
UN Human Rights Council
45th Session, 1st October 2020

Item 9 – General Debate

Madam President,

In recent years, the world has seen an alarming resurgence of antisemitism, often called “the oldest hatred”.

In addition to the use of social networks and to the context of political polarization, racists and anti-Semites now have abused the COVID pandemic to spew their hatred, where the Jews and Israel are once again used as scapegoats.

The emergence of new communication technologies, while offering numerous opportunities, has also provided a setting for racists to disseminate their odious ideologies.

Hate speech and incitement hurt communities and individuals alike, and can lead to serious violence. They cannot be confused with free speech, and the abuse of social media platforms to spread this kind of content cannot be tolerated. Therefore, we welcome the positive steps taken recently by several social media platforms to limit the circulation of hateful content and help their users identify it.

Madam President,

The very nature of the challenges posed by the pandemic begs for solidarity and unity – which are only crippled by the rejection of human diversity.

Much has been said about the importance that accurate information has in facing the pandemic, but when fighting disinformation, policy makers must also pay attention to hate speech and the targeting of minorities.

As long as Jews and other minorities are seen as “the other”, generalized and demonized, exclusion and violence will continue to infect our societies, and the promises to “build back better” and “leave no one behind” will remain unfulfilled.

Thank you, Madam President.