

Executive Council of Australian Jewry Inc.

הוועד הפועל של
יהודי אוסטרליה

The Representative Organisation of Australian Jewry

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3 October 2012

His Excellency Sven-Olof Petersson
The Ambassador of Sweden to Australia
5 Turrana Street
Yarralumla ACT 2600

Email: sven-olof.petersson@foreign.ministry.se

Dear Ambassador,

Re: Attacks against Jewish citizens and community buildings in Malmö

We were distressed to learn that the Jewish Community Centre in Malmö was recently attacked with an explosive device and that bricks were thrown through its reinforced entrance. This incident occurred just after Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar.

What is worse is that although Sweden is a country that prides itself on its progressive human rights record, the authorities in Malmö seem to lack the courage to confront the pervasive Jew-hatred that produced this attack in the first place, and to bring to justice the perpetrators of this attack and past attacks against Jewish citizens and communal buildings that have occurred in recent years.

Malmö's rabbi, Shneur Kesselman, has estimated that he alone has been the victim of 100 incidents during his few years in the city. According to reports we have received, a dozen Jewish families have already left Malmö for Stockholm, Israel, or the United States because of antisemitism.

These attacks do not stem from the traditional perpetrators of European Jew-hatred, such as neo-Nazis, but from among mostly Muslim immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East who have failed to integrate into Swedish society.

The mayor of Malmö, Ilmar Reepalu, appears to be very much a part of the problem. He has failed to condemn the anti-Jewish attacks publicly and without qualification. On the contrary, on at least one occasion he is reported to have said that the attacks were justified because the Jews of Malmö refuse to denounce Israel.

It beggars belief that in any civilised society an elected official should even obliquely suggest that some citizens may legitimately be made the targets of violence because of the peaceful expression of their political or religious convictions.

Our community is outraged that anti-Jewish attacks in Malmö have been occurring with apparent impunity over a sustained period of time, and that the Swedish authorities appear to be paralysed against taking remedial action and, in the case of Mr Reepalu, completely unsympathetic to the victims. This state of affairs cannot continue without severely undermining Sweden's reputation as a progressive, peace-loving nation.

We ask that you bring our community's concerns to the attention of your government and request that the problem of antisemitism in Swedish society generally, and the problem of violent antisemitism in the city of Malmö in particular, be addressed with the sense of urgency and priority that is obviously needed.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Dr Danny Lamm
President



Peter Wertheim AM
Executive Director