

Informal Meeting of the General Assembly

Combating Antisemitism and Other Forms of Racism and Hate: The Challenges of Teaching Tolerance and Respect in the Digital Age

INDIA STATEMENT
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Madam President,

1. I thank you for convening this meeting and for giving us the opportunity to speak.
2. The Jewish people have for more than two millennia faced discrimination and hatred based on their identity. Antisemitism which relies on the idea that certain physical and intellectual differences exist between groups and these differences are biological, permanent, and irreversible has no place on this planet. Pervasive antisemitism often co-exists with other forms of deep-rooted malaise towards others.
3. Today, we watch with concern the groundswell of antisemitism, racism, intolerance and xenophobia in a world interconnected through technology. Social media has given people a platform to spew hate speech and radical beliefs to other disaffected people, amplifying what are otherwise fringe opinions. Some have turned hatred into violence.
4. Terrorists openly or under the garb of anonymity radicalize youth using social media, luring them into their nefarious designs. Such acts continue with impunity.
5. We need a multilateral and multi-stakeholder engagement to address challenges of hate speech online. Lasting commitment from technology companies to abide by higher standards of regulations regarding content in one such issue that we need to grapple with.

6. We commend Secretary-General's commitment to prevent proliferation of hate speech and intolerance online and offline and to encourage dialogue among stakeholders. The report of the SG's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation is beginning of a deliberation to tackle the emerging challenges to social cohesion in digital age.

7. While we act on how to apply the existing human rights norms in digital settings, we must simultaneously focus on harnessing the power of communication technologies to foster the values of global citizenship.

8. The digital world increasingly provides space of socialization for younger generations. Educational experiences in spontaneous and participatory cultures of the digital world hold special appeal to the youth. Online education in civics and history are potent tools that remain underutilized. We need to maximize digital dividends by focusing on civic education in digital context.

Madam President,

9. Evocative accounts of solidarity and compassion from our own history are most potent tools to fight age old prejudices. Antisemitism is a phenomenon that have been rarely witnessed in India, even though the link between India and people of Jewish faith goes back thousands of years in history.

10. The first Jews came to India two thousand years ago. Since then, Jewish immigrants arrived in India at different points in times in the history. They have retained their identity, while assimilating influence from local cultures.

11. The only known instance of an attack on a Jewish place of worship in India was when Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists landed from outside India and caused mayhem in Mumbai in November 2008, killing 165 people including 6 people at the Chabad House.

12. Even here, the act of bravery of an Indian nanny saving a two-year-old child after the brutal killing of both his parents by the terrorists, serves as beacon of hope and inspiration.

I thank you Madam President.