



*The American Jewish Committee Berlin Office \* Lawrence & Lee Ramer Institute for German-Jewish Relations  
Leipziger Platz 15 \* 10117 Berlin \* Tel.: +49 (030) 22 65 94-0 \* Fax: +49 (030) 22 65 94-14  
www.ajc.org*

**WELCOMING REMARKS – DEIDRE BERGER  
A CALL TO ACTION PRESS CONFERENCE**

January 20, 2010

Welcome to the Berlin office of the American Jewish Committee/ Ramer Institute on German-Jewish Relations. For decades, the AJC has partnered with German organizations to advance German-Jewish relations and the transatlantic agenda. When Holocaust memory threatens to fade, AJC brings together partners to take action on remembrance.

Today, one week before Holocaust commemoration day, we would like to draw attention to a neglected aspect of the Holocaust. While Auschwitz is the ultimate metaphor of industrialized death, the majority of Holocaust victims were shot by German death squads in Eastern Europe.

Due to the tireless work this past decade of Father Patrick Desbois and the Paris-based Yahad in Unum, we have become aware of the fact that these killing fields have remained largely untouched. Most victims did not receive a burial, the mass graves were rarely sealed, and if there are memorial plaques, few mention the Jewish victims.

65 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, it is time to address the unfathomable legacy of the German shooting units, who shot millions of Jews, as well as murdering Romas, Soviet communists and other targets of the Nazi regime. It is time to seal the graves. It is time to commemorate the victims. It is time to rescue wherever possible the histories and memories of those whose lives were brutally extinguished.

Yesterday, one of the most eloquent of Holocaust survivors, the German-American journalist Ernst Cramer, died at the age of 96. The death of this remarkable personality, was a poignant reminder of the dwindling number of survivors and witnesses to the genocidal policies of the Nazis.

Time has nearly run out to finish the unfinished business of the Holocaust. For this reason, AJC has initiated a coalition of organizations to support and further the remarkable work of Father Desbois, who has now documented approximately 1000 Holocaust gravesites. With each passing day, there are fewer survivors and witnesses who can identify sites that have been largely forgotten and tell the stories of the murder of much of European Jewry.

This matter is so urgent that a coalition from Washington, Paris, Brussels, Prague, Moscow, Kiev and Berlin has come together in record time to address the sealing and memorializing of the mass

gravesites. I would like to introduce my colleague Rabbi Andrew Baker, the Representative on Fighting Antisemitism to the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, to explain the goals of the initiative.