

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 29, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write to you today to urge you to send a presidential delegation at the highest level to the 80th anniversary of the Babyn Yar massacre in Kyiv, Ukraine on October 6, 2021. The commemoration, conducted by Ukrainian President Zelenskyy, will assemble world leaders, including Israeli President Isaac Herzog and German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Sending Vice President Harris to lead a U.S. delegation would underscore the U.S. commitment to Holocaust remembrance and fighting the scourge of anti-Semitism that continues to find vectors of influence around the world 80 years after the Holocaust.

Babyn Yar is Europe's largest mass grave. It is the final resting place of close to 100,000 souls and a powerful symbol of the "Holocaust by Bullet" that claimed 2.5 million Jewish lives across Eastern Europe. The massacre began on September 29 and 30, 1941, during which 33,771 Jewish victims were shot dead by the Nazis during just two days. Throughout the Nazi occupation of Kyiv, tens of thousands of Jews, Ukrainians, Roma, and others were also shot and left for dead at Babyn Yar. Earlier this year, President Zelenskyy announced the building of the Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center in Kyiv, which will be one of the largest Holocaust memorials in the world.

Anti-Semitism is on the rise in the 21st Century, and according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, anti-Semitism is finding "new forms and from diverse sources." The Anti-Defamation League's most recent Audit of Antisemitic Incidents found that antisemitic incidents rose 12 percent in the U.S. from the previous year. In Europe, the European Commission found in the first two months of 2021 compared to the first two months of 2020 there was "a seven-fold increase in antisemitic content on Twitter, Facebook and Telegram in French, and over a thirteen-fold increase in antisemitic content in German." The European Commission's Fundamental Rights Agency also conducted a survey in 2018 entitled Jewish people's experiences with hate crime, discrimination and antisemitism in the European Union, which found that nine in 10 European Jews believe anti-Semitism is increasing in their country and eight in 10 consider it a serious problem.

The United States must continue to stand up for religious and ethnic tolerance around the world. By sending a high-level delegation to Kyiv, the United States will show that it recognizes the atrocities committed at Babyn Yar and the threat rising anti-Semitism poses to global governance. It will also reinforce relations among countries that are committed to ensuring these atrocities are not forgotten and will never again be allowed to occur.

Samantha Power, when she was U.S. Ambassador to the UN, expressed what we all recognize when said at the Holocaust Museum: “There’s a well-worn tradition in most societies of marginalizing the other. Xenophobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism—starts as rhetoric, very quickly migrates to discrimination and can result in violence. It is extremely important that parts of our society that aren’t themselves being targeted by antisemitism, see this as a warning. When antisemitic discrimination or violent acts happen, it is a threat to liberal society.”

We urge you to send this high-level delegation without delay.

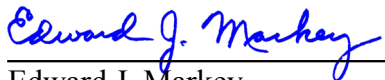
Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Roger Wicker
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



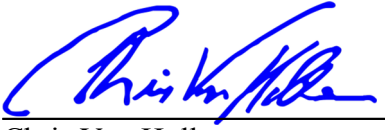
Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



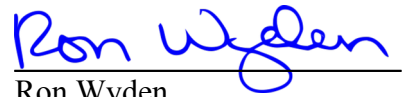
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Van Hollen", written over a horizontal line.

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Wyden", written over a horizontal line.

Ron Wyden
United States Senator