

Remarks of Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin Summit on Combating Anti-Semitism

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As prepared for delivery

Washington - Thank you, Beth, for that introduction, and Director Wray, for welcoming me to the Department of Justice.

A few months after I became Treasury Secretary, I traveled to the Middle East for the first time. On that trip, I went to Israel and visited the holy sites. It was a profoundly moving experience to light a candle and tour Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center. It is a place that commemorates the life and death of 6 million Jews who were victims of the Holocaust. That experience was a solemn reminder of the atrocity that we must never forget, and that we must fight to prevent, every single day.

Last year, I returned to the Middle East. I had the great honor of being part of the President's delegation, and traveling with Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, to open the United States Embassy to Israel in Jerusalem.

The event was 23 years in the making. In 1995, the 104th United States Congress passed—with enormous bipartisan support—the historic Jerusalem Embassy Act. Yet for more than 20 years, the promise of recognizing the Eternal Capital went unfulfilled by Administrations of both parties. Many critics said it could not be done, or that it should not be done. President Trump did it, and it was my great honor to be there for the ceremony to help fulfill this promise to Jewish Americans and the people of Israel.

Last month, I returned to the Middle East for the Peace to Prosperity Summit in Bahrain. It was a successful event that outlined incentives for strategic economic investments that will lead to peace and stability in a region that has, for too long, been known for conflict.

As we work to stem violence and promote peace overseas, unfortunately, we are seeing a rise of anti-Semitism both at home and abroad. At times, that anti-Semitism can take the form of violence.

In October, I traveled with President Trump, the First Lady, Ivanka and Jared to Pittsburgh following the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting where 11 innocent people lost their lives. Amidst the tragedy and profound sadness, we found inspiration in the community, the support people showed for one another, and the bravery of the first responders.

Recognizing the need to continue defeating hateful ideology, I'd like to discuss briefly some of the work we do at Treasury. As Secretary, I encouraged my German counterpart, the Finance Minister, to increase funds for the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (known as the Claims Conference), which is based in New York. I am pleased with the additional funding his ministry provided.

The program currently serves over 75,000 Holocaust survivors receiving pensions and homecare in the late stages of their lives, and this funding goes towards meeting vital needs, including food and medicine.

At a time when anti-Semitism is rising, Holocaust education is also critically important. The Claims Conference devotes millions of dollars per year for worldwide Shoah education, which supplements its decades of experience as a voice for survivors and other Jewish people around the world.

Finally, I want to mention Treasury's work in the area of terrorism and financial intelligence. I am proud that we use our economic authorities, including sanctions, to disrupt funding and isolate human rights abusers. In February, we also sanctioned New Horizon—an Iranian entity—for holding international conferences supporting the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force. They were recruiting, gathering intelligence, and propagating anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial.

I am pleased to join you today to discuss the important work of combating anti-Semitism. All of us have tools to defeat it. It is up to us in this room, and the wider audiences we collectively reach, to fight for safety, equality, and justice for the Jewish people.

Thank you very much.

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