

Opening Statement of Rabbi Yehuda Kaploun
Nominee for Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, with
the rank of Ambassador
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
November 19, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen and distinguished Members of the committee. I would like to acknowledge my family, who is here today.

My name is Yehuda Kaploun and I am honored to be nominated for the important position of United States Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, with the rank of Ambassador. I want to thank President Trump and Secretary Rubio for placing their trust in me for this important role.

Allow me a few moments to share with you about my history and how we can combat this hatred that has consumed this planet.

As a child, I would walk to synagogue with my father the noted educator Rabbi Yaakov Kaploun in New Haven, Connecticut and Ottawa, Canada. I remember occasionally hearing the cries of “dirty Jew” along the way.

Later, I was living in Crown Heights during the pogrom where the Australian scholar Yankel Rosenbaum was stabbed to death during the riots, with cries of “kill the Jews” in the streets.

Then I was a volunteer advisor at the World Trade Center on September 11, when terrorists crashed two planes into the towers. I watched as brave firefighters ran into the building and paid the ultimate sacrifice. My sister Esther Kaploun passed away 6 years ago from 9/11-related cancers. The shirt that I wore on that day was used by the government to measure the levels of asbestos at the site.

My cousin Adi Kaploun, a brave mother, was killed on October 7 and her two

young children were orphaned. She was one of the 1200 souls murdered that day.

I sat with Yarden Bibas the night before the funeral of his wife and children. Yes, I have seen the worst that humanity can do.

When asked to serve my country by our president in a role that I truly wished didn't need to exist, there was no hesitation. Despite the ongoing threats to my family from individuals that required significant change in my life, I sit before you humbled by the opportunity to serve my country in a role to protect Jews domestically and globally.

It is a daunting task. And I'd like to share the thoughts and goals that will guide me, G-d willing, upon confirmation. Antisemitism is a symbol of larger hatred. History has proven when a country starts with allowing antisemitism the results aren't kind to that country. That is why President Trump and Secretary Rubio have stated there can be no compromise with antisemitism.

Today we must focus on the living and the future. So how do we combat antisemitism? How do we combat the fact that foreign governments spend hundreds of millions to promote antisemitic agendas and endow chairs at universities with the distinct role of teaching hate and promoting an anti-American agenda?

Antisemitism is also anti-American. Those who chant "death to the Jews" all too often chant "death to America."

Why is it a child graduating elementary school in many states cannot tell you who the past five presidents were, or our first five presidents, but they are aware of Gaza problems? Or college students attend protests and chant "From the river to the sea" but don't know what river or what sea?

The answer, Senators, is simply education and a resolve to combat hate anywhere and by anybody. We are often too silent when people seek to justify the murder, rape, and killing of men, women, children, and babies on

October 7, or exhibit blatant ignorance about hateful acts of antisemitism. There can never be one iota of hesitation to condemn antisemitism.

I was privileged to go for many years to sabbath services with the late Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel and engaged in many wonderful projects with him, including working to help special needs children. I recall a profound quote he gave to me one day: "A community is judged by how it treats those less fortunate than them."

Then I was with him when he spoke about the slaughter of Muslims in Bosnia Herzegovina. He realized that the task at hand is to educate the world, that we are all humans created in G-d's image. We cannot allow anyone to teach children from infancy to kill and be a martyr. Together with bipartisan support, we must educate the world to respect one another.

Lofty goals perhaps. But a lesson I learned from the grand rabbi of Lubavitch as well as from my grandparents and parents is to do my best to impact and make the world a better place before you place your head on the pillow every evening.

I am not a miracle worker. We cannot do this alone. We do this by building bridges through education and friendships. We must learn from the past to protect and educate the living. If confirmed, I urge all of you to please join me in helping to create standards that can hold those countries and companies accountable that promote antisemitism. Join me in condemning antisemitic rhetoric anywhere and by anyone.

We must educate, educate, educate about the history of the Jewish community and the Judeo-Christian values our country was founded on. I pledge to all of you here: I will not waiver, I will not rest. I will commit to you to do my very best, if confirmed, to fight antisemitism everywhere and make this world a better arena for G-d to dwell and spread his blessings upon us all.

I am honored to appear before you today and I look forward to your questions.