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September 7, 2020

Mr. Mark Zuckerberg  
CEO, Facebook  
1 Hacker Way  
Menlo Park, California 94025

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Dear Mr. Zuckerberg,

We write to you on behalf of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) and on behalf of Holocaust survivors from North America, South America, Israel and Europe. [The Claims Conference](#) is the organization that is responsible for providing compensation and home care for survivors since 1951. We are not only the representative of Holocaust survivors in negotiations for reparations from Germany, we are also one of the largest individual funders of Holocaust education institutions and programs in the United States and worldwide.

We write to you regarding the scourge of Holocaust denial that is available on Facebook, and following previous correspondence with Facebook on this subject.

We are deeply concerned about the statement issued by Facebook as quoted by [AP on July 29](#) as follows:

*"Facebook said in a statement that it takes down Holocaust denial posts in countries where it is illegal, like Germany, France and Poland, while in countries where it is not an offense, like the U.S. and Britain, it is carefully monitored to determine whether it crosses the line into what is allowed.*

*"We take down any post that celebrates, defends, or attempts to justify the Holocaust," Facebook told the AP. "The same goes for any content that mocks Holocaust victims, accuses victims of lying about the atrocities, spews hate, or advocates for violence against Jewish people in any way. Posts and articles that deny the Holocaust often violate one or more of these standards and are removed from Facebook."*

Facebook has made clear that, in its view, if Holocaust denial does not meet these standards, it is acceptable content for the platform.

Facebook's Community Standards prohibit hate speech. Holocaust denial is not a legitimate argument over historical facts. It is antisemitic hate speech. That Holocaust denial is antisemitism and thus hate speech, is not a view held just by most Holocaust survivors. There is a major international consensus on this subject.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an intergovernmental organization which unites 34 governments and experts to strengthen, advance and promote Holocaust education, research and remembrance worldwide. IHRA's member

countries adopted the [Working Definition of Holocaust Denial](#) and Distortion at IHRA's Plenary meeting in 2013:

***“Holocaust denial in its various forms is an expression of antisemitism. The attempt to deny the genocide of the Jews is an effort to exonerate National Socialism and antisemitism from guilt or responsibility in the genocide of the Jewish people. Forms of Holocaust denial also include blaming the Jews for either exaggerating or creating the Shoah for political or financial gain as if the Shoah itself was the result of a conspiracy plotted by the Jews. In this, the goal is to make the Jews culpable and antisemitism once again legitimate.”*** (emphasis added)

In May 2016, the IHRA adopted a [working definition of antisemitism](#) that includes :

*“Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust); Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.”*

That definition of antisemitism, including the fact that Holocaust denial is antisemitism, has so far been [adopted by 26 countries](#) and by prominent international leaders. Additionally, the [US Department of State has adopted](#) IHRA's definition, thus treating Holocaust denial as antisemitism.

Likewise, the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) (USHMM) treats Holocaust denial in a similar way:

***“Holocaust denial and distortion are forms of antisemitism, prejudice against or hatred of Jews. Holocaust denial and distortion generally claim that the Holocaust was invented or exaggerated by Jews as a plot to advance Jewish interests. These views perpetuate long-standing antisemitic stereotypes, hateful beliefs that helped lay the groundwork for the Holocaust.”*** (emphasis added)

Similarly, the [United Nations Special Rapporteur](#) on Contemporary Forms of Racism takes the same approach:

***“... Holocaust denial and distortion are generally motivated by strong anti-Semitism, and build on the claim that the Holocaust was invented or exaggerated as part of a plot to advance Jewish interests. That view perpetuates long-standing anti-Semitic prejudices and stereotypes, accusing Jews of conspiracy and world domination and of hateful charges that were instrumental in laying the groundwork for the Holocaust....”*** (“Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/150,” 10 April 2014)

The Facebook statement of July 29, 2020 seeks to distinguish between Holocaust denial that “spews hate” and Holocaust denial that does not.

Neither the 34 member countries of the IHRA, the United States, Department of State, the UN Rapporteur, the USHMM and countless other leaders and experts see such a distinction. Nor do we believe logic justifies such a distinction.

On behalf of Holocaust survivors and on behalf of their goal to eradicate hate speech about the Holocaust, we urge Facebook to cease making a non-existent distinction between Holocaust denial that “*spews hate*” and Holocaust denial that does not.

Instead, we respectfully ask that you not stand alone and oppose the overwhelmingly accepted approach, but rather treat Holocaust denial in the same way that so many countries and institutions, experts and Holocaust survivors do – as antisemitic hate speech that has no place in our society, let alone on a major social media platform.

On behalf of Holocaust survivors worldwide, we thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Gideon Taylor  
President, Claims Conference

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Greg Schneider  
Executive Vice President, Claims Conference

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