



# human rights *first*

THE NEW NAME OF

LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

March 10, 2004

The Honorable Colin L. Powell  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Powell:

We write to express our serious concern about the absence of senior U.S. government representation at the upcoming meeting of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Berlin on antisemitism. There is an alarming rise in antisemitic expression and violence throughout the world, and in Europe in particular. By and large European governments have not taken necessary actions to systematically monitor and report on antisemitic threats and violence or to develop effective measures to combat it.

The U.S. government needs to exert strong leadership to encourage a more active and effective European response. The best opportunity to convey a message of U.S. leadership is through high-level U.S. government participation at the April 28-29 Berlin conference.

Given the urgency of this problem, we were deeply disappointed to learn that the most senior U.S. government official who is scheduled to attend the Berlin conference is the U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE. While we welcome the inclusion of public members on the U.S. delegation, including former New York Mayor Ed Koch, in our view the U.S. delegation to this important conference should be led by a senior government official.

The importance the United States government gives this meeting will be watched closely by other OSCE nations, particularly since Germany and the United States have been its principal promoters. As you know, the German government will be represented by Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer. Other OSCE members can be expected to follow the example of the United States and Germany in determining their level of official participation in Berlin. The presence of a senior U.S. government official is thus likely to set a benchmark for others and strengthen both the level of participation in Berlin and opportunities for meaningful commitments coming out of the conference.

We therefore urge that you lead the U.S. delegation and make opening remarks on behalf of the U.S. government. You and others in the Bush Administration have frequently spoken eloquently about your desire to use the bully pulpit to focus on fundamental human values. The Berlin conference offers an excellent opportunity for you to provide such leadership on this critically important issue.

## Headquarters

333 Seventh Avenue  
13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, N.Y. 10001  
Tel: (212) 845-5200  
Fax: (212) 845-5299

## Washington D.C. Office

100 Maryland Avenue, N.E.  
Suite 500  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
Tel: (202) 547-5692  
Fax: (202) 543-5999

[www.HumanRightsFirst.org](http://www.HumanRightsFirst.org)

## Executive Director

Michael Posner

## Chairman

William D. Zabel

## President

Tom A. Bernstein

## Board of Directors

M. Bernard Aidinoff  
Raymond M. Brown  
Lynda Clarizio  
Craig Cogut  
Mitchell F. Dolin  
Donald Francis Donovan  
A. Whitney Ellsworth  
Kenneth R. Feinberg  
Leslie Gimbel  
R. Scott Greathead  
Louis Henkin  
Robert D. Joffe  
Lewis B. Kaden  
Kerry Kennedy  
Harold Hongju Koh  
Philip A. Lacovara  
Robert Todd Lang  
Jo Backer Laird  
Li Lu  
Barbara A. Schatz  
Steven R. Shapiro  
George Vradenburg  
Sigourney Weaver  
James W. Ziglar

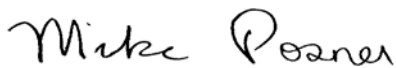
## Chair Emeritus

Marvin E. Frankel (1920-2002)

Your personal participation would also send a powerful signal that the United States expects European governments to take strong, concrete steps to combat antisemitism. It would reinforce the U.S. government's commitment to pursuing this agenda after the Berlin conference as a key element of U.S. foreign policy with every member of the OSCE.

We strongly urge you to strengthen the composition of the U.S. delegation to this OSCE conference next month, preferably by leading the delegation or, in the alternative, by appointing another senior U.S. government official to assume that critical role. Antisemitic violence and other forms of antisemitic discrimination are serious violations of human rights. Your leadership and personal engagement in addressing the current crisis are urgently needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Posner". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael Posner  
Executive Director