2023 Annual Report

FIGHTING ONLINE ANTISEMITISM

March 14, 2024

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About Fighting Online Antisemitism

FOA is the front line against online antisemitism, using a holistic approach that combines antisemitic content monitoring and removal, educational programming, international cooperation, advocacy, and cutting-edge technology. As an Israeli-based NGO, we train volunteers, monitor social media, and raise awareness about the harm caused by antisemitism and online hate. Since 2020, our global team of volunteers has acted swiftly to remove tens of thousands of antisemitic content (according to the IHRA working definition of antisemitism) from major social networks, stopping the spread of violent, false, and hateful messages. FOA collaborates with Israeli academic institutions and municipalities, international NGOs, and social media platforms.

Letter from the Executive Director

As we look back on 2023, we present this report with a mix of determination and concern. Last year we saw a troubling increase in both offline and online antisemitism, posing significant challenges to our mission of eradicating online antisemitism. From holocaust denial to false information and targeted attacks, the Jewish community worldwide faces a wave of discrimination and bigotry across various platforms and public spaces.

This digital landscape became even more tense following the Hamas attack on October 7th, which not only escalated tensions but also drew increased international attention to the issue. Moreover, the disturbing increase in discussions denying Israel's right to exist as a sovereign nation further emphasized the urgency of our work.

Despite these challenges, Fighting Online Antisemitism (FOA) ramped up its efforts to address antisemitic and anti-Israel sentiments head-on. Our proactive strategy included the quick reporting and removal of offensive online content, along with the expansion of volunteer training programs. Notably, our report on the first month of the Israel-Hamas War revealed a staggering 300% increase in online antisemitism compared to 2022. We increased our training workshops, reaching 3,000 workshop participants. Through the dedication of our volunteers and the use of innovative technologies, like our unique AI-driven monitoring system, we made significant progress in countering online antisemitism during this turbulent period.

Looking ahead, our commitment remains strong. In 2024, FOA aims to further expand its reach and impact by increasing focus and presence in key regions, launching new educational programs for various jewish communities worldwide, and strengthening partnerships with like-minded organizations. Together, we continue to protect the lives of the Jewish people, advocate for a safer, more inclusive online environment and work towards a future free from the harm of antisemitism and hate.

Many thanks to all of our donors, partners and volunteers who have supported us and are helping us in this vital fight to stop the spread of online antisemitism,

Tomer Aldubi
FOA Founder and Executive Director

Executive Summary

In the past year, Fighting Online Antisemitism (FOA) has decisively and innovatively tackled the alarming increase in both online and offline antisemitism. Employing a comprehensive strategy that encompasses content monitoring, educational initiatives, and global collaboration, FOA has significantly intensified its efforts. FOA's continued dedication and proactive steps demonstrate its crucial role in combating online antisemitism, which has escalated during the Israel-Hamas War. Key points include a threefold increase of antisemitic online content compared to 2022, alongside 40% removal rate since the war in Israel began.

The FOA Annual Summary Report describes a 300% surge in online antisemitism since 2022, a rise sharply underscored by events following the Hamas attack on October 7th. The report reveals a troubling trend: antisemitic publications have tripled, including a significant portion of anti-Israel content and violent incitements against Jews and Israelis, with expressions of support for Hamas. This content, monitored across primary social networks like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and others such as Telegram, VKontakte, and GAB shows a marked concentration. Of the leading social networks, the majority of flagged content in 2023 was on X (40%), followed by Facebook (8.5%), Instagram (6.5%), TikTok (2%), and YouTube (2.5%), distributed across eight languages predominantly in English (47%), Russian (27%), French (12%), and Arabic (9.5%).

What makes FOA unique are the efforts made in removing antisemitic content, rather than only monitoring and reporting. FOA succeeded in removing content thanks to the thousands of volunteers worldwide. At the end of 2023, we had an average removal rate of 41% on the four leading social networks. As a "Trusted Flagger," FOA's reports are swiftly acted upon, yielding higher removal rates compared to private users averages.. In 2023, Facebook and TikTok led with the highest removal rates of around 37% and 35% respectively. However, platforms like VK and GAB, notorious for hosting violent antisemitic content, show only a marginal improvement in removal rates, underscoring the ongoing challenge in combating antisemitism across all digital landscapes.

Milestones

3,000+ Volunteers Globally

40% Avg Post Removal Rate since the Israel-Hamas war

120+ Training Workshops

5 Educational Programming Languages

10 Number of Social Networks Monitored

8 Languages Reported

2024 Goals

Looking into 2024, FOA is set to widen its influence by extending operations in the US and Europe, introducing educational programs in more languages, and aiming to monitor and report an increased volume of antisemitic content with better content removal efficacy. These endeavors reinforce FOA's commitment to protecting Jewish communities online and cultivating a more inclusive and tolerant digital landscape.

In 2024 FOA hopes to expand its efforts by:

- Expanding US and European teams to increase focus and presence in these regions.
- Opening an FOA branch in Europe to make a significant impact across The European Union.
- Launching new educational programs in 3 more different languages.
- Continued development of our AI system in order to monitor, report, and remove antisemitic content more effectively.
- Expanding content reporting and removal rates and increasing
  - Increase the content removal rate to at least 50% on Meta, X, YouTube and TikTok, as well as increasing the content removal rate to at least 30% on X and other social platforms
  - Monitor content in Arabic, Italian, and French

- Ongoing monthly training workshops to increase volunteers
  - Recruit thousands of Israeli and International volunteers, mainly students and young adults from different backgrounds, religions, genders and ages.
- Expand international partnerships and outreach to new Jewish communities, organizations, and social and civic organizations.
- Enhanced collaboration with social media platforms to promote positive change in content publication standards.

Content Monitoring, Reporting and Removal

Reporting Methods

Manual and AI Based Reporting

FOA's volunteers and AI system globally monitor, report and remove online antisemitic content based on the Working definition of antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the hate speech guidelines of the social networks. Developed in collaboration with Israeli high-tech companies Final, Cyabra, BrightData, the Israeli initiative Code For Israel, and other companies, this cutting-edge system efficiently monitors content across diverse social media platforms. It streamlines the monitoring process, enabling swift identification and removal of antisemitic content within specific social networks. This technology significantly enhances the capability of FOA-trained volunteers, enabling them to monitor, report, and remove larger volumes of antisemitic content compared to manual methods. Any new hashtag or trend the volunteers find is then also reported to our AI system.
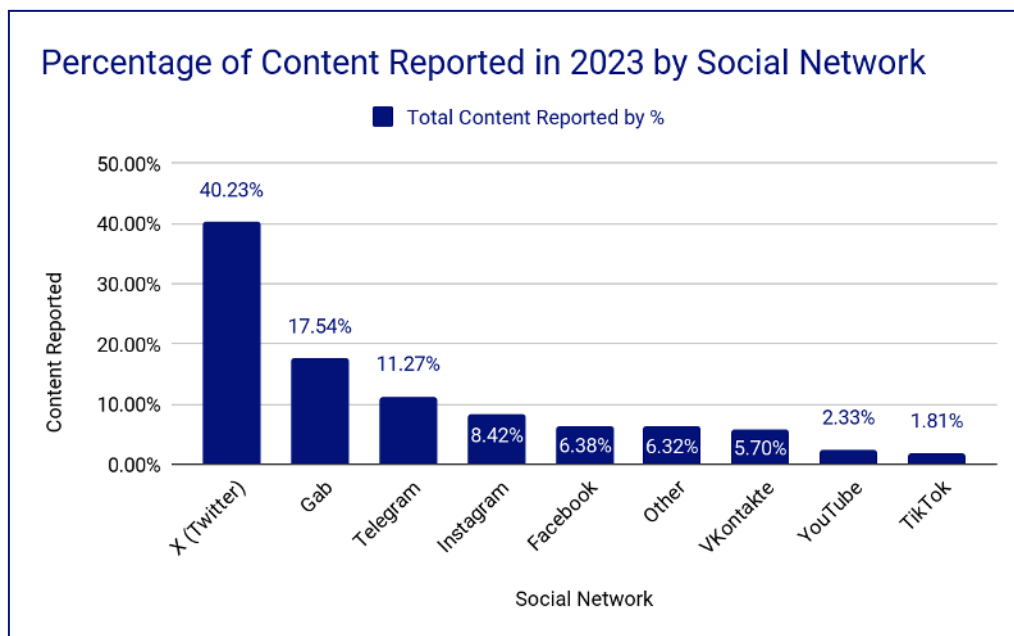

Post on X, removed December 2023.

FOA's unique system, automatically aggregates content through an external interface, leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assess each post based on the IHRA working definition of antisemitism and developing trends. Posts identified as highly antisemitic are promptly forwarded to FOA's volunteers for review. They assess and report the content to the respective social media platforms, urging its removal. In many cases where content persists, FOA, recognized as a 'Trusted Flagger' directly engages with the platforms to prompt immediate action. This strategic approach ensures a proactive stance against online antisemitism, aligning with FOA's commitment to swift and effective content moderation.

Volunteers play a crucial role in identifying new trends in antisemitic content. During the first month of the Israel-Hamas war, our content monitoring identified the misuse of the paraglider icon by antisemitic groups, linked to the 'Al-Aqsa Flood' campaign by Hamas. FOA's proactive approach also led to the deletion of problematic content, such as a video

on Moataz Matar's YouTube channel and 26 posts by Aisha AlSayed, preventing the spread of hateful messages during a critical time. Currently, FOA is working to remove Matar's account on YouTube.

Content Reporting Overall

Overall in 2023 out of 6,000 antisemitic items, the largest amount of content reported came from X (formerly Twitter), with Gab coming in second.

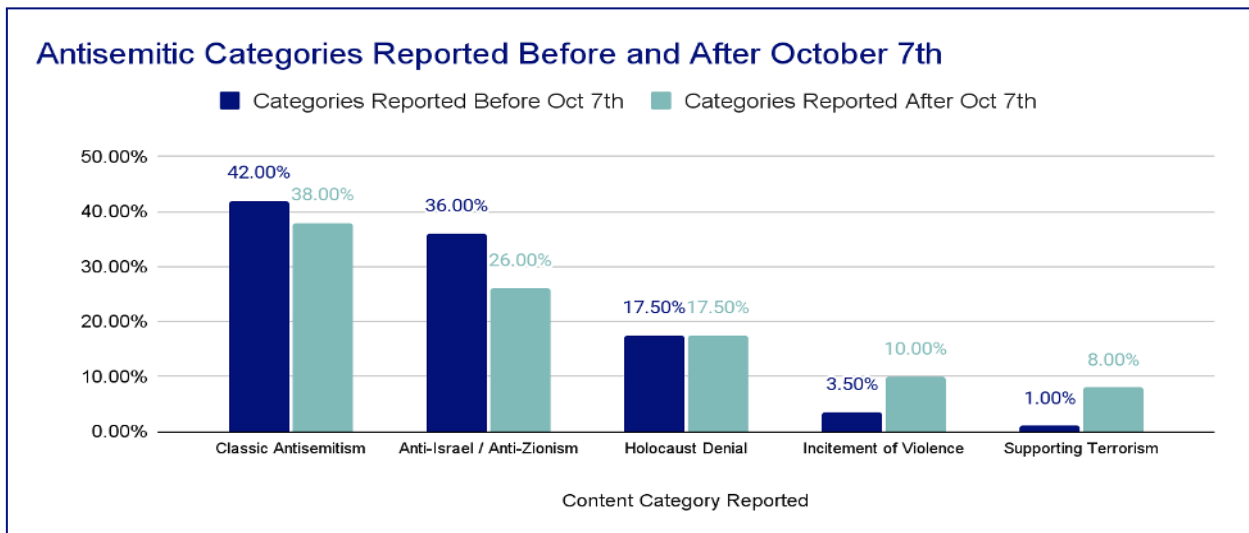Percentage of Content Reported in 2023 by Social Network

The "Other" category includes: LinkedIn, LiveJournal, GETTR, Reddit, Pinterest, Dzen, GOYIMTV, BitChute.

Content Reported by Language

FOA monitors content in 8 languages, while the majority of content is monitored in English (72%), Russian (8.5%) and Arabic (6%). Other languages include Spanish, French, German, Italian, Turkish, Polish, and Serbian.

Categories of Antisemitism

FOA also closely monitors the different antisemitic categories of content reported. Classic Antisemitism was the most popular category both before and after October 7th. This refers to any content that contains old forms of antisemitism; i.e. comparing Jews to pigs, rats or thieves, portrayals of the 'big nose caricature', and conspiracy theories against Jews. After October 7th, Classic antisemitism and Anti-Israel / Anti-Zionist content decreased. In its place, content that supported terrorism, and inciting or glorifying violence increased dramatically. Incitement of violence increased almost three times, and content supporting terrorism increased 8 times after the war.

Example of a Facebook post depicting "Classic Antisemitism". This post was removed December 2023.

Antisemitic Categories Reported Before and After October 7th

■ Categories Reported Before Oct 7th   ■ Categories Reported After Oct 7th

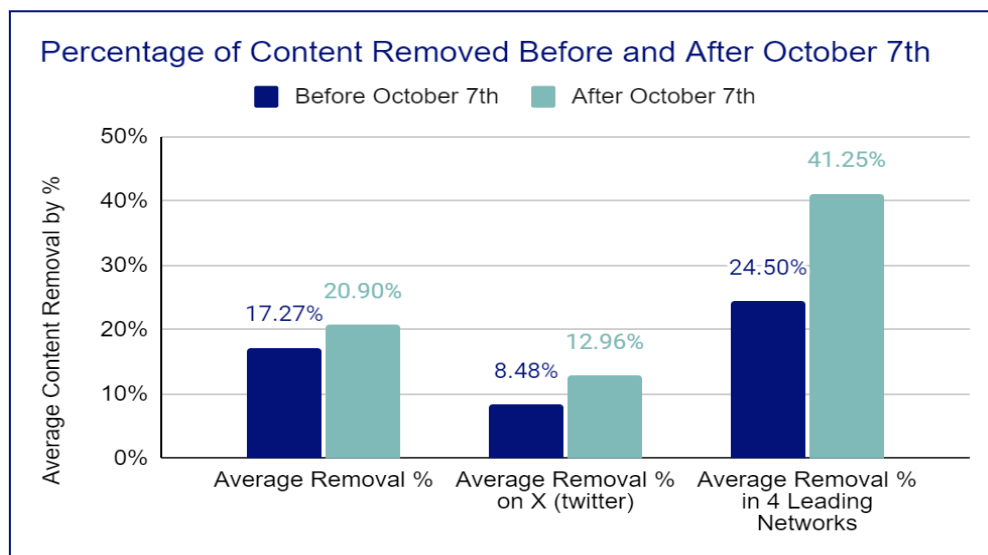| Content Category Reported	Before Oct 7th	After Oct 7th
Classic Antisemitism	42.00%	38.00%
Anti-Israel / Anti-Zionism	36.00%	26.00%
Holocaust Denial	17.50%	17.50%
Incitement of Violence	3.50%	10.00%
Supporting Terrorism	1.00%	8.00%

Content Removal Rates

What makes FOA unique are the efforts made in removing antisemitic content, rather than only monitoring and reporting. FOA succeeded in removing content thanks to the thousands of volunteers worldwide. At the end of 2023, we had an average removal rate of 41% on the four leading social networks.
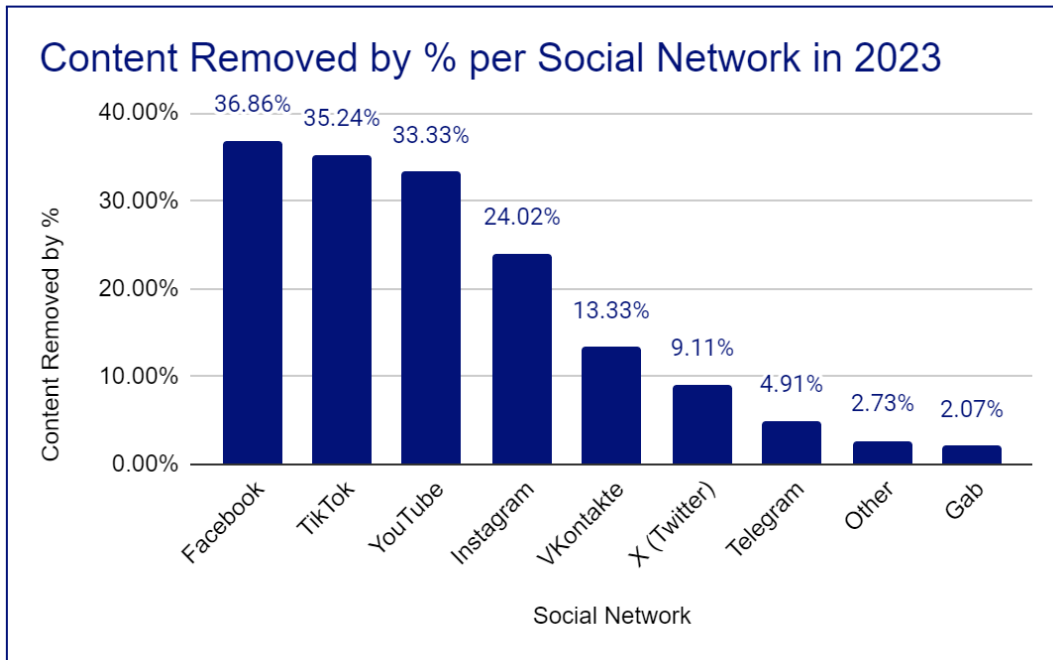
In many cases, despite FOA's thousands of volunteers identifying content as a violation, antisemitic content is not removed, even when content shows blatant antisemitism or violence toward Jews and Israelis. In addition, this discrepancy highlights the content's vague nature, situating it in a 'gray area' where interpretations differ among viewers. Consequently, this variation in perspectives regarding platform guidelines can result in inconsistent content moderation outcomes. Social media platforms usually have community guidelines or content policies that they use to determine whether content should be removed. FOA as a "Trusted Flagger" directly reports these posts to the social platform where it goes under review again, which we have seen good success.

Due to the rise in volunteers and content monitoring efforts after October 7th, FOA reported and thus removed more antisemitic content from social networks. X (formerly Twitter), is the only major social network with a very low removal rate, both before (8.48%) and after (12.96%) the Israel-Hamas war began. The other four leading social networks (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube) had an average of 24.5% before the war and 41.25% after the war.

Percentage of Content Removed Before and After October 7th

Regarding yearly removal rates, Facebook is the highest (36.86%), followed by TikTok (35%). Of the top 6 leading social networks, X had the lowest removal rate at a little over 9%. As a "Trusted Flagger," FOA's reports prompt swift action, resulting in higher removal rates compared to global averages. When compared to 2022, platforms like VK and GAB,

known for hosting violent antisemitic content, marginally decreased their removal rates, highlighting the ongoing challenge of eradicating antisemitism online (16% in 2022 vs. 15.41% in 2023).

Content Removed by % per Social Network in 2023

TikTok video, removed November 2023

Salah Kamel

5 בנוב' · 🌐

هتلر أخطأ عندما قال
قتلت اليهـود و تركت لكم بعضهم لتعلموا اني كنت على حق .
يا رجل، احنا مصدقينك، لكن كان يجب ان تستأصلهم.

היטלר עשה טעות כשאמר
הרגתי את היהודים והשארתי חלק מהם בשבילך כדי שתדע שאני צודק.
בנאדם, אנחנו מאמינים לך, אבל היית צריך למגר אותם.

Hitler made a mistake when he said
I killed the Jews and left some of them for you so that you might know that I was right.
Man, we believe you, but you should have eradicated them

Post from X, posted in November and removed in January.

Workshops, Programs, and Partnerships

In response to the Israel-Hamas War following the atrocities in Israel on October 7th, FOA swiftly mobilized its efforts, conducting over 30 online workshops and webinars in the first month of the war.

In 2023, FOA organized over 120 workshops and long-term programs in 5 different languages, including English, Spanish, German, Russian and Hebrew, engaging more than 2,700 participants in our online initiatives alone. By the year's end, our global volunteer base exceeded 3,000 members from various ages, genders, religions and countries such as the United States, Israel, Austria, Brazil, and Mexico, followed by Switzerland, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Portugal, the Abraham Accords Countries and China. This influx of student and global volunteers has greatly bolstered our organization's efforts in combating antisemitism online.

These multilingual sessions provide participants with essential skills for monitoring, reporting, and removing antisemitic, anti-Israel, and violent content from various digital platforms. Webinars focused on raising awareness, and utilizing FOA's AI system. By integrating theory with practice, participants are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to uncover and address new and evolving antisemitic and anti-Israel content, particularly in the context of the war. They learn to monitor and report antisemitic content across leading social platforms and are trained to independently report on such content. Moreover, participants become online content creators, advocating for Israel. They were guided through the process of scripting, filming, and editing their videos. By the end of the sessions students emerged as empowered advocates, equipped with practical strategies to counterattack the spread of antisemitic content on TikTok. They gained the knowledge and confidence to create compelling content with a positive narrative about Israel, challenging harmful stereotypes.

Israeli Educational Programs

In the past year, our educational programs in Israel have made a profound impact. FOA's collaboration with high school and university academic institutions yielded significant results this year through partnerships offering high school or academic credit or scholarships in exchange for volunteering (acknowledged by the Ministry of Education since 2021). Over 300 students and young adults contributed more than 2,000 hours of volunteering, highlighting a notable increase in activism spurred by the war. We also held TikTok workshops with high school students in Southern Israel who, having experienced ongoing bombardments in their city since October 7th, initially felt overwhelmed by the rise of antisemitism they encountered online.

FOA conducts various workshops and long-term projects for young adults in Israeli municipalities such as Rishon Lezion, Holon, and Ashkelon. Additionally, we collaborated with NGOS such as the World Zionist Federation, Young Diplomats Ashdod, the Masa Project (the Jewish Agency), KKL, StandWithUs, etc. Those programs provided valuable insights and strategies for addressing antisemitism effectively for dozens. These programs highlight our commitment to education as a powerful tool in the fight against antisemitism.

International Educational Programs

FOA has established partnerships across Europe, the United States, Canada, South America and Australia. Since the Israel-Hamas war in October, there has been global interest also in our long term training and educational programs. In 2023 we developed many new partnerships and launched global educational programs.

Instagram post of Classic Antisemitic trope depicting Jews as pigs.

Caption reads: This post was posted by an enlightenment page, but Instagram deleted it. Revolutionaries publish this post to support Dr. Abbasi and the truth of Israel's Saftia pig.

Post removed November 2023.

World Zionist Organization Partnership

In 2023, we partnered with the World Zionist Organization (WZO) on English, German and Spanish language educational programs, including an international bootcamp during the onset of the war that enlisted thousands of participants in online training workshops in English, Hebrew, and Spanish. The programs span 3 months in which FOA provided participants with the structure, gave access to the unique AI reporting system, as well as knowledge, support and opportunity to practice their newly acquired knowledge to maximize impact. Participants report antisemitic manifestations on social media independently after they finish the program.

These volunteers were instrumental in identifying antisemitic content and trends on social media in other languages, in addition to finding new hashtags that the organization can track and report. It's important to note that after the program many participants continue to volunteer within the organization and become an integral part of identifying and removing antisemitic content.

REACH Project

FOA's flagship program REACH (Remove and Eradicate Antisemitism and Cyber Hate) is a media, digital, and public enterprise whose goal is to empower and train a critical mass of volunteers to be proactive in fighting against the phenomenon of antisemitism and delegitimization in front of international audiences. The program emphasizes the rise in antisemitism, and how to combat evolving antisemitic and anti-Israel content in the context of the Israel-Hamas war.

Switzerland

In May, FOA launched its REACH program in Switzerland, with the support of the Edith and Helmut Steiner Foundation and in partnership with the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities (SIG). This 3 month program, which had over 40 participants and was led by a local coordinator based in Switzerland, began with an in-person meeting in Zurich, including an overview of the state of antisemitism, a review of antisemitic incidents from 2022 and contemporary forms of antisemitism in the country. During the weekly online meetings, participants learned about the IHRA's working definition of Antisemitism, as well as the differences between online and offline hate speech and antisemitism, monitoring, reporting, and removing content in German in the country and in other German speaking countries.

Digital Activist Bootcamp (REACH) Canada

In December, FOA launched its REACH program in Canada with the support and partnerships of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). The project was officially finished in February 2024, including more than 60 participants. 6 online meetings were conducted with various speakers such as: Michal Cotler-Wunsh, Israel's Special Envoy for Combating Antisemitism, Ruth Cohen-Dar is the Director of Department for Combating Antisemitism and Holocaust Remembrance at Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ido Daniel, Senior Director for Digital Strategy, Israel Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism.

Workshops in the UK

In June 2023 FOA led three prominent events in the United Kingdom both in person and online, led and hosted by the National Jewish Assembly (NJA) for the Board of Deputies, and the Henry Jackson Society.

Countering Antisemitism and Islamophobia on Social Media Platforms

FOA conducted a workshop on combating antisemitism, racism, and cyber hate on social networks for Jews and Arabs who live in Israel and the nations which are part of the

Abraham Accords. This online event, in collaboration with the Sharaka organization, included meetings for participants from various religions as part of the IVLP project. The project aims to empower individuals and communities to combat online hate speech, including antisemitism, Islamophobia, and disinformation, and provides practical strategies and tools for identifying and countering hate speech online.

ERASMUS+ Cyber Hate Program

The program is a consortium of organizations from seven countries, including Germany, Spain, Croatia, Slovakia, Hungary, Bosnia, Macedonia, coordinated by the German Youth Agency. This program is focused on the planning of a new reporting portal, which is scheduled to go online in the autumn of 2024 and will be targeted at young people. The reports received will be documented and analyzed in a cross-country comparison to develop further measures against hate speech.

TikTok Workshop in Slovakia

In November, the Post Bellum Organization in Slovakia hosted the second International Educational Conference 'FREE STUDENTS' in Bratislava. The conference focused on distinguishing truth from disinformation and the need to protect freedom by actively fighting the spread of false information. The conference saw participation from university students, recent graduates, and educators. FOA participated at the conference for the second time. This year, FOA held a special workshop, equipping dozens of students and educators with the skills to create impactful TikTok videos that commemorate the Holocaust and the Holocaust survivors.

Conferences

Events with the European Jewish Association (EJA)

FOA participated in several events with the EJA. In May, FOA participated in EJA's Annual Conference in Porto, Portugal, and held a presentation about online hate and the current findings in proactive online monitoring of antisemitic content. Trends in antisemitic rhetoric online were discussed and the continued increase in classical antisemitic tropes.

In October, FOA participated at the EJA conference in Zagerb, Croatia, and presented the joint report with the EJA - "From Kristallnacht to Jasenovac - Countering Antisemitic Discourse in Southeast Europe: A report on online antisemitism in Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia".

In August, FOA led a workshop at EJA's bootcamp in Brussels for dozens of European students.

Events with The International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH)

INACH is the leading network within the EU and globally that combats cyber hate using a holistic approach that combines monitoring, content removal, educational methods, international cooperation, advocacy and cutting-edge technology. INACH includes 34 members from 27 countries, and FOA is the first and only Israeli member.

In October, FOA participated in INACH's Annual Conference in Malaga, Spain. The focus of the conference was the importance of artificial intelligence and algorithmic transparency in the field of digital hate speech. FOA led a panel discussing "Inspiring and successful stories in the fight of hate speech".

In addition, FOA participated in INACH's annual roundtable with members of the leading social platforms and enterprises such as YouTube, LinkedIn, Meta, Tiktok, X, and Microsoft. Each member presented trends related to cyber hate, content moderation, fake accounts, among others.. The discussion included preventative measures that platforms are taking to minimize hateful content and challenges in getting extremist content removed.

Conclusion: Looking Into 2024

In 2023, the struggle against antisemitism, particularly online, reached a critical point. FOA plays an important role in confronting the escalating wave of antisemitism and anti-Israel rhetoric. The organization significantly ramped up its volunteer training programs and strengthened collaborations with similar organizations and government bodies that share its mission. Through active participation in Israeli Knesset (Israeli Parliament) committees, media appearances, and the development of sophisticated AI-driven technology, FOA aims to make a difference and shift the online narrative. The efforts also include advocating for legal measures to restrict offensive content and urging social media platforms to strengthen their guidelines and monitoring capabilities. By adapting to and responding to evolving threats, FOA contributes to a safer, tolerant online environment.