

BUSINESS

Soros' Open Society Foundations commit \$30M to groups fighting antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate



Alex Soros, on behalf of his father George Soros, stands in the East Room of the White House, Jan. 4, 2025, in Washington. (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta, File) [License this photo](#)



BY [JAMES POLLARD](#)

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NEW YORK (AP) — Open Society Foundations, the family [philanthropy founded by hedge fund billionaire George Soros](#), is putting \$30 million toward groups fighting antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate over the next three years.

The [major human rights funder](#) pledged Wednesday to strengthen interfaith partnerships and protect those facing heightened threats in response to the rising levels of [hate against both Jewish and Muslim communities](#), coinciding with the [Israel-Hamas war](#) and the [current fragile ceasefire](#).

Last year saw the highest level of deadly violence against Jews worldwide in over three decades, according to an [annual study released last month](#) by Tel Aviv University, including the [December shooting at a Hanukkah celebration](#) in Australia. Meanwhile, [anti-Muslim rhetoric has intensified](#) against the backdrop of the Iran war, with one congressional Republican saying Muslims “[don’t belong in American society](#).”

“The deep injustices occurring in the Middle East are fueling indiscriminate prejudice, dehumanization, and violence directed against both Muslims and Jews,” Open Society Foundations President Binaifer Nowrojee said in a statement. “Entire communities cannot be targeted simply because of their religion. Bigotry and intolerance in any form must be called out and confronted.”

The announcement marks the foundations’ most visible campaign since last fall’s reports that the U.S. [Department of Justice was considering possible charges](#) against Open Society Foundations. President Donald Trump specifically named Soros as he [ordered the FBI to crack down](#) on what he called “left-wing terrorism” — an accusation that OSF has denied in statements emphasizing their mission to strengthen democracy.

Alex Soros, who [took over leadership of his father’s foundations](#) in late 2022, noted that “discrimination and hate” aren’t abstract concepts for him as the son of a Holocaust survivor and husband to a Muslim American. The foundation added that George Soros, who holds significant influence as a liberal megadonor with vast financial investments and philanthropic ties, is frequently targeted by conservative conspiracy theories that twist those powerful connections into antisemitic tropes about behind-the-scenes puppet masters.

“At a moment like this we need to stand together and act,” Alex Soros said in a pretaped video posted on social media. “This investment is about keeping people safe and pushing back against hate.”

The commitment is aimed broadly at expanding education on forms of discrimination, supporting cross-community leaders who build trust and safeguarding free speech rights to lawful expression. The foundations have already selected some grantees and are inviting other nonprofits to apply for funding. Recipients include the Jewish Social Justice

Roundtable, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and the Nexus Project. Shoulder to Shoulder, a multifaith alliance that prepares religious leaders to address anti-Muslim discrimination, is among those leading the work on Islamophobia.

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Amy Spitalnick, the CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, welcomed the strategy to tackle both matters together. The grant will allow JCPA to build upon its solidarity work with Muslim and Arab American communities, Spitalnick said, which have deepened since the start of the Israel-Hamas war. She pointed to a fellowship and a Capitol Hill discussion on Jewish-Muslim solidarity that were both launched with the Muslim Public Affairs Council.

She emphasized that hate is interconnected. The normalization of Islamophobia, racism and broader anti-democratic extremism creates the conditions for antisemitism to flourish, she said.

"We need funders and others to recognize that treating any of these issues in silos doesn't get at the root cause, doesn't get at the broader resiliency we need right now," Spitalnick said. "The fact that Jewish safety requires Muslim safety, that Muslim safety requires Jewish safety."

The Soros' announcement did not say how the foundations will define antisemitism — a point of contention on college campuses and in state legislatures where debates have raged over whether criticism of Israel amounts to hatred of Jewish people. The shortlist of Open Society grantees suggests a more nuanced definition than the Anti-Defamation League, which [releases an annual audit of antisemitic incidents](#) in the United States. The ADL holds that vilifying Zionism, or the movement to establish and maintain a Jewish state in Israel, is a form of antisemitism.

In contrast, the Nexus Project promotes definitions of antisemitism that do not include opposition to the Israeli state's policies. Similarly, in opposition to a National Education

Association resolution prohibiting the use of the ADL's educational resources, Spitalnick emphasized that "one does not need to align with the ADL on every issue."

Andrés Spokoiny, the president and CEO of the Jewish Funders Network, estimated that the philanthropic sector has dedicated hundreds of thousands of dollars to countering antisemitism — regardless of its definition. Other high-profile efforts include the \$25 million "Stand Up to Jewish Hate" ad campaign [launched by New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft](#) in March 2023 through his Foundation to Combat Antisemitism.

But the persistence of antisemitism has left some members of Spokoiny's group questioning their approaches.

"There's a lot of perplexity around what actually works," he said. "So many funders are very frustrated."

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