

Chairman John F. Kerry
Statement for Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs
“Attack on Israelis in Bulgaria”

Every American heart feels for the families of those killed in last week’s vicious and cowardly murder of five innocent Israelis and a local bus driver in Bulgaria. Our prayers and sympathy are with the people of Israel and Bulgaria in these days of immense grief.

As the smoke clears, one thing is clear: This terrorist attack was an act of hate, and it should stiffen the spines of free people everywhere. History is full of painful reminders that acts of hatred, left unchallenged, can grow to envelop whole societies—exposing the ugliest side of humanity. We must stand strong against the cruel sting of bigotry, anywhere and everywhere it rears its head.

Too many don’t realize the global reality of anti-Semitism today. Too many don’t realize that a witches’ brew of old prejudices, new political grievances, and economic troubles not seen since the 1930s have created dangerous new openings for extremism.

The United States is committed to the security of Israel and to that of our Bulgarian partners. In addition to words of condolence and condemnation, America should offer every assistance to Israel and Bulgaria in dealing with the aftermath of this tragedy. I expect we will see—and we must see—a thorough investigation and close cooperation among our three governments to learn more about this deplorable incident and to bring to justice anyone connected to this horrific act.

The fragility of a just society imposes on all of us a moral obligation to be eternally watchful against the forces that could scratch away at it, or tear it down altogether. While these attacks remind us that the fight is far from over, they also strengthen our resolve to stand together for the right of free people everywhere to live their faith in a peaceful world. We cannot rest until the job is done.