

**Side event to the UN Human Rights Council**  
**“Navigating the New Terrain of Antisemitism:  
Online Spread Beyond Social Media Platforms post October 7th”**  
**Organized by the World Jewish Congress, 19 March 2024**

Remarks by Manuel Valls, former Prime Minister of France

Ladies, Gentlemen, dear friends,

Thank you, dear Robert, for your words, and thank you, dear Leon Saltiel, for your invitation, it's an honour.

It's been 88 years since the World Jewish Congress was founded, and it underwent the darkest period of its history starting from its birth.

“All Jews are responsible for each other.” This Talmudic phrase has carried you so far, through the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, not suspecting that the horrors of your beginnings would so soon be replayed in a different guise.

Antisemitism is a passion, and the words of the French philosopher Vladimir Jankelevitch resonate painfully within me. He said: “We don't reproach the Jews for professing this or that, we reproach them for being. This refusal extends”, he underlined, “to the existence of the State of Israel.”

In the aftermath Second World War, the world woke up to “never again,” having seen the horror of extermination camps and the Holocaust, the abominable face of the worst that humankind can do. But today, the past and present are colliding, intertwined.

In the aftermath of the attacks on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the worst antisemitic massacre of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the words of President Emmanuel Macron, we woke up to a “never again, but...”.

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, terrorist organization Hamas, founded by the Muslim Brotherhood, infiltrated Israel, professing their hatred of Jews and calling for the destruction of the State of Israel. Yes, but...

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1200 men, women, and children, forty of them being my compatriots, died in the most brutal ways. Yes, but...

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, Israeli women were targeted, used as tools of war, raped and tortured. Yes, but...

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On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 250 persons were taken hostage, dead or alive, adults and children. 130 are yet to regain their freedom. They are used as a shield for the leaders of Hamas, at the heart of a despicable negotiation. Yes, but...

Can you hear my disgust, my horror, my dread? I can hear yours, and that of many people.

And silence. The silence should haunt us all. It haunts me.

It took over 5 months, and I state this here, in Geneva, for a UN report to recognize the sexual violence perpetrated by Hamas against women and children on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Better late than never, you say. I don't even know anymore.

It took this massacre to happen for calls to reform UNRWA to be heeded after years of unheard alarms, leaving Palestinian youth bottle-fed antisemitism with the help of international funds.

We are at the edge of a world that no longer knows nuance. We are at the edge of a world where political ideology takes precedence over universal justice.

I have been fighting all forms of antisemitism for 25 years. As a deputy, a mayor, a minister – I prohibited so-called “humourist” shows of Dieudonné. As the Prime Minister, I faced the terrible wave of 2015-2016 attacks. But from this moment on, in France, hatred won the battle against reason, to such an extent that denying a “Zionist” access to a conference room during a pro-Palestinian mobilization has become possible, even within the prestigious Institute of Political Sciences, which trains tomorrow's elite. This is not an isolated act, and you know it. It occurs over and over in universities of France. In Toulouse, Jews don't have the right to access the university campus anymore. Also in universities of Europe and the United States.

Hatred won the battle against reason in the ranks of my country's National Assembly, to the point where some deputies, though poorly trained in the issue, have no other obsession than this conflict, to the detriment of their true mandate.

Part of the left has retained its dignity, preserving the humanist, universalist values, the passion for knowledge over ardour for ideology, respect for freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and secularism so dear to the French. This left, to which I belong, has for some years now seen the rise of another left, cherished often by the youth, which prefers to reason in terms of ideological fractions – it's so much easier – rather than question the values it defends. It refused to “Be Charlie” in 2015. It has therefore joined the camp of the Islamists, even if they are the most sexist, most homophobic, the most hostile to democracy and the most barbaric, and whose ideological matrix founded by the Muslim Brotherhood is the hatred against Jews: it's what Pierre-Andre Taguieff has rightly called the “Islamism-Leftism,” who began, thirty years ago, to pave the way for wokeism which separates the world to “oppressed” and “oppressors” and makes the fight for the “oppressed,” whoever they may be, their holy cause.

This radicalized left – now hailed by the identitarian far-right, which never renounced its hatred of Jews – infused with aggressive neo-feminism and “cancel culture,” cannot recognize

itself in the humanist, republican, reformist, social-democratic left, to which I belong, and which is vigilant against antisemitism.

This divide is now complete, and we must recognize it, despite the “reductio ad hitlerum,” which is practiced by the followers of this anticolonialism of the idiots which has become antizionism, by howling “right-wing”, “reactionary” or even “far-right” wolf as soon as a truth is stated about the reality of what they are. Antisemitism has become the new opium of the progressives.

Hatred has also taken to the streets, as since the terrorist attacks in Israel, antisemitic attacks in France have tripled, over 1000% antisemitic acts since October 7th. Unfortunately, this is also the case in other countries, such as Belgium, Germany, Spain and Great Britain.

Hatred has conquered hearts and minds of people, who forget that before we can talk about peace, all hostages must be released.

They are not interested in the Palestinian cause, which is a just cause. Palestinians deserve to live in peace in their State. But it is the hatred of Israel that mobilizes people today.

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, the unspeakable happened, changing the image of the world. Why don't those searching for truth recognize that on this bloody day, crimes against humanity were committed, with names of today's victims added to the list of yesterday's victims, their ancestors? The founders of kibbutzim which were attacked were themselves survivors of the Holocaust.

The times of the current war do not leave us a choice. Without ignoring the horrors of the war and continuously hoping for a peaceful solution for Palestinians, without Hamas - we must act now, together, with our unwavering support for Israel, because fighting anti-Zionism today means fighting antisemitism.

And this battle must be waged first and foremost in our schools and universities, keeping a vigilant eye on woke-ism, which leads to unabashed antisemitism, which extended in the timespan of a few months from the far-right to the far-left. For an adept of the woke culture, the Jews cannot be oppressed, since they are white; and since they cannot be oppressed, they cannot be any other than the oppressors. Thus, they use the words “apartheid”, “colonialism”, “genocide”, trying to “nazify” Israel and question its right to existence. This dualism has disgraced European and American universities alike since the beginning of the current war in the Middle East.

The battle must continue in the media, particularly social networks. I'll be carefully following the findings of your report on antisemitic bias in Wikipedia, and I'm convinced that we must act swiftly in this area, for example following the lead of the US by banning Tik Tok, whose algorithms are shaping the narrative of the youth based on obvious and dangerous misinformation. Of course, we must recognize which countries are behind this, always the same – Russia, China, Iran, which participate in this disinformation. Of course, France and Europe must fight to apply the lessons we collectively learned when opposing this aggressive, multi-faceted front. We must leave no room for extremists of far left and of far right, from woke-ists to Islamists. The latter have set their sights on Europe, where millions of Muslims

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live. The Islamists want to separate them from the rest of the citizens, they hope to provoke the climate of a civil war. I affirm that we should protect the Muslims in Europe, impede any equation of Islam and Islamism, and build an enlightened Islam in Europe. In Israel, Islamists strike at us to sow terror, divide our societies, and weaken our democracies.

They are united in their goal to destroy us because they hate our universal and democratic values.

In these few words, I want simply to outline the very concrete, multifaceted, specific character of today's antisemitism, hatred of Jews, hatred of Israel, which merge. We should be able to identify both and keep them in mind.

Dear friends, there is no land on this planet, which is safe for the Jews, this is what the 7<sup>th</sup> of October tells us. To not understand this, is to not understand what we are living through, to not understand how the people of Israel think, and to not understand this big moment of disappointment for the Jewish world, in Europe and in America.

It's been 88 years since the World Jewish Congress was founded and its founders made the promise to be forever responsible for each other.

It is my turn today to make this promise because there is one subject on which I will never stay silent. For it is the fight of my life. It is a fight I wage and will continue to wage, against all forms of hatred of Jews. Because I know that the hatred of Jews is always an early warning ahead of a big catastrophe.

I will fight this battle tirelessly, together with all of you, to ensure that the global Jewish community will never have to face this battle alone. Today they are in a moment of great solitude.

My message is to tell the Jewish people - dear friends, you are not alone. It is by your side that I will stand, and by which we should stand.

I thank you.