



National Sheriffs' Association Joins Senior International Police Leaders at Auschwitz for Landmark Commemoration and Democratic Policing Initiative

April 7, 2026 – (Alexandria, VA) The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) is proud to join more than 130 senior law enforcement leaders from across the world in Poland as part of the Not On Our Watch: Operationalizing Never Again initiative, participating in the International March of the Living. This initiative is being coordinated under the Rutgers Miller Center on Policing and Community Resilience in partnership with the University of Virginia Center for Public Safety and Justice. The global delegation follows the signing of a historic international policing accord in Berlin with the German Police Union and the Federation of European Police Unions and brings together leading police organizations, unions, and institutions committed to translating the lessons of the Holocaust into modern operational responsibility.

Following the March of the Living, the International Police Delegation will be recognized during the official candle-lighting ceremony at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Leading global police associations, representing millions of officers, have been invited to light a commemorative candle, symbolizing a shared commitment to confront hatred, prevent violence, and uphold democratic values.

The National Sheriffs' Association is committed to ensuring that the lessons of history are not only remembered, but operationalized in modern policing. As elected leaders responsible for protecting communities across the United States, sheriffs understand the critical role law enforcement plays in preventing extremism, safeguarding communities, and upholding democratic values. NSA's commitment through this initiative reinforces its dedication to strengthening leadership, accountability, and international cooperation in the face of evolving threats.

“I want to take a moment to recognize the significance of this occasion, not only as a commemoration of history, but as a call to action for those of us entrusted with protecting our communities. This initiative challenges law enforcement leaders to confront threats early, strengthen coordination across borders, and lead with integrity in the face of rising extremism. Our role is not only to respond to violence, but to prevent it and to ensure that the values we are sworn to uphold are protected every day.” Justin Smith, NSA Executive Director & CEO.

Participants are engaging in direct dialogue with Holocaust survivors, victims, and those impacted by modern acts of extremist violence to reinforce the real-world consequences of hatred and inaction, while underscoring the critical importance of leadership, accountability, and early intervention in preventing violence before it escalates.

The Not On Our Watch initiative calls on law enforcement leaders to strengthen prevention, coordination, and public trust as democracies face rising threats from extremism, polarization, disinformation, and violence targeting vulnerable and religious communities. Through this effort, law enforcement is reaffirming its commitment to proactive leadership, community protection, and the defense of the democratic institutions that define and sustain our society.

About the National Sheriffs' Association

The National Sheriffs' Association is one of the largest associations of law enforcement professionals in the U.S., representing more than 3,000 elected Sheriffs across the nation, and with a total membership of approximately 10,000. NSA is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising the level of professionalism among sheriffs, their deputies, and others in the field of law enforcement, public safety, and criminal justice. Throughout its eighty-five-year history, NSA has also served as an information resource for all law enforcement, as well as state governments and the federal government.

About Not On Our Watch

Operationalizing Never Again is a global executive-level initiative that translates the lessons of democratic breakdown into practical, modern policing doctrine. The program convenes senior law enforcement leaders across borders to strengthen democratic resilience, reinforce institutional accountability, and protect vulnerable communities through applied training and sustained international collaboration.

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