all individuals, reflects that. Nevertheless, without inhibiting free speech, it must be possible to achieve the following through the efforts of Americans:

- to induce large internet corporations to remove anti-Semitic content as soon as it is flagged.
- to require that they conform, in each country where they are present, to the laws of democracies faced with anti-Semitism. In France we have many ways to fight hatred directed at Jews when it comes from the French press, but we are defenseless against a web woven across the Atlantic.

Freedom of speech is not freedom to hate. It is not a human right to incite murder. On the Internet, ways have been found to fight and ban child pornography: likewise, anti-Semitism must be identified and beaten back. American friends, for French Jews this battle is vital. We can neither fight nor win it without you.

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