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## Elie Wiesel speaks at Anti-Defamation League event on "The New Anti-Semitism"

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Gigantic field of steles (© dpa/pa) "The essence

of bigotry is the denial of the humanism of the other." So spoke Frederick M. Lawrence, president of Brandeis University, at the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) contemporary discussion, "The New Anti-Semitism" Monday, Nov. 7, in Historic Faneuil Hall. In honor of the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass), the Consulate General of Germany to New England has proudly partnered with ADL for the event that also included remarks by Nobel Prize Laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, and Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick.

"It's still here, it still exists, even in this country," said ADL National Director Abraham H. Foxman. In fact, the event took place on the heels of a new survey released by ADL last week which showed that 15 percent of Americans currently hold anti-Semitic views.

"Anti-Semitism is a disease, a disease of soul, of mind, a disease that humanity experiences from time to time just like Typhus or Cholera," Wiesel also said at the event. The economic downturn may have contributed to a rise of intolerance and resurfacing of age-old misconceptions about Jewish people. "It does not make non-bigots, bigots, but it does inflate existing stereotypes," Lawrence said.

While anti-Semitism itself was old, the way in which it manifests itself nowadays was new. Chiefly, the global and anonymous nature of the Internet had made it easier for bigotry to spread more widely and with less consequence than was historically possible. Search engine algorithms could also prominently yield prejudiced results without any context for simple keywords searches such as "Jew." This could serve to propagate the stereotypes further.

Contemporary anti-Semitism had also morphed from a chiefly Christian phenomenon to one that can also come from other sources. With regard to the State of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Lawrence emphasized the fine line between true criticism of Israel's policies on the one hand, and deeper anti-Semitism on the other. Such criticism was legitimate, in his opinion, so long as it was equally raised at other regions of the world with similar conflicts.

Governor Deval Patrick thanked ADL for its hard work calling and responding to hate of all groups and all colors. The event ended with a story from ADL New England Regional Director Derek L. Shulman. During

a visit to Berlin in 2010, Shulman tripped on a cobblestone and found himself looking at a memorial for a person killed at Auschwitz. For Shulman, this was a call to plan an ADL event educating people about anti-Semitism. He called on the audience to use this event as its own "stumbling stone" and begin to act against bigotry and intolerance in all their forms.

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## HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITY



Germany is profoundly aware of the historic responsibility it bears toward the Jewish community and toward the State of Israel as a result of the crimes of the Nazi regime. This responsibility, a cornerstone of German policy, requires remembrance, reconciliation and ongoing vigilance now and in the future.

### Historic Responsibility

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