



February 3, 2022

The Honorable Bob Menendez
Chair
Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James E. Risch
Ranking Member
Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Menendez and Ranking Member Risch:

On behalf of the SPLC Action Fund, we write to express our strong support for Professor Deborah Lipstadt to serve as the State Department's Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism.

The SPLC Action Fund advocates for the implementation of policies and laws to eliminate the structural racism and inequalities that fuel oppression of people of color, immigrants, young people, women, low-income people, and the LGBTQ community. The Action Fund is dedicated to fighting for racial justice alongside impacted communities in pursuit of equity and opportunity for all. We work primarily in the Southeast United States, with offices in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Washington, D.C.

We are pleased the Committee has scheduled confirmation hearings for next week and we urge Senators to promptly confirm Professor Lipstadt to this important diplomatic position. As one of our nation's preeminent scholars on the Holocaust and antisemitism, Professor Lipstadt is uniquely qualified to help the United States take a leadership role in confronting antisemitism abroad, sharing best prevention practices to confront threats, discrimination, and violence directed at Jews and Jewish communities. We also deeply appreciate the role Professor Lipstadt played in the Integrity First for America's successful lawsuit against planners and perpetrators of the deadly 2017 Charlottesville "Unite the Right" riots. Professor Lipstadt provided extraordinary expert testimony on the history, ideology, symbolism, and rhetoric of antisemitism and placed them in their proper historical context for jurors. Her comprehensive report and testimony helped jurors understand how the defendants had engaged in an illegal conspiracy to commit violence and intimidation.

The Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism promotes U.S. foreign policy positions against anti-Semitism and develops and implements policies and projects to support efforts to combat patterns of anti-Semitism globally. For more than 15 years, the Special Envoy has worked to advance bilateral relationships to combat antisemitism and worked alongside other State Department diplomats to highlight these concerns in international organizations. The Special Envoy's work is an essential complement to the State Department's significant efforts to document acts of anti-Semitism and other human rights violations that occur around the world as part of the Department's annual Country Reports

on Human Rights Practices. Recognizing that the global threat of antisemitism and other acts of bias-based violence has increased, Congress acted to elevate the role of the U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism to the rank of Ambassador in 2020. The need to fill this post with a person of Professor Lipstadt's reputation and expertise is urgent.

Last May, as the State Department released its annual International Religious Freedom Report, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said anti-Semitism is "on the rise worldwide, including here in the United States as well as across Europe." There is substantial evidence that Jewish communities abroad are experiencing increased online and physical threats and the same kind of normalization and mainstreaming of hate and anti-Semitism that SPLC has documented in the United States.

Last month, on the 80th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference when the Nazis met to coordinate the "final solution" – their plan to exterminate Jews – the United Nations approved a resolution urging Member States "to take active measures to combat antisemitism and Holocaust denial," especially on social media platforms. That Resolution also urged states "to develop educational programs that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help to prevent future acts of genocide."

We urge you to confirm Professor Lipstadt to the role of Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism without delay.

Sincerely,



Margaret Huang
President and CEO



LaShawn Warren
Chief Policy Officer