



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Intelligence and Counterterrorism Chairman Max Rose (D-NY)

Confronting the Rise in Anti-Semitic Domestic Terrorism

January 15, 2020

Thank you to all of the witnesses for coming here today to testify on the topic of domestic terrorism motivated by anti-Semitism. This is an issue that has deeply affected my district, my community, and the whole New York City area. In 2018, the ADL identified over 1,800 anti-Semitic incidents throughout the United States. That number has been rising over the last several years. Disturbingly, 249 of these anti-Semitic incidents were carried out by extremists—the highest proportion of such attacks since 2004. Since December 23rd, there have been over a dozen attacks on Jews across New York City, after the terror attack in Jersey City that claimed four innocent lives. On December 28th, during Hanukkah, an extremist stabbed five people at a Hasidic rabbi's home in Monsey, New York.

Recently, white nationalists put up posters in my neighborhood and had the audacity to hang a banner over a major highway, the Belt Parkway, in Brooklyn in my district. Jewish people have been coming to America since before it was even called America in order to freely practice their religion, escape persecution, and build a better life for their families. Yet now we are under assault by extremists, many of whom are emboldened to act and often encouraged by content on social media platforms. The time for thoughts and prayers has passed—the time now is for action.

Today's hearing is an opportunity for all of us to hear from experts on anti-Semitic violence and homeland security. I hope we will take this opportunity seriously and focus on the violence that is terrorizing the Jewish community. Democrats on this Committee have led on this issue. fact, this week, the President is expected to sign into law H.R. 2479, a bill led by Chairman Thompson, which I have cosponsored and fought for, that will authorize and fund the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to help secure synagogues and other houses of worship. I fought for funding for this program to be increased to \$90 million. It was increased, thanks to strong bipartisan support. But we also need to consider what measures lawmakers and law enforcement can implement to make sure that anti-Semites and racists can't carry out acts of violence, and that domestic terrorism is seen as the crime that it is.

Government officials, at all levels, have a duty to protect Jewish individuals, communities, and institutions from anti-Semitic violence, and must put forth comprehensive strategies to address it. That includes meaningful and respectful outreach and partnerships with Jewish community institutions. In doing so, these strategies should protect and uplift the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans. We cannot forget that Anti-Semitic violence in the United States is often linked to transnational networks of terror and hate, including global networks of white supremacist extremists in Europe and elsewhere. The government must prioritize understanding and combating these networks in order to prevent anti-Semitic and racist violence. And, as we all know too well, anti-Semitic violence is too often linked to vitriolic discourse online. The government should be encouraging social media companies to prioritize the removal of terrorist content—including violent anti-Semitic content—in order to prevent online hate from turning into real-life violence.

That's why I've introduced H.R. 5209, the Raising the Bar Act, that would direct DHS to establish a voluntary program to grade social media companies on their ability to moderate terrorist content by their own standards. I hope this bill will earn bipartisan support and move to the House floor as soon as possible. Today, we're going to hear from two panels of experts. On this first panel, we will hear from non-governmental experts about the issue of anti-Semitic domestic terrorism and their recommendations for government on how to deal with violence affecting Jewish communities in America. On the second panel, we will hear about what the government is currently doing, and what more they should be doing.

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