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January 18, 2022

Attorney General Merrick B. Garland
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Mr. Attorney General Garland,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones in good health and spirits during the unprecedented pandemic crisis.

I write to you on behalf of the 400,000 constituent members of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, a leading Jewish Rights NGO, named after the heroic Holocaust Survivor, Nazi Hunter, and campaigner for justice in an unjust world.

First. We want to express our gratitude and admiration for the heroic actions taken by the special FBI unit flown in from Washington, which successfully saved hostages at a Texas Synagogue and eliminated the Islamist terrorist who threatened to kill Jews at prayer on a Sabbath morning.

Their professionalism was matched by the actions of local and State law enforcement and other agencies during the 11-hour siege.

Americans of all faiths and creeds are grateful for the remarkable outcome that could have wrought more tragedy.

At the same time, we were shocked when FBI spokespeople inexplicably, initially declared that this terrorist act was not targeting Jews. These declarations were not backed by the facts on the ground, as well as the well-documented raving anti-Semitism expressed by the terrorist he was seeking to have released. To be clear, it wasn't a mall or MacDonal'd's that was the chosen target, but Jews at prayer.

Those statements have hurt the reputation of the FBI, and enraged and worried our community. It further muddled and deflected media coverage, here an overseas, including the BBC, which invoked the FBI as declaring the attack at a Jewish House of Prayer was not a terrorist act targeting Jews.

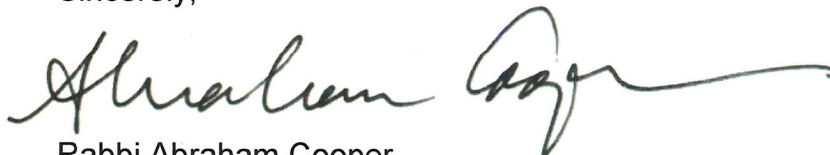
We appreciate that the FBI spokesperson has since corrected the FBI's stance but the damage has been done.

Moving forward, the Simon Wiesenthal Center is urging that you instruct everyone under the jurisdiction of the US Justice Department to adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism and to incorporate it into its training.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum of Tolerance's Tools for Tolerance has for decades and until this day, provided training for over 160,000 law enforcement professionals across the US. We are willing and able to help the Justice Department upgrade its training and invited you General Garland to visit our renowned Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles as soon as the pandemic eases.

Thank you for your service and for your attention to the concerns we raised.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Abraham Cooper
Associate Dean
Director Global Social Action
Simon Wiesenthal Center International Headquarters
Los Angeles, CA