

APPENDIX “A”
R. v. Ian Aspenlieder
Joint Community Impact Statements

Introduction

This community impact statement is designed to assist the Court by consolidating statements of a number of Jewish organizations that each represent many members of the Canadian Jewish community. They each describe in their own unique way the impact that this crime has had. However, that impact is not confined to the Jewish community. Several non-Jewish members/allies of the Alliance of Canadians Combatting Antisemitism (ALCCA) describe the impact this crime has also had on diverse community members who are not Jewish but stand in solidarity with their Jewish allies in combatting antisemitism and hatred. The statements are reproduced in alphabetical order and are sometimes expressed in the first person; sometimes in the second person. Albeit at the expense of structural consistency, we felt it important that the Court hear the voices of those impacted in ways unique to each.

Alliance of Canadians Combatting Antisemitism (ALCCA)

ALCCA’s statement was co-authored by Mark Sandler, LL.B., LL.D. (honoris causa), ALCCA’s Chair, and Rochelle Drenfeld, LL.B., a member of ALCCA’s Board and its Senior Criminal Counsel.

ALCCA is a national, non-partisan coalition of over 60 community organizations working to combat antisemitism and hate across Canada through advocacy, training and education, policy reform, and respectful dialogue. Our work includes training for police and prosecutors on legal measures to combat hatred of all forms, educational programs on antisemitism, advocacy on issues relevant to antisemitism with policymakers, based on expertise of our members, and constructive dialogue with those who share the desire for civil discourse, even on the difficult issues that face us. Our members include many Jewish organizations and, equally important, non-Jewish members allied with our core principles.

On July 25, 2025, Ian Aspenlieder pled guilty to causing mischief to a war memorial. According to an Agreed Statement of Fact filed with the Court, on Monday June 9, 2025, in the early morning hours, Mr. Aspenlieder attended the National Holocaust Monument in the city of Ottawa, threw red paint on the front of the monument and wrote the words “Feed

Me”, throwing more red paint on the east side of the monument. This caused some members of the Jewish community to fear for their safety and the safety of their loved ones.

Further, the Agreed Statement of Fact reveals that Mr. Aspenlieder left an imprint of his hand in red paint at the site. It is for the Court to determine what inferences should be drawn from this evidence, not the community, but we wish to explain the impact of this evidence. In May 2024, the Wall of the Righteous at the Shoah (Holocaust) Memorial in Paris was desecrated with painted blood-red handprints. In the Jewish community, the red handprint is well recognized as referring to the lynching and murder of two Israeli soldiers in the West Bank by a crowd in October 2000, at the beginning of the second Intifada and is memorialized in the infamous photo of one of the murderers raising his blood-soaked hands to the cheering crowd. The imprint of Mr. Aspenlieder’s hand in red paint reinforces the deep pain, fear and lack of security felt by the Jewish community as one of its sacred sites was vandalized through what is regarded as murderous symbolism. The Honourable Harry LaForme elaborates on the significance of this symbolism in his statement to the Court.

It is anticipated that Mr. Aspenlieder will say that his crime was motivated by anger towards Israel’s handling of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and Canada’s failure to act and not by bias, prejudice or hate.

But this is precisely how antisemitism against Canadian Jews is perpetrated. Mr. Aspenlieder was entitled to his views on the Middle East conflict – and to express them forcefully. Indeed, as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism¹ clearly states, “criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic”. But he did not stand outside the Israeli embassy or Parliament to protest. Instead, he desecrated a national monument entitled, “Landscape of Loss, Memory and Survival,” designed to ensure that we remember one of the darkest chapters in human history, the mass extermination of over six million Jews and countless others, and acknowledge the remarkable contributions Holocaust survivors have made to Canada. This was a calculated choice made by Mr. Aspenlieder. Mr. Aspenlieder’s actions can only be reasonably regarded as holding Canadian Jews collectively responsible for the conduct or perceived conduct of the State of Israel, an

¹ In 2019, the Government of Canada adopted the non-legally binding International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism (IHRA Definition) as part of Canada’s Anti-Racism Strategy. While other definitions of antisemitism exist, the IHRA Definition is the most authoritative, comprehensive, and representative definition of antisemitism in the world today. It is the product of a 16-year-long democratic, iterative process, and as of the date of publication, has been adopted by 42 other countries, most provinces including Ontario and multiple international organizations.

illustration of antisemitism specifically addressed by the IHRA Definition. And that is precisely what antisemitism is too often all about.

When there is conflict in the Middle East, antisemitic hostility and hate crimes spiral upwards. Since October 7, 2023, the number of these crimes has reached unprecedented levels in Canada. On July 22, 2025, Statistics Canada released new national data on police-reported hate crimes. In 2024, there were **4,882** police-reported hate crimes across Canada — **1,342** of which were motivated by religious hatred. Of those, **920 targeted the Jewish community**, representing the largest number of reported incidents against any identifiable group based on religion. Hate crimes targeting Jews also accounted for a disproportionate share of all religion-based hate crimes in Canada at 71%. In 2023, **959** such incidents targeting the Jewish community were reported, equally troubling numbers.

Similarly, there was a marked rise in Public Incitement of Hatred charges in Canada from 2022 to 2023, abating only slightly in 2024. See Appendix “B” attached for the most current Statistics Canada Report on Hate Crimes in Canada. B’nai Brith’s statement also brings to the Court’s attention the events captured by its audit of antisemitic incidents.

Moreover, a recent study commissioned by the Office of the Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism documented the intolerable levels of antisemitic incidents now being experienced by Jewish students in Ontario's K-12 spaces. Too many of such incidents occurred under the watch of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, identified alongside the Toronto District School Board as systemically under-responsive to the events described. Aspenlieder's crime is a manifestation of a serious Ottawa problem, an Ontario problem, and indeed, a Canada problem.

Until our society fully recognizes that it is deplorable to attack spaces associated with Jews, as well as Jewish students and other community members based on opposition to Israel’s conduct, antisemitism will continue to flourish. Attacking a holocaust memorial is particularly repugnant because it feeds into the growing instances of Holocaust denial, minimization and inversion (labelling Israel/Israelis as Nazis) utilized to demonize Jews and delegitimize Israel’s very existence (as opposed to criticizing its government or behaviour). If an attack on a holocaust memorial is not regarded as antisemitic, then Jewish community members feel that it will continue to be “open season” on attacking Jewish Canadians regardless of their political views.

Contrary to what may be asserted on Mr. Aspenlieder's behalf, his motivation does not mitigate his crime. From the perspective of the mainstream Jewish community and its allies, his conduct was an abhorrent act of hatred toward a minority, now vulnerable population that intimidated and provoked fear among Canadian Jewry and Ottawa citizens. The act required planning and demonstrated a complete disregard for societal norms, in which we respect communal and civil spaces and treat each other with tolerance even if we do not share the same viewpoint.

This is precisely why the *Criminal Code* treats crimes that are motivated by bias, prejudice or hatred against identifiable groups, whether distinguished by colour, race, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or mental or physical disability, as deserving of strong, deterrent and denunciatory sentences – especially where a particular group, such as Jews, is being targeted in unparalleled numbers.

In our view, Mr. Aspenlieder's crime should be no exception.

B'nai Brith Canada

My name is Richard Robertson. I am B'nai Brith Canada's Director of Research and Advocacy. B'nai Brith Canada, which was founded in 1875, is Canada's most senior human rights organization. B'nai Brith's mandate is to combat racism and hatred in all its forms and to defend the rights of the marginalized. We are the voice of Canada's grassroots Jewish community.

On July 25, 2025, Mr. Iain Aspenlieder, a former employee in the City of Ottawa's Legal Affairs Department, pled guilty to charges relating to the defacing of Canada's National Holocaust Monument (Holocaust Monument). Mr. Aspenlieder's actions were more than just mischief, they were antisemitic in nature. His actions were driven by hate and caused significant harm to Canada's Jewish community.

As per the agreed upon facts of this case, Mr. Aspenlieder's hate-motivated, antisemitic actions were thoroughly calculated. He purposely vandalized the public facing façade of the Holocaust Monument:

The hate-motivated act of defacing the Holocaust Monument is a form of collective punishment against the Jewish people, and as such, is a grievous manifestation of antisemitism. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of

antisemitism, which has been adopted by both the Federal Government and the Government of Ontario, defines antisemitism as, “*a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and **physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.***”² Mr. Aspenlieder directed his hate at property that holds sacred significance to the Jewish community.

Mr. Aspenlieder’s actions came at a time when Canada’s Jewish community was in crisis. From 2022 to 2024, B’nai Brith Canada recorded an over 124% increase in acts of antisemitism.³ Initial estimates for 2025 demonstrate that the crisis facing the community has continued unabated. These figures are reinforced by the statistics of police-reported hate crimes, referred to in ALCCA’s statement and reproduced as Appendix B.

The unprecedented rise in antisemitism has left a palpable dread hanging over the Jewish community. This atmosphere of despair is only amplified by the actions of Mr. Aspenlieder. Jewish Canadians do not feel safe in their own communities. The constant fear of being targeted has left members of the community in perpetual fear for their well-being and has led members of the community to question their future as Canadians. These feelings are exacerbated when such a significant monument to the Jewish community, one dedicated to the victims of the Shoah, is targeted in a hateful manner. Purposefully defacing the Holocaust Monument is a cruel assault on the memory of the Holocaust and the atrocities that resulted in the systematic murder of over six million Jewish men, women and children. In defacing the Holocaust Monument Mr. Aspenlieder incited hatred and antisemitism against our community that further enhanced the feelings of insecurity and marginalization presently being felt by Jewish Canadians. No community should have to live like this. No community should have to exist in perpetual fear that they will be subjected to hatred being promoted against them simply because of their religious beliefs.

Mr. Aspenlieder had no right to contribute to the rise in hatred being expressed against the Jewish community, and to contribute to its fear induced paralysis and sense of hopelessness because of his antisemitic beliefs.

Mr. Aspenlieder directly contributed to the destruction of the notion that Canada remains a safe haven for Jewish persons. The denial of our right to live peacefully as members of the Canadian society is compromised by those like Mr. Aspenlieder. His actions were not only criminal in nature, they were also an affront to Canadian morals and values.

² [What is antisemitism \(IHRA\)?](#)

³ [Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents - League For Human Rights](#)

Historically, Jewish Canadians immigrated to Canada to escape persecution and to seek a better life. Canadian Jewry did not survive the Holocaust, pogroms, and other unimaginable atrocities and hardships to face hate in our adopted homeland. Our forefathers did not commit themselves to contributing to the betterment of Canadian society for our memorials, which pay homage to our past suffering, to be vandalized.

Mr. Aspenlieder's actions have further traumatized a cohort of society that is still grappling with and seeking to heal from its painful past. His crimes re-open and deepen the visceral wounds of our collective trauma.

Mr. Aspenlieder chose to act on his hate-filled views in a callous and cowardly manner. The public nature of his hateful acts only adds to the harm he has inflicted upon the community. Our community is one that has been routinely shamed, scapegoated and victimized in the public realm.

For centuries, antisemitism has been used to justify violence against Jews. This has resulted in pogroms and genocidal acts being committed against our people. That is why we must be vigilant in standing guard against antisemitism, hatred and intolerance. Antisemitism often leads to and intersects with other forms of prejudice and hate. No forms of racism and hate can be tolerated in Canada's inclusive and diverse society. Antisemitism is a threat not only to Jewish individuals and the Jewish community, but to all Canadians.⁴ The actions of Mr. Aspenlieder have only exacerbated and amplified the division and incitement presently ravaging our society.

Throughout our history, Jews have been targeted and unfairly subjugated. Mr. Aspenlieder was not the first and will not be the last to threaten our community's vitality and to compromise our right to exist in this country. His actions have consequences for the Jewish community. Although his hatred strikes right to our core, we will never be defeated. The Jewish community is and will remain a proud and integral component of Canadian society.

⁴ [Canadian Handbook on the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism - Canada.ca](http://CanadianHandbook.ontheIHRAWorkingDefinitionofAntisemitism-Canada.ca)

Bring Love

About Bring Love

My name is Michael Osborne and I am the founder of Bring Love. Bring Love is a grassroots organization dedicated to deepening ties between Catholics and Jews during a time of increased antisemitism.

Bring Love is a fledgling group. It is not set up as a representative group and cannot purport to speak on behalf of the Catholic community as a whole.

Accordingly, this community impact statement will focus on the impact of the offence from the standpoint of Catholic teaching.

Indifference is not permissible

Speaking of an inscription on a monument in Auschwitz, Pope St. John Paul II said, “Before this inscription it is not permissible for anyone to pass by with indifference”.

The same is true of the National Holocaust Monument: it is not permissible to pass it by with indifference.

This is especially true of Catholics, for we are taught that Jews are our beloved brothers and sisters. We cannot be indifferent to the rise in Jew hatred that has surged across Canada. We cannot be indifferent to the vandalism of the National Holocaust Monument. This crime is the product of hatred. In turn, it feeds hatred. Hatred that damages the very fabric of Canadian society.

Jews are our beloved brothers and sisters

The Catholic Church “decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone” (*Nostra Aetate*, 1965).

In 1986, Pope St. John Paul II visited the Great Synagogue of Rome, where he said the Jews are our “beloved brothers”:

The Jewish religion is not “extrinsic” to us, but in a certain way is “intrinsic” to our own religion. With Judaism, therefore, we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers, and in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers.

Popes Benedict XVI and Francis reaffirmed this teaching. Within days of his election, Pope Leo XIV reaffirmed Catholic teaching that “Because of the Jewish roots of Christianity, all

Christians have a special relationship with Judaism” (Address to representatives of other churches and ecclesial communities, and other religions, 2025).

The importance of Holocaust education, monuments, and “never again”

This special relationship Catholics have with Jews includes keeping alive the memory of the Holocaust, so that we can keep the promise inherent in the phrase “never again”.

During his visit to the Great Synagogue, St. John Paul II recalled pausing before a memorial stone with a Hebrew inscription during his visit to Auschwitz, concluding that “Before this inscription it is not permissible for anyone to pass by with indifference”.

In February 2024, Pope Francis linked the “terrible increase in attacks against Jews around the world” that followed the October 7 attack to the Holocaust, writing, “We had hoped that ‘never again’ would be a refrain heard by the new generations, yet now we see that the path ahead requires ever closer collaboration to eradicate these phenomena.” (Letter to my Jewish brothers and sisters in Israel, 2024).

The importance placed by the Catholic community on its relationship with Jews is not confined to papal statements. The Ontario Catholic elementary and secondary curricula for religious education stress the importance of our relationship with the Jewish people. As well, in common with all schools across Ontario, Catholic schools teach students about the Holocaust, ensuring that they will not pass by a Holocaust monument with indifference. Indeed, the Ottawa Catholic School Board notes on its website that,

Throughout the years, we have encouraged students to read books highlighting the significance of the Holocaust, invited Holocaust survivors to our schools to share their stories, and our educators have explored Jewish heritage and culture with our students in our classrooms.

Vandalism of a national monument is a national concern

The National Holocaust Monument is just that: a national monument. It was erected to keep alive in Canada the memory of the Holocaust and our commitment to the promise of “never again”. An attack on this monument is thus not just a matter of concern to the local Jewish community, or even the Jewish community in Canada as a whole; it is by definition a matter of national concern.

Catholics share this concern, not just as citizens of Canada, but because, if it is impermissible for us to pass this monument with indifference, it is just as impermissible for us to be indifferent to the terrible increase in hatred and hate-crimes against Jews that we

see around the world and in Canada. It is impermissible for us to be indifferent to an act of vandalism of the National Holocaust Monument.

As Most Reverend Yvan Matthieu, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Ottawa-Cornwall said at an interfaith vigil in response to this act of vandalism,

We must stand with our brothers and sisters who are suffering. In Canada, there must be no place for hatred. Acts like this only deepen wounds — they do not bring healing or peace.

Canadian Antisemitism Education Foundation

I am Russel Molot. I am a lawyer, born and raised in Ottawa. The Canadian Antisemitism Education Foundation (CAEF) has asked me to read this Victim Impact Statement to the Court.

For two decades, CAEF has provided programs that build understanding across ethnic and religious communities, highlighting commonalities in the fight against discrimination, racism, and antisemitism. CAEF believes in a strong Canada grounded in the Western democratic values of pluralism, the rule of law, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion—values that have made this country admired worldwide. As a registered charity, CAEF works closely with Jewish community organizations across Canada, both nationally and at the grassroots level. Many of our members, including our president, are descendants of Holocaust survivors. For us, this is not only a matter of community impact but also one of deeply personal violation of dignity.

Like many nations, Canada established a national Holocaust memorial in its capital. It stands as a reminder to Canadians—and to visitors from abroad—that our soldiers once bore witness to the horrors of liberation, and that our governments at all levels must remain united in the solemn commitment that “Never Again” must be more than words; it must be a reality. The Holocaust remains unique in human history. It was not a spontaneous outbreak of violence or a war crime committed in the heat of battle. It was the systematic, bureaucratically organized, state-sponsored attempt to annihilate an entire people. Every branch of German society—government, law, medicine, education, culture, and industry—was mobilized to eliminate Jews from Europe. The Holocaust was an industrialized genocide, executed with chilling precision and totalitarian intent. Its uniqueness lies not only in the magnitude of its devastation, but in the way an advanced, educated society turned its knowledge and institutions toward barbarism.

Mr. Asplenlieder's actions highlight that antisemitism is not confined to the fringes. It is once again a problem of the educated. Antisemitism is on display in universities, in professional circles, and in those who claim authority through learning and position. That is what makes it so insidious. When the educated engage in antisemitism, they lend it a veneer of legitimacy. It is meant to advance. They disguise hatred as discourse, or prejudice as principle, and in doing so they corrode the very values that education is meant to advance.

Mr. Asplenlieder is not a youth acting in ignorance, nor an outsider unaware of our history. He is an adult, a lawyer—a member of a profession entrusted with upholding justice, guarding the rule of law, and respecting human dignity. As a lawyer, he should have known better. To deface a Holocaust monument is not simply an act of vandalism. It is an attack on memory. It is an attack on the lessons we have learned to help prevent repeated mistakes and foster resilience against the illiberal ideologies sweeping the world. His actions, moreover, are a direct insult to the survivors of the Holocaust, to the survivor's families, to the 45,000 Canadian soldiers killed and another 55,000 soldiers wounded. When a lawyer desecrates such a monument, it is more than a private failure. It is a public betrayal.

The law is the bulwark against persecution, the safeguard against the abuses that made the Holocaust possible. For someone trained in law to demean the memory of its victims undermines public confidence not only in him as an individual but also in the integrity of the legal profession itself. For this reason, general deterrence is critical. The Court must send a clear message that antisemitism in any form, and particularly when expressed by members of the professional class, will not be tolerated. The lesson of history is unmistakable: when educated elites use their position to spread or legitimize hatred, the consequences can be catastrophic. A firm response from the justice system is required to affirm that Canada will not permit such behavior from any citizen, and especially not from those whose professional role carries the weight of public trust.

Canadian Organization for Hindu Heritage Education

My name is Dr. Ragini Sharma and I am the President of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Organization for Hindu Heritage Education (COHHE) which educates and advocates for the Canadian Hindu community. I write this statement in consultation and agreement of the major Hindu organizations that advocate for Hindu Canadians. The Hindu community was deeply disturbed by the anti semitic hate motivated vandalism on the Holocaust Memorial in Ottawa. The monument is to publicly remind **Canadians about the**

horror of the Nazi genocide, and it is a symbol of Canadian values of standing against antisemitism, against hate towards any group. A targeted desecration of the Holocaust memorial is an attack on our Canadian values and as such this incident is a concern for all Canadians, not only for Canadian Jews. Hindu Canadians condemn such hate motivated acts of vandalism because they stand for peaceful protest and against antisemitism and all forms of hate. Such incidents remind them of the pain, fear and anger they have felt when numerous Hindu temples and other monuments have been vandalized. For example, the beheading of a Gandhi statue at Simon Fraser University⁵ and over 25 incidents over the past few years of Hinduphobic hate messages being spray painted on Hindu temples walls. We urge the court to treat the vandalism on the Holocaust memorial as a hate crime and to send a clear message to all Canadians that such hate motivated acts will be addressed by the court with an appropriately deterrent and denunciatory sentence.

The Centre For Holocaust Education and Scholarship

This statement was authored by Mina Cohn, Chair of the Centre for Holocaust Education and Scholarship (CHES), Marion Silver, CHES secretary and Sharon Rosenberg, a retired criminal lawyer and a past member of CHES.

The desecration of the National Holocaust Monument constitutes a deep hurt, not only to the Jewish Community in Canada, but also to all Canadians who expect and respect justice and equality. No one is denying the democratic right to protest. Mr. Aspenlieder was entitled to express his views. However, he chose to desecrate a national monument entitled, “Landscape of Loss, Memory and Survival.”

The National Holocaust Monument, abstract, minimalist, and symbolically designed in the form of six triangles of a shattered Star of David, is intended to ensure that we remember one of the darkest chapters in human history, the mass extermination of six million Jews and countless others. To defile the Monument that is dedicated to the memory of millions of innocent men, women, and children, who were savagely murdered by the Nazis, is a travesty. Moreover, this vandalism is an affront to the survivors of the Holocaust who have made Canada their home and have contributed meaningfully to the fabric of Canadian society.

⁵ <https://www.sfu.ca/humanities-institute/news-events/news/2023/04032023.html>

The Centre for Holocaust Education and Scholarship (CHES) is in close contact with Holocaust survivors and their descendants in Ottawa. CHES was established in 2015 with the mission to address the growing need for Holocaust education, given the rise of Holocaust denial and antisemitism. CHES offers year-round programming that aims to combat antisemitism, prejudice, and racism, and promote respect for diversity and human rights. CHES' events attract a wide audience within and outside the Jewish community, including diplomats, government representatives, community leaders, educators, students, and the public.

CHES' involvement with the National Holocaust Monument

CHES' involvement with the Monument started upon its inauguration in 2017. CHES recognized the untapped potential of the monument to reach and teach tens of thousands of students and tourists each year educating about the Holocaust and the role antisemitism played in the Holocaust and the dangers of hate and antisemitism today. Upon request, CHES began offering guided tours to a steady stream of visitors. Through interaction with the tour participants, it became clear that there were critical gaps in awareness of basic facts and knowledge of the Holocaust. Visitors often did not understand the significance of the monument.

In 2021, CHES, Liberation 75, and the USC Shoah Foundation collaborated to create an interactive virtual, bilingual guide, an IWalk app, to enhance the experience of visitors, to increase visits to the monument, to provide a deeper understanding of the history of the Holocaust and the symbolism of the Monument. The much-anticipated launch of the IWalk app, funded by the federal government, and years in the making, had been scheduled for June 12th, 2025, with a presentation at the Canadian War Museum, followed by a walk to the Monument to experience the app.

The short-term effect of the desecration of the Monument

On the morning of June 9th, just 3 days before our planned launch of the IWalk app, we were alarmed by the devastating news streaming from various media outlets about the vandalism at the National Holocaust Monument. Using the National Holocaust Monument, a Jewish memorial site, as a stage for protest was shocking. The immediate impact of the stressful news and images of the desecrated monument caused anxiety, alarm and trauma. There were calls expressing deep concern for safety by members of CHES and members of the Jewish community. The constant worry was what would happen next. Could the next incident be worse and more violent? The Holocaust did not start in the gas chambers, but with words and desecrations.

As a direct impact of the vandalism, CHES was overwhelmed with immediate calls from registered participants to the IWalk app launch, out of real concern for their safety. While June brought with it grim challenges, and CHES was under considerable pressure to cancel the event, the Board decided that cancelling would be capitulating to a perceived threat of intimidation. The launch proceeded, as planned and as scheduled, with extra security. The Canadian War Museum deployed all its senior security staff, and the Ottawa Police Service provided extra security. In the end, 25% of our registered guests chose not to attend the launch event out of fear.

For the past two years, demonstrations in Ottawa have grown louder with hateful messages. With the meteoric rise in antisemitism, we were forced to avoid publication of our event locations and to always consider the level of security deemed necessary in these circumstances. The cost for additional security has become a factor we must consider now for all our programs. The long-term effect has been profound. The level of insecurity and anxiety within Canadian Jewry has grown exponentially since October 7th. This act of vandalism at the National Holocaust Monument, perpetrated in hatred, caused additional harm and fear within the Jewish community. Such an outright act of antisemitism evokes pain and anguish and recalls the horrific suffering and trauma caused by the Holocaust.

Given our significant contact with Jewish students, teachers and professors, members of CHES have observed a much-heightened concern for their safety in the face of rising acts of antisemitism in our community. We see that Jewish parents are very worried about what their children will encounter in the public system in the new school year. We note that attendees at CHES events are increasingly concerned with security. A certain segment of the Jewish community no longer feels safe attending any Jewish events or any Jewish institutions. Such an antisemitic act of desecration only serves to exacerbate the overall unease that is permeating the Jewish community. We can no longer take for granted the sense of safety and security in Canadian society that we once enjoyed. The defacement of the National Holocaust Monument was a painful reminder to Holocaust survivors, to their descendants, and the wider Jewish community, of the trauma of the Holocaust and that Never Again can happen again.

Centre For Israel and Jewish Affairs

My name is Richard Marceau, and I am the Vice-President, External Affairs and General Counsel for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). CIJA is the advocacy agent of Canada's Jewish Federations. It is a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization, representing the perspectives of more than 150,000 Jewish Canadians affiliated through

their local Federations. As the Canadian affiliate of the World Jewish Congress, representative to the Claims Conference and to the World Jewish Restitution Organization, CIJA is also connected to the organized Jewish community.

For Holocaust survivors and their families, the National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa is the physical embodiment of memory, survival, and moral responsibility. It is a sacred space where grief, resilience, and remembrance converge. It is the place where schoolchildren learn the lessons of history, where Canadians honour the millions of victims of the Holocaust, and where we renew our promise of “Never Again.”

When this monument was deliberately vandalized, it was an attack on memory, on dignity, and on a community that has lived with the scars of genocide. The fact that this act was intentional, and that the perpetrator has now admitted guilt, underscores the seriousness of the harm.

For Jewish Canadians, the defacement of a national Holocaust memorial reignited generational trauma — the fear that even in Canada, our history and suffering can be desecrated. For survivors, some in the final years of their lives, it carried the painful message that their stories and their suffering might be forgotten, disrespected, or minimized.

The harm caused by the vandalism of the National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa is profound. When a national monument to atrocity and human loss is desecrated, it undermines the values of respect, inclusion, and remembrance that Canada strives to uphold. For the Jewish community, it is not just symbolic damage but a direct assault on their history, dignity, and sense of belonging. The words scrawled in red paint, “feed me,” carry a menacing and dehumanizing undertone that intensifies fear, sending a message of hate and denial at a time when antisemitism is surging. This act makes members of the Jewish community feel unsafe, marginalized, and unseen, while reminding them that antisemitism—which historically led to horrific violence against Jews—is still alive today.

Beyond the symbolic harm, the security implications are deeply real. Such an act heightens the perception that antisemitic hostility is not only present but could escalate from vandalism to intimidation or violence. As a result, Jewish institutions often feel compelled to adopt costly and burdensome security measures—such as surveillance, guards, and police presence—creating a constant reminder of vulnerability. The incident also raises questions about how well Jewish spaces, both sacred and public, are safeguarded. This crime amplifies the community’s sense of exposure. Moreover, this act

of hate reverberates beyond Ottawa, sending a chilling message to Jews across Canada that even highly visible, government-recognized spaces are not immune from desecration.

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre

My name is Jaime Kirzner-Roberts and I am the Senior Director of Policy and Advocacy at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, one of our country's leading human rights organizations. I address you today on behalf of Canada's Jewish community to convey the profound impact of the crime committed by Mr. Iain Aspenlieder, who defaced the National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa on June 9, 2025.

The National Holocaust Monument has already been described to the Court by others. It is a sacred space of remembrance and reflection, honouring the courage and resilience of Holocaust survivors and the immeasurable contributions they and their descendants have made to Canada. The monument is not only a site of national memory but also a public reminder of Canada's solemn commitment to stand against antisemitism, hatred, and intolerance in all their forms.

Mr. Aspenlieder's vandalism of this monument was not a random act. The words "FEED ME" were clearly tied to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. By choosing the Holocaust Monument as the canvas for this message, Mr. Aspenlieder effectively held Jews collectively responsible for that conflict - Holocaust survivors who are certainly not active participants in this conflict, and Canadian Jews who are not either. This targeting - this conflation of Jews around the world and across time with the modern-day acts of the state of Israel - makes the act one of explicit antisemitism. It was an attempt to weaponize a sacred memorial, transforming it from a place of remembrance into a platform for hate. For Holocaust survivors and their families, the harm is deeply personal. To see the monument defiled in this way is to be confronted with the same baseless scapegoating that they and their loved ones endured during the Holocaust itself. Nazi propaganda notoriously portrayed Jews as the root of all societal ills, and their ideology held that the world's problems could only be solved through struggle against Jews. By defacing the Holocaust Monument with a message that holds Jews accountable for a present-day conflict, Mr. Aspenlieder invoked this same poisonous logic.

It is especially cruel and perverse to blame Jews who were themselves targeted for annihilation in the Holocaust - and to desecrate the very memorial that exists to remember that genocide - by making them symbolic punching bags for grievances about an unrelated conflict. For the broader Jewish community, Mr. Aspenlieder's act underscores the painful

reality that antisemitism in Canada today often manifests through the misdirected blaming of Jews for events in the Middle East. It sends a chilling message that Jewish Canadians remain perpetual targets of hostility and suspicion, regardless of their actual connection to the conflict. This collective blaming isolates and stigmatizes Jewish Canadians, forcing them to carry the weight of conflicts far beyond their control, and fostering an atmosphere where they are viewed as outsiders whose loyalty and belonging in Canada are questioned.

It heightens fear within the community, particularly among children, parents, and the elderly, that visible expressions of Jewish identity - such as attending synagogue, wearing religious symbols, or paying tribute to murdered ancestors at a public site - could expose them to harassment or attack. In this way, the vandalism of the Holocaust Monument is not only an assault on memory but also a direct assault on the safety, dignity, and inclusion of Jews living in Canada today.

This crime reverberates far beyond Ottawa. It undermines public trust in the security of sacred sites, erodes the communal assurance that places of mourning will be respected, and heightens the sense of vulnerability experienced by Jewish Canadians at a time of rising antisemitism globally and nationally. It risks emboldening others to engage in similar acts of hate, further destabilizing the safety and cohesion of Canadian society. We ask the Court to recognize the gravity of this offence and the profound harm it has caused to Holocaust survivors, the Jewish community, and Canadian society at large. Acts of desecration directed at the Holocaust Monument are not victimless crimes - they are deliberate attacks on memory, identity, and the values of human dignity and tolerance that Canada holds dear.

We urge the Court, in its sentencing decision, to send a strong message that such acts of antisemitic hate will not be tolerated. Accountability in this case is critical not only for justice but also for reaffirming Canada's collective commitment to remembrance, to combating antisemitism, and to protecting sacred spaces of memory. Thank you for listening to the voices of the Jewish community in this matter.

The Honourable Harry S. LaForme O.C. & I.P.C.

I am Anishnaabe and a proud member of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. I am counsel to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and my First Nation views me as a traditional knowledge keeper.

In accordance with the protocols of my people I acknowledge that *R. v. Aspenlieder* is proceeding on the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin people. For countless generations the Anishinaabe Algonquin people have walked these lands. I honour their kinship and stewardship to the land. And to the Anishinaabe Algonquin people I say “Miigwetch” for permitting me to share with the Court the impact Mr. Aspenlieder’s desecration of our National Holocaust Monument has had. The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation are the descendants of the “River Credit” Mississaugas, an Anishnaabe first nation. Our ancestors occupied, controlled, and exercised stewardship over approximately 3.9 million acres of lands, waters, and resources in Southern Ontario.

The Mississaugas are watchful that the values set out in our sacred teachings are sustained throughout our treaty lands. Our view of land stewardship is consistent with the overarching responsibility of the Court to support the Rule of Law. I believe the Anishinaabe Algonquin people hold views of land stewardship similar to those held by my First Nation.

Ogimaa-Kwe (Chief) Clair Sault and my First Nation’s Council have publicly indicated that Jewish Canadians are our welcomed treaty partners and have objected to the hatred, antisemitism and bigotry directed at Jewish Canadians that they have witnessed throughout our traditional lands and Canada since October 7, 2023.

I am a practicing lawyer and retired judge who served for ten years on the Superior Court of Justice and fourteen years on Ontario’s Court of Appeal. In 2023 I was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada.

The assault on our National Holocaust Monument was an assault upon us all

As Anishnaabe I strive to adhere to the traditional values of my people. The Creator placed the distinct races of humankind upon Mother Earth and gifted each with unique knowledge to be used for their benefit and shared for the benefit of all humankind. The Seven Sacred Teachings⁶ were given to us so that we all may learn how to live and move forward together in a good way. Anishnaabe are community and relationship oriented who believe that we have a responsibility for the welfare of all beings on Turtle Island⁷.

As Anishnaabe we consider the consequences of our decisions and actions in terms of the seven generations who came before us and the seven generations who come after us. Our ancestors are important to us. We feel their presence and honour their memory.

⁶ The Sacred Teachings are Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty, Wisdom, Humility and Truth

⁷ Turtle Island is the name used by many First Nations for the continent of North America

At paragraph 26 of the Agreed Statement of Facts (ASF) Mr. Aspenlieder states that “I appreciate the effect that this has had on my family, on the Jewish community in Ottawa and across Canada.” Mr. Aspenlieder appears to believe that the impact of his actions is limited to Jewish Canadians. I disagree. The impact of his actions extends beyond the Jewish community into the broader Canadian society.

Edifices such as the National Holocaust Monument belong to all of us. They don’t just belong to the Jewish people. Antisemitism is not a Jewish problem it is the problem of the antisemites who make it a problem for all of us. Canada must take ownership of the antisemitism that is running rampant throughout our nation.

The Court plays a vital role. It is the bulwark against anarchy and chaos. The Court is the guardian of our constitution, our democracy, our civil rights and the rule of law. The Court should pay special heed to the rights of people who form a minority within Canada. The Court is being called to guardianship.

As Anishnaabe the damage done to our National Holocaust Memorial shook me to the core. The vandalization of our National Holocaust Monument was an assault upon our shared humanity and shared history. I experienced it as an assault upon our shared ancestors and our collective memories of them.

It was just “one too many” of the “way too many” acts of hate that I have watched Jewish Canadians suffer since October 7th. I can feel myself being diminished as a human being by such bigotry and hate. It erodes the soul of our nation.

I do not doubt that Jewish Canadians feel threatened and unsafe. I feel the same. I hope the Court appreciates the collective trauma this crime has vicariously caused many Canadians.

Our national monument was intentionally desecrated in way that maximized publicity, attention and shock. Mr. Aspenlieder has ensured that denunciation and general deterrence are the overarching principles governing these sentencing proceedings. Veterans are revered by my people. Through ceremony gratitude is expressed for their sacrifice and service to protect our country and our communities, and to safeguard the rights and freedoms we enjoy. For such destruction to take place next to Canada’s War Museum dishonours our veterans and the countless other Canadians (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) who served and continue to serve Canada during peace and in war. Our National Holocaust Monument is called “Landscape of Loss, Memory and Survival” and a fragmented Magen David (Star of David) is part of its design. It takes me back to dark

chapters in our shared history of Canada; marked by the death of more than 6,000 Indigenous children. It reminds me of the tragic loss of 6 million Jews across Europe during, and in the period leading up to, the Holocaust. The memory of the victims of the holocaust, our ancestors, our survivors, our veterans and the suffering and sacrifice of countless millions were defiled too.

The contents of the ASF suggests that the vandalism of our National Holocaust Monument was meant as a message to the State of Israel in regards to the war Hamas started on October 7, 2023. It purports to hold Jewish Canadians collectively responsible for the actions of a foreign government and I experience that as antisemitism.

I fail to see how desecrating a monument dedicated to the 6 million Jews and 7 million other Europeans slaughtered by the Nazi regime during World War II (80 years ago) is a message that will resonate with a foreign government nor how it will advance peace or alleviate the human suffering taking place in the Middle East.

The Embassy of Israel in Ottawa is about 1.8 kilometers or a 20-minute walk from the National Holocaust Monument. Of course, Canada's Parliament is also nearby. If the target was the Israeli or Canadian government, why didn't Mr. Aspenlieder protest (lawfully) at either location?

Mr. Aspenlieder intentionally chose to vandalize a monument to the 6 million Jews slaughtered in the holocaust. He purposefully damaged an edifice that incorporates a shattered Magen David in its structure. The Magen David is a symbol of Jewish identity. Mr. Aspenlieder splashed his red paint so that it ran down the monument's walls creating for me an image of the blood of the 6 million Jews murdered over 80 years ago. Even more disturbing to me was the red hand Mr. Aspenlieder left at the site. I reacted to it viscerally with revulsion. It chilled me.

It is important to me that I share what the red hand means to me, my understanding of it and how it affects me. To me the red hand represents violence, threats of violence and violence that predominantly targets Jewish people.

The Red Hand

For decades the red hand has symbolized the brutal murder of Jews in the Middle East.

On June 1 and 2, 1941 a pogrom known as the Farhud was carried out against Jews in Iraq. Farhud is the Arabic word for “violent dispossession.”⁸ Before the pogrom began a red hand was painted on the homes of Jews targeted for the pogrom. The pogrom was marked by the looting and burning of Jewish homes and businesses and the torture, wounding and murder of the Jewish inhabitants. The Farhud pogrom was inspired by the Nazi propaganda circulating in Iraq at the time.⁹

The violence of Farhud was repeated by the Nazis during the Holocaust and replicated by Hamas on October 7, 2023, but with the deplorable added feature of hostage taking. In October 2000 two Israeli reservists took a wrong turn and ended up in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Ramallah was controlled by the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian Authority Police took the two reservists into custody and brought them to a police station. The police station was overrun by a violent mob who viciously attacked and murdered the Israeli reservists.

An infamous photo was taken of the Palestinian Aziz Salha standing at a window of the police station. It shows Mr. Salha holding up his bloodied hands to the jubilant mob outside; hands covered with the blood of the two Israelis.



⁸ See <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/june-1-declared-international-farhud-day-jun-2015>

⁹ See, Lyn Julius' article published by the Jewish News Syndicate on June 1, 2022 <https://www.jns.org/why-we-need-to-remember-the-farhud/>

Mr. Aspenlieder brought the presence of the red handprint to the attention of the police; he wanted them to know about it. What a dreadful threatening symbol that further defiled our National Holocaust Monument.

Since October 7th I have seen the red hand painted, posted and paraded through our streets and communities. I find it disturbing. But it particularly troubles me to see a red hand left at our National Holocaust Monument.

Mr. Aspenlieder's decision to desecrate our National Holocaust Monument that has a shattered Magen David as part of its structure, his use of red paint to create an image of blood running down walls that memorialize the slaughter of millions of Jews 80 years earlier and the presence of the red hand, for me, moves this crime from the political to the hateful to the antisemitic.

I am deeply disturbed by the increasing and unchecked hate and bigotry targeting Jewish Canadians. My son is a young Anishnaabe adult and proud member of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Just like our Chief, Council and me my son is upset by the hate he is witnessing against Jewish Canadians. My son is aware of the desecration of our National Holocaust Monument and the history of our people in Canada, our legacy of pain, trauma and marginalization.

Recently my son shared with me his thought that Jewish Canadians may have replaced Indigenous people as the most marginalized and discriminated against people in Canada. I asked him how that made him feel and he said, "Sad. Very sad." He asked, "How it is that our country allows Jewish Canadians to be treated so badly?" I am at a loss as to how to answer him. I do not understand either.

Mr. Aspenlieder has made denunciation and general deterrence the overarching principles applicable to these sentencing proceedings. I ask the Court to be the guardian it is charged to be. Denounce clearly and unequivocally the abhorrent conduct exhibited by Mr. Aspenlieder on June 9, 2025.

Miigwetch.

Signed on the Treaty and Traditional Lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

Upstanders Canada

The desecration of Canada's National Holocaust Monument shocked and harmed all Canadians, cutting to the heart of our collective security and sense of inclusion and multiculturalism.

My name is Patrick Johnson and I am the president and founder of [Upstanders Canada](#), a national organization uniting people of all identities dedicated to confronting antisemitism and affirming Canadians' solidarity with Jewish people. Our board of directors were shocked to see this monument to those who were persecuted and perished in the Holocaust, a place of prayer, meditation and remembrance, desecrated and the memories of the victims of the Shoah defiled. This attack diminished and denigrated the memory of those who suffered the worst manifestation of antisemitism in a millennia-long trajectory of anti-Jewish discrimination.

The attack on this monument, which belongs to all Canadians, and stands as a testament to our collective values of inclusivity and human justice, is located just blocks from the Supreme Court and our Parliament, the embodiment of our society's foundations of democracy and equality before the law. As such, this crime was a direct assault on the essence of what it is to be Canadian. The monument serves to remind non-Jewish Canadians of the terrible consequences of antisemitism and violence against Jews.

It was therefore profoundly disturbing to the members of our board to see antisemitism expressed in this place, of all places, in our national capital. Such action is an attack on the foundations of Canada's democracy and Canada's place as a liberal, tolerant society that remembers even the worst parts of history – those of our own country and of our broader human civilization. We were sickened to see the distress and fear of our Jewish colleagues and friends in our many partner organizations.

The perpetrator's actions are an attack on the sense of belonging for all Jewish Canadians and those of us who stand with them. Upstanders Canada's board members understand how this attack undermines our cherished values and frays our mutual ties with our Jewish colleagues and friends. We are exhausted by the enormity of the task of confronting the explosion of antisemitism.

We urge the court to ensure that the perpetrator's sentence reflects our society's collective revulsion at his dangerous and divisive actions, and that the Court take the opportunity to send an unmistakable message to all Canadians about the seriousness with which we as a country view such affronts as a safeguard that no such action ever occurs again in Canada.

Conclusion

We, the undersigned have authored the statements attributed to us in this Community Impact Statement, and confirm that, to the best of our knowledge, the information contained in our respective statements is true. We also collectively support the views expressed by all the contributors herein.

Where indicated by asterisk below, the undersigned would like to read our statements to the Court.

Dated this __19__ day of October, 2025



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Appendix B

Table 6
Police-reported hate crimes, by detailed motivation, Canada, 2020 to 2024

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CSV (3 KB)

Select columns

	2020	2020	2021	2021	2022	2022	2023 ^r	2023 ^r	2024	2024
	number	% change from previous year	number	% change from previous year	number	% change from previous year	number	% change from previous year	number	% change from previous year
Total	2,646	36	3,355	27	3,612	8	4,828	34	4,882	1
Race or ethnicity	1,619	83	1,745	8	2,002	15	2,198	10	2,377	8
Black	676	96	647	-4	842	30	821	-2	873	6
East or Southeast Asian	263	293	312	19	213	-32	195	-8	185	-5
South Asian	135	67	167	24	196	17	279	42	321	15
Arab or West Asian	126	1	184	46	172	-7	268	56	310	16
Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)	78	169	77	-1	66	-14	72	9	59	-18
White	85	77	57	-33	91	60	84	-8	83	-1
Other race or ethnicity 1	188	25	223	19	314	41	364	16	446	23
Race or ethnicity not specified	68	74	78	15	108	38	115	6	100	-13
Religion	530	-14	886	67	768	-13	1,345	75	1,342	0 ^s
Jewish	331	8	492	49	527	7	959	82	920	-4
Muslim	84	-54	142	69	109	-23	220	102	229	4
Catholic	43	-16	155	260	52	-66	49	-6	61	24

	2020	2020	2021	2021	2022	2022	2023 ^r	2023 ^r	2024	2024
Other religion 2	40	-30	64	60	62	-3	85	37	105	24
Religion not specified	32	88	33	3	18	-45	32	78	27	-16
Sexual orientation	258	-3	438	70	509	16	889	75	658	-26
Other motivation 3	200	33	205	3	276	35	315	14	397	26
Motivation unknown	39	...	81	...	57	...	81	...	108	...

^r revised

... not applicable

0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

0^svalue rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded

Note(s): Hate crime counts from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey include both confirmed and suspected hate crime incidents. Information in this table reflects data reported by police services covering over 99% of the population of Canada.

Source(s): Uniform Crime Reporting Survey ([3302](#)).

Date modified:
2025-08-27