Dear Friend,

In the midst of Chanukah, our celebration of light, the shadow of hatred, fear, and violence still engulfs our world. Last Saturday's act of terror against a Jewish community in New York is a reminder that bigotry remains a daunting force. It culminates both a week of heinous attacks against Jews on the East Coast, and a sharp and troubling rise in antisemitic rhetoric and violence over the last few years.

Washington State has the fourth highest number of hate crimes nationwide according to the most recent FBI data. Today, antisemitic crimes comprise the majority of religious-based hate crimes in our country.

When children see armed guards in front of Jewish organizations and consider it to be normal, something is broken. When survivors of the Holocaust warn of troubling echoes of growing hate, we should listen. And when someone breaks into a rabbi’s home during a celebration of Chanukah to attack a community for its mere existence, our entire society should shudder.

We must call this what it is — domestic terrorism. In the face of a rising antisemitism, we call on our government for a meaningful response to the increase of hate crimes and hate groups. Antisemitism has many sources and origins — the proliferation of hate on the internet, the fading of Holocaust memory, and the absence of strong responses from the highest levels of leadership. This lack of action is both a cause and a symptom.

As the shock we feel turns to anger, concern, and sadness, we must respond. While victims and perpetrators are often obvious, perhaps the greatest danger to a secure society is the passivity of bystanders. Today, none of us have the luxury of being bystanders. It does not matter if we are religious or secular. It does not matter whom we love. It does not matter the color of our skin or our political affiliation. What matters is how we respond. We must follow our ancestors and not allow those who seek to deny us the right to live and practice as Jews to succeed. We must meet intimidation with inspiration, and violence with unqualified justice. We must offer solidarity to those within the more observant Jewish community whose customs make them both more recognizable and more vulnerable.

We must overcome the complacency of bystanding with the courage of upstanding. We ask you to join us and stand up, speak out, and be counted. Raise your voice. We must redouble our efforts to educate and advocate within our community, and in partnership with others who are experiencing similar threats to their freedoms in our current climate. The simple act of showing up for one another is how we will begin to turn back this tide of hatred.

As we light the final candle of Chanukah, rededicating ourselves to our faith and our freedoms, let the power of our individual light become a collective flame, turning
back this growing darkness.

Following this letter is a listing of resources for education and action. Please feel free to reach out to Cassie Garvin at the Federation at cassieg@jewishinseattle.org or (206) 774-2228 with any questions you may have.

L’Shalom,

Authors:
Miri Cypers, Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League Pacific Northwest
Dee Simon, Baral Family Executive Director, Holocaust Center for Humanity
Rabbi Will Berkovitz, CEO, Jewish Family Service
Nancy B. Greer, President and CEO, Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle
Rabbi Daniel A. Weiner, Temple De Hirsch Sinai

Additional Signers:
Regina Friedland, Regional Director, American Jewish Committee Seattle
Rabbi Olivier Benhaim, Bet Alef Meditative Synagogue
Rabbi James Mirel, Bet Chaverim Congregation
Rabbi Mendel Weingarten, Executive Director, Chabad at University of Washington
Rabbi Yosef Shtroks, Chabad Jewish Center of Olympia
Rabbi Shmuly Levitin, Chabad of Downtown & Chabad Young Professionals Seattle
Carol Benedick, Executive Director, and Rabbi Lauren Kurland, Congregation Beth Shalom
Albert Israel, President, Congregation Ezra Bessaroth
Ettie Davis, President, Hadassah, Seattle Chapter
Rabbi Emeritus Jay Rosenbaum, Herzl-Ner Tamid
Amee Sherer, Greenstein Family Executive Director, Hillel at the University of Washington
Rabbi Yechezkel Kornfeld, Island Synagogue Congregation Shevet Achim
Adam Steinberg, Northwest Regional Director, J Street
Rabbi Rachel Nussbaum, Kavana
Jeff Cohen, CEO, Kline Galland
Rabbi Yohanna Kinberg, Kol Ami: A Center for Jewish Life
Rabbi Zari Weiss, Kol HaNeshamah
Rabbi Avi Rosenfeld, Mercaz Seattle
Raphael Katsman, President, Minyan Ohr Chadash
Mina Miller, President and Artistic Director, Music of Remembrance
Rabbi Benjamin Hassan, Sephardic Bikur Holim
Amy Lavin, CEO, Stroum Jewish Community Center
Senior Rabbi Ruth A. Zlotnick and Rabbi Jason Levine, Temple Beth Am
Rabbi Rachel Kort, Temple Beth Or
Rabbi Avi Fine and Rabbi Callie Schulman, Temple De Hirsch Sinai
Jeffrey Kay, Founder, The Tribe MC of Seattle
Rabbi Yona Margolese, Head of School, Torah Day School of Seattle
David Berkman, Director, URJ Camp Kalsman
Lisa Kranseler, Executive Director, Washington State Jewish Historical Society

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan, City of Seattle
Council Chair Rod Dembowski, King County
Councilmember Claudia Balducci, King County
Councilmember Jeanne Kohl-Welles, King County
Councilmember Jared Nieuwenhuis, City of Bellevue
Councilmember Jennifer Robertson, City of Bellevue
State Representative Christine Kilduff
State Representative Mari Leavitt
State Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos
State Representative Tana Senn
State Representative Drew Stokesbary
State Senator Joe Nguyen
State Senator Derek Stanford

Please note this letter was sent to many community and elected leaders who are away on vacation and did not have an opportunity to sign on.

Resources for Education and Action

These resources were compiled to accompany the Puget Sound Community Statement on Antisemitism.

To elected, civic, and faith leaders, as well as individuals who wish to be allies to the Jewish community in combating antisemitism, we recommend the following ways to help meet the challenge:

1. Seek to Understand
   a. Check out resources on antisemitism from experts like the:
      i. Anti-Defamation League
      ii. UNESCO
      iii. US Holocaust Memorial Museum
   b. Sign up for a local class such as on Confronting antisemitism and intolerance at the Holocaust Center for Humanity.
   c. Read Deborah Lipstadt’s new book, Antisemitism Here and Now.

2. Stand Up
   a. Seek to stop it in its tracks by swiftly, forcefully, and publicly condemning acts of antisemitism.
   b. If you believe someone has said or done something antisemitic and doesn’t understand, help them to understand the impact of their words.
   c. When you see antisemitic vandalism, harassment, intimidation, or violence, speak up, in consultation with the victim, and with their consent, report it directly to the police, the ADL, SAFE Washington, or a trusted leader within your community who will ensure the incident is reported.
   d. If you don’t know if something is antisemitic, get in touch with the Anti-
3. **Reach Out**
   a. Contact your child’s school and ask what their policies and practices are for adequately addressing hate-based incidents, including anti-Jewish incidents, in schools. If they don’t exist, ask that they be created and that impacted minority communities be a part of that process.
   b. **Reach out to your local synagogue** -- ask what you can do to help, sign up for an interfaith service project, or ask if you can attend a service or a holiday celebration.
   c. Check out the [Guide to Jewish Washington](#) to find local Jewish organizations with whom you might engage, attend an event, learn from, etc.

4. **Advocate**
   a. Contact your elected officials. Share this community statement with them. Tell them antisemitism is a growing concern and that you’d like them to make understanding and addressing growing antisemitism a priority.
   b. Contact the [Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle](#) to learn how you can support their advocacy.

5. **Show Up**
   a. For [Holocaust Remembrance Day Events](#).
   b. For community solidarity gatherings.

For other communities that experience hate crimes and to build enduring relationships with potential allies.