

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Conclusions*

- Antisemitic threats and violent hate crimes have dramatically increased across the Russian Federation. Not only do Jews face specific dangers through incidents of antisemitism, but an infrastructure of antisemitism - at the grassroots and official levels – is taking hold throughout much of the country, influenced by communist, neo-Nazi, Russian Orthodox and other sources of antisemitic activity. These forces act with nearly complete impunity, sending the message that neither the central nor local governments will provide for the physical or political safety of Russian Jews.
- Despite positive statements on the need to fight antisemitism from leaders of the Russian government, a massive decentralization of power has given Russia's regional leaders unprecedented power. These officials are not accountable to anyone for their violations of human rights, or for their blatant cooperation with antisemitic forces. For example, in 11 regions, regional and/or municipal authorities collaborate with, or show a high level of tolerance for, the neo-Nazi movement Russian National Unity (RNU), in some cases even giving them police powers, without any fear of sanction from Moscow.
- Jews and other targets of the RNU face an uncertain future in Russia due to the RNU's popularity with disaffected Russian youth. As the country's economic, social and ethnic situation continues to decline, this trend is likely to continue.
- At the national level, particularly in the State Duma (the lower house of the Russian parliament), the Communist Party of the Russian Federation has revived antisemitism as a leading plank in its platform. Communist antisemitism, as espoused by party chief Gennady Zyuganov, takes the traditional Soviet approach of couching antisemitic rhetoric in the language of anti-Zionism, while Communist parliamentarians like General Albert Makashov and Victor Ilyukhin directly defame and incite violence against Jews.
- The passage of the extremely discriminatory religion law in 1997, which was backed enthusiastically by the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), opened the door to massive persecution of religious minorities in the regions, especially of faiths that are seen as serious competitors to the ROC. In almost every region covered in this report, ROC clergy have joined forces with regional officials, including former KGB religious affairs officials, communists and local extremist organizations like the RNU, to harass, defame, threaten and attack religious minorities. While Jews have not been the primary target of this law, the community can only thrive if Russia succeeds in developing a culture of religious tolerance towards minority faiths.
- Russia's failure to successfully create a rule of law based state, and severe problems of torture and lawlessness on the part of the police and other authorities, have created a dangerous environment for all citizens of the Russian Federation, but particularly for members of minority populations. This trend constitutes a passive form of antisemitism, since victims cannot count on the police or the courts for protection from hate crimes.

- Attacks on ethnic minorities are common, as are public xenophobic statements by regional officials, groups and media. Illegal residency requirements in cities like Moscow, and police targeting of ethnic minorities, especially Chechens and Meskhetian Turks, for extortion, torture and expulsion are of serious concern for Russia's future as a multi-ethnic state.
- Antisemitism in Russia often goes hand in hand with anti-Western, and specifically anti-American, sentiments. In Russia, antisemitism is the common language for the united opposition to democratic reform and cooperation with the United States, and Russian Jews are accused of being part of a Western conspiracy to destroy Russia. NATO's actions in Kosovo, and criticism of Russia's war in Chechnya, have greatly exacerbated this trend.
- In expressing their commitment to stamp out antisemitism in Russia, President Yeltsin (to President Clinton) and Prime Minister Putin (to Jewish religious leaders) have recently asked for systematic documentation of the problem. This report documents the incidents and infrastructure of antisemitism. It is incumbent on them to transform good words into deeds.

### *Recommendations*

#### **For the Russian Government:**

- Through the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Federal Security Service (FSB), vigorously investigate and prosecute antisemitic and extremist organizations and individuals, and incidents of hate crimes, under the currently existing law prohibiting the incitement of ethnic or religious hatred (Article 282 of the Criminal Code). Redirect FSB resources currently being used to investigate and prosecute environmental scientists and journalist to the crucial task of fighting extremism.
- Utilize all available resources to encourage the Duma to enact the draft law "On Political Extremism" to bolster the Article 282-based efforts to confront antisemitic extremism.
- Provide effective police protection to endangered Jewish and other minority religious and community sites.
- Repudiate the 1997 law on religion and introduce legislation in the Duma to restore full freedom of religion in Russia.
- Reverse the official trend towards obstructing and de-legitimizing minority religious institutions and human rights NGOs.
- Dismiss Russian federal officials in regional and/or municipal offices who collaborate with, or are tolerant of, extremist groups and individuals.
- Undertake reform of the police, prosecutors and courts to promote rule of law as a primary value in Russian political culture.

**For the United States Government:**

- Keep channels of communications open between US government officials and human rights and Jewish organizations and urge the Russian side to seek similar consultations from its NGO community.
- Enhance the status of human rights, religious persecution and antisemitism issues on the formal agenda for all bi-lateral meetings between Russia and the United States.
- Urge the Russian government to take legal action against antisemitic extremist groups and individuals; encourage the Duma to pass a strong law against extremism and to repudiate the 1997 law on religion.
- Maintain and expand United States assistance programs in the area of civil society, democracy, human rights, rule of law and religious freedom, with special emphasis on grassroots monitoring and advocacy.
- Continue to provide a strong humanitarian response to the problem of refugees in the former Soviet Union - including vulnerable religious minorities like Jews and Evangelical Christians - through a generous US refugee admissions program.
- Support the inclusion of strong human rights considerations in guidelines for the approval of new loans or other forms of bi-lateral and multi-lateral assistance.

