



# BROOME COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Frederick J. Akshar II

Undersheriff Sammy L. Davis

155 Lt. Van Winkle Drive, Binghamton, NY 13905

**For Immediate Release:**

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## **BROOME COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PRESS RELEASE**

### **Broome Sheriff, Law Enforcement and Community Leaders Reaffirm Support and Commitment to the Safety of the Jewish Community Ahead of Hanukkah Holiday**

(TOWN OF DICKINSON) Broome County Sheriff Fred Akshar joined leaders from the local Jewish Community, local law enforcement and representatives from the federal, state and local government to publicly reaffirm the community's commitment to the safety and security of Jewish families and families of every faith as they celebrate the holiday season.

The message of solidarity and support comes ahead of the Hanukkah Holiday beginning December 7, as antisemitic rhetoric continues to be on the rise following the October 7 Hamas terrorist attacks. The October attacks took place during the prior Jewish holidays of Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah and nearly 50 years after the surprise attack that sparked the Yom Kippur war in Israel.

“We are in a dark moment in this country, but I believe in this community, we are a bright light,” said Sheriff Fred Akshar. “While our Southern Tier community is not immune the antisemitism on the rise across our nation, we stand in solidarity with our Jewish friends. As Sheriff of this county, it is incredibly important for me to reassure all our friends in the Jewish community know that from a law enforcement perspective, we are doing everything possible to ensure that they are safe so that they can enjoy their holiday just like every other Broome County family plans on doing.”

Joining the Sheriff for the public message of support and solidarity were Rabbi Levi Slonim of the Rohr Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life at Binghamton University, Dr. Stephen Malkin, Director of Security for Temple Israel's Safety and Security Committee and Chairman of the Security Committee for the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, Sheryl Brummer, Director of the Jewish Community Center, Rabbi Micah Friedman of Temple Israel in Vestal, Assemblyman Joe Angelino, former Congressman Lee Zeldin, Broome County District Attorney-Elect Paul Battisti, Vestal Police Chief Stace Kitner, representatives for Congressman Marc Molinaro and Broome County Executive Jason Garnar as well as Jewish students from Binghamton University.

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“The message that hatred will not be tolerated and that you want our Jewish families and students to be as comfortable as possible to express our religion and celebrate the holiday means a tremendous amount to our community,” said Rabbi Levi Slonim. “A little light dispels much darkness. We have to always remember that, and there is no better story to remind us of that message than the story of Hanukkah.”

“We are fortunate to live in a diverse community that shows kindness, respect, tolerance for all faiths,” said Dr. Stephen Malkin. “During the Hanukkah celebration, the Menorah is placed in the window to share the light with the world. The wick of the Menorah candle draws its strength from the base to feed the flame. May we be that wick that draws kindness, respect and hope from that base that feeds the flame of peace that brings light to the world and grows brighter with every night.”

“I want all of the Jewish students at Binghamton University, and every college campus across the state and country, to know that there are many of us who have your back,” said former Congressman Lee Zeldin. “We are living in a time when Jewish students in America are being harassed, both verbally and physically, and Jewish professors are quitting jobs they loved, because they no longer feel welcome. What makes matters worse is the large number of college presidents and other administration officials who refuse to lead with moral clarity. As we head into Hanukkah and the holiday season, we must recommit to do everything in our power to keep the members of the Jewish community safe, both on our streets and on our college campuses.”

“It is a special country, a special state, a special county and a special city that we live in where we have our sheriff, we have elected officials, really everyone here coming together to make a proactive statement that we are going to protect our Jewish students and not allow them to be intimidated, attacked or harassed like so many students have been across the country,” said Saul Hakim, Binghamton University student and president of the BU Zionist Organization. “I wear my star proudly because I know we have a support system here to protect us. I know there are people here who have my back. I hope every Jewish student takes this message and feels the same comfort that I do.”

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