



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **On the Attacks in Pennsylvania and Kentucky**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 1, 2018

Thank you [Mr. Chair] and other delegations who were kind enough to express condolences.

Mr. Chair, on October 27, in the most deadly anti-Semitic attack in U.S. history, a gunman murdered 11 congregants of a Jewish synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as they gathered for weekly services. Three days earlier, an assailant murdered two elderly African Americans in a store in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, shortly after he had tried to enter a predominantly African-American church. In both cases, the suspects are in police custody. The assailant in the Pittsburgh case has been charged with 44 federal criminal counts, including eleven counts of obstruction of free exercise of religious beliefs resulting in death. The attack in Kentucky is also being investigated by the Department of Justice as a possible hate crime and further investigations into both cases are ongoing.

Mr. Chair, families in Pittsburgh and Jeffersontown suffered brutal losses, and both incidents are reminders that anti-Semitism and racism are a real and present danger across our region, including in my own country. The United States has a strong tradition of respect for diversity, and these attacks remind us of the importance of that tradition.

As the White House said about the murders in Pittsburgh, "This atrocity was a chilling act of mass murder. It was an act of hatred. And above all, it was an act of evil. Anti-Semitism is a plague to humanity, and it is responsible for many of the worst horrors in human history. We all have a duty to confront anti-Semitism in all its forms, everywhere and anywhere it appears."

Mr. Chair, the United States denounces in the strongest terms, violence perpetrated against anyone on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or gender. We condemn this violence, as well as its condonation through words, deeds, actions, or inaction.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.