Austria leads 47 nations in pledge at UNHRC to combat antisemitism

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<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/43-nations-led-by-austria-pledge-to-combat-antisemitism-at-unhrc-681049>

At least 47 nations led by Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia pledged to combat antisemitism in a special statement issued at the 48th session of the [United Nations Human Rights Council](https://www.jpost.com/international/jewish-and-muslim-organizations-give-joint-statement-at-unhrc-681010) in Geneva.

“We will remain steadfast in our pledge, never again,” said Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg as he issued a special video statement in which spoke about the danger of antisemitism.

It’s the first time Austria has issued such a statement.

“Even 75 years after the end of World War II it is a tragic reality that antisemitism is not a thing of the past,” Schallenberg said.

“This venom still exists, right in the midst of our societies. This is why today we declare our unequivocal solidarity in the face of hatred,” he added.

“We restate our commitment to combating antisemitism and all forms of racism, prejudice and discrimination anywhere, at any time.”

The statement was the work of the Slavkov Format, under which Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia work on joint issues. The statement was coordinated with the World Jewish Congress.

It was read out at the start of a debate on racism, antisemitism and the growing threat from hate speech and the glorification of Nazism.

“The [COVID-19 pandemic](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/politics-and-diplomacy/netanyahu-blames-bennett-for-1392-covid-deaths-681030) has overshadowed many crises and has diverted our attention from critical developments such as rising antisemitism, intolerance and hatred,” Schallenberg said.

Such hatred, he said, is “toxic” to a democracy.

“This isn’t a fight between antisemites and Jews. This fight is between antisemites and anyone who believes in the values of equality, justice and liberty,” Schallenberg said.

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid thanked Schallenberg for the statement. Countries that signed the declaration included: Bosnia, Honduras, Israel, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Germany, Bulgaria, Australia, the United Kingdom, Greece, Belgium, Cyprus, the United States, Ukraine, Cameroon, Japan, Slovenia, Argentina, Armenia, Croatia, Finland, New Zealand, Guatemala, Colombia, Chile, Poland, Moldova, Netherlands, Latvia, Romania, Seychelles, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, Hungary, Lithuania , Estonia, Uruguay, Italy, Luxembourg, Brazil, Monaco, and Malta.

During the debate Israel’s ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Meirav Eilon Shahar, said that Jews are once again “labeled by odious propaganda, online and off-line, as the ones to blame for wars, economic crises, forest fires and, of course, the COVID pandemic.”

“Israel applauds states that have adopted strategies to confront racism and antisemitism,” Eilon Shahar said. She called on all states to endorse the antisemitism definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

“Legislation and law enforcement mechanisms are essential, but can only work when complemented by educational programs that embrace tolerance and diversity, and promote the memory of past atrocities and their victims,” she said.