

August 16, 2019

Dear Mr. Mostyn,

Thank you for your letter, for providing the Green Party of Canada with the opportunity to speak to the issues facing Canada's grassroots Jewish community, and for your advocacy on their behalf. Please find our response below.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Parkinson  
Director of Policy and Legislation  
Green Party of Canada

### **Combating Antisemitism, Hate Crimes and Hate Speech and Fulfilling our Responsibilities on the International Stage**

The steady increase in hate crimes and incidents, both at home and abroad, is deeply alarming. Fueled by a resurgence in recent years of destructive and divisive politics, the disturbing effects are perhaps most apparent south of our border. However, it is clear that we are only a few steps away from following that same path. The Green Party is committed to doing politics differently — meaning that we will urgently work with affected communities, and the many strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that serve them, on a national plan to combat antisemitism at home and abroad.

In the 21st century, no space has proven more conducive and permissive to the dissemination of hate speech and hate crimes than the internet and social media. A fresh federal strategy is needed. The Green Party believes that it is time that social media giants, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are held to account and that Canadian standards for illegal content removal are set, as has already been done in the European Union. We also believe that public education is an essential part of the solution to ensure that the sobering history of human rights violations that have been perpetrated against minority groups, and the lessons they teach us, will not be forgotten. We will call for mandatory curricular inclusion of materials to this effect, with particular importance paid to the atrocities committed against the Jewish people during World War II — a necessity given the frightening rise of modern Holocaust denial.

Increased hate has not been confined to the digital world. Verbal and physical threats to members of minority communities, particularly those who gather at religious institutions, including schools and other cultural centres, are also on the rise. Synagogues are finding they have to spend large portions of their budgets on physical security. This is absolutely unacceptable. The Green Party believes that a national plan to combat antisemitism, hate crimes and hate speech must also include the following:

- Development of training resources and guidelines for law enforcement agencies to help them understand the unique security concerns faced by religious communities;
- A commitment to working with those communities to develop appropriate security and response plans, to both prevent offences and ensure victims receive the support they need;
- Improvements to offence definitions and the statistical tracking of offences, both criminal and non-criminal; and,
- Increased funding, delivered through Public Safety Canada, to ease the increased financial costs being borne by religious institutions.

Canada also has an important role to play in combatting antisemitism, hate crimes and hate speech and protecting religious minority communities abroad.

The Green Party is committed to speaking out vigorously and utilizing Canada's diplomatic influence to condemn hate offences and other human rights violations in the strongest of terms on the international stage. Canada must be a lead advocate for the rights of refugees and persecuted minorities.

We believe that legislative tools, such as the *Immigration Act and Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act* ("Magnitsky Act"), should be leveraged to hold foreign actors accountable. Notorious offenders, such as the Iranian government and its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, must face sanctions. However, diplomatic ties should also be maintained, as further isolation of bad actors serves only to increase polarization and harm innocent individuals within their borders.

The Green Party maintains that the international community also holds a responsibility to pressure actors to work towards peaceful solutions in cases of conflict, and supports individual citizens' rights to engage in nonviolent protest. While the Green Party does not endorse the formal Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, it acknowledges the tactics it entails as legitimate tools of non-violent political expression.

Finally, the Green Party is committed to helping restore faith between United Nations' agencies and Israel, believing that they still have a key role to play in facilitating progress toward a two state solution for Israelis and Palestinians that recognizes the deep connection both communities feel towards the land and holy sites.