



Dr. Michael Blume addressing the
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at the International Center for Law and Religion Studies
Utah, USA, October 3

„Protecting the Right to Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and
Religion. 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of
Human Rights“

***Germany's Growing but Embattled Diversity -
Working as a State Commissioner against
Antisemitism in the State of Baden-Württemberg***

Dear friends,

if I start by stating that it is a special honour to speak at your esteemed conference on Law and Religion Studies, I kindly ask you to take this not as a mere phrase.

As the fourth invitation reached me, my team and I decided that this time I'd better accept it. The first invitation to speak at this conference might have been prompted by a book I had written about the American prophet Joseph Smith and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS). But I had yet to see the the holy sites in Utah, however I could not make it at that time.

The second invitation came as I led a team of our German State of Baden-Württemberg in Iraq, tasked with evacuating 1.100 Yazidi women and children that had suffered from violence by the so-called Islamic State. Our mission was to protect these lives by bringing the persecuted to Germany and with the atrocities continuing every day mattered, so I had to decline the invitation yet again.

And I am proud to say that many of those strong rescued Yazidi women and children, such as the Peace Nobel laureate Nadia Murad, human rights activist Fareeda Abbas or Ardawan Abdi are already raising their voice and advocating for their religious people right up to the United Nations. And I want to thank you for having Scottish MP Brendan O'Hara and for him raising his voice on behalf of the Yazidi minority yesterday at this conference.

Dear friends, the legal recognition of injustice is important to both the survivors and to upholding our democratic and shared values. As a witness of the Genocide against the Yazidids, I testified in three German court cases against members of ISIS. I did not give up to terror and fear in

Iraq and do not plan to do so in Europe.

The third invitation reached my office as I had just been appointed to the new office of State Commissioner against Antisemitism of my State Baden-Württemberg. Having been recommended by the two main Jewish communities and our State Parliament, the Landtag, my team and I took up the task to fight against antisemitism.

Imagine the digital hate by extremists against a Protestant married to a Muslim who had helped Yazidis and had been freshly entrusted by the Jewish communities in combating Antisemitism! Even now, some of you might receive some hate mails just for having me here. So again, I decided to decline the third invitation with a heavy heart.

But the J. Reuben Clark Law School at the Brigham Young University did not give up on me and I want to thank all of you, especially Elizabeth Clarke and Ralf Grünke for giving me a fourth chance. Only after I had reached the beautiful State of Utah on Saturday did I realize that this time, this might become a reality! And now – it is.

What's more, today's October 3rd is a National Holiday in Germany, the day of the reunification of the two separate German states – the Federal Republic of Germany and the so called German Democratic Republic. Two states both founded after the hateful Nazi Regime. My father had to endure imprisonment and torture before my parents managed to escape the oppression of the socialist GDR in the 1970s.

These last decades, the diversity in our Nation has increased tremendously based on religious freedom, the rule of law and of subsequent immigration. Nothing illustrates this diversity more than the fact that my German

co-delegate to this conference Dr. Moon-Suk Heo, is a buddhist nun known in our nation and at this conference by her religious name Hye Yu Sunim. Today, all the world religions are part of Germany and the European Union.

But, alas, my friends, all is not well in our world and not in Europe, either. Those of you who attended the General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints on Sunday might have seen a small group of angry protesters outside, accusing and even cursing the people leaving the Conference Center.

This was not a sign of legitimate critique on teachings to better them or about criticizing individuals – it was about what we call „Dualism“ according to the esteemed Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (1948 – 2020) of the United Kingdom, may his memory be a blessing. In psychological dualism, which is often linked to religious or philosophical dualisms, humanity is divided into „we-groups“ that are deemed good and worthy to have a future and perceived enemies that are seen as „them“, as evil and singled out for destruction.

There have been numerous forms of dualism in human history such as sexism, racism, antiziganism, antimasonism etc.

But as the Jews have been the first religion of the alphabet, with every Thora scroll hand-written to exactly 304.805 alphabetical letters and with every child learning to read and write, antisemitism became the most violent form of dualism. Whereas all other dualists tend to assume that they are better than the attacked groups, antisemites believe Jews to be the most powerful, rich and evil group of super-villains out to destroy all non-Jewish humanity.

Just yesterday, I had been invited during Sukkoth to the

Jewish Community Center in Salt Lake City and we spoke about never giving up the global fight against this form of hate. For me as a German, it was moving to be invited as a friend into this Jewish community. But at the same time, I could not ignore the sad fact that even here in the United States, Jewish institutions have to be protected heavily.

I am grateful for Bett G. Scharffs reminding to all of us about the Holocaust. We are right to celebrate 75 years of the Universal Declaration of Human rights. However, our celebration also coincides with the 100th anniversary of the ardent antisemite Adolf Hitler's first surge for power and his first attempt to overthrow of Germany's first democracy in 1923. We all know that he was not stopped and became a murderous dictator only 10 years later.

In this destruction of democratic institutions media moguls such as Alfred Hugenberg participated in spreading disinformation and antisemitic conspiracy myths. And sadly, these last weeks, Elon Musk accused the US-american Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Jewish Soros-family via his social media platform „X“, while attacking our German democracy and supporting an extremist party in the upcoming elections.

I managed to defeat Twitter/X in a Frankfurt court trial and I plan to visit the ADL tomorrow in Washington to support them in their legal struggle. I firmly believe as a German, as a Christian, and as a democrat that civilization is lost when we are giving up the Rule of Law.

But I do see throughout Europe that it is especially up to the conservative and Christian parties not to give in to hateful dualism and not to give up the Rule of Law. If political conservatives and religious people are turning their backs on sciences and the separation of secular powers, our democracies are doomed.

Therefore, I want to end my presentation with quoting the esteemed Senator of Utah, Mitt Romney (GOP), who showed that you can be a deeply religious conservative while honoring our shared values of scripture, of dignity and justice.

Mitt Romney tweeted on May 2023 on „X“:

„Autocracy always ends badly: Russia brutalizes its neighbor, China commits genocide on its minorities, Iran executes hundreds and imprisons 20.000 political opponents. Thank God for our Constitution.“

Therefore, I want to thank all of you for your attention and our shared struggle against all kinds of Dualism and for the Rule of Law.