



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1036-1999, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1036

Resolution denouncing the inhumane desecration of the Weissensee Jewish Cemetery in Berlin, Germany and advocating zero tolerance for criminals who violate cemeteries.

By Council Members Fisher, Berman, Dear, DiBrienza, Eisland, Espada, Freed, Koslowitz, Lopez, Marshall, Nelson, O'Donovan, Perkins, Reed and Abel; also Council Members Michels, Povman, Provenzano and Rivera.

Whereas, In early October of this year, in what police believe was a neo-Nazi attack, more than one hundred headstones were smashed, knocked over, or otherwise desecrated in northeastern Berlin's Weissensee Jewish Cemetery, the largest and most devastating cemetery desecration in many years; and

Whereas, The Weissensee Jewish Cemetery opened in 1880, contains about 115,000 graves, and includes memorials to the more than 12,000 German Jews killed fighting for their country in World War I and the six million European Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II; and

Whereas, Swastikas were posted on a monument dedicated to the Jews deported by the Nazis from Berlin and also on a monument dedicated to the memory of playwright Berthold Brecht in front of the Berliner Ensemble Theater; and

Whereas, Although German officials have promised zero tolerance for perpetrators of such heinous acts, anti-semitic crimes have been on the rise since Germany was reunified, including an incident last year in Berlin, when the grave of Heinz Galinsky, a Jewish leader who survived Auschwitz, was blown up at the Charlottenburg cemetery; and

Whereas, Recently, there has been an influx of Russian Jews to Germany, helping to increase the country's Jewish population to almost 100,000, with about 20,000 Jews in Berlin, while at the same time, the eastern part of the country is experiencing an increase in the influence of far-right political groups, such as Deutsche Volksunion, which received enough voter support to qualify for parliamentary representation in two states surrounding Berlin; and

Whereas, Andreas Nachama, the chairman of the Berlin Jewish community condemned the desecration of the graves as "horrific acts carried out by inhumane creatures," and stated that, "It is intolerable that something like this happens in Berlin;" now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York denounces the inhumane desecration of the Weissensee Jewish Cemetery and advocates zero tolerance for criminals who violate cemeteries.

Adopted.

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