

DISTRICT ATTORNEY INVESTIGATING ANTI-SEMITIC INCIDENTS DURING RELIGIOUS ONLINE VIDEO SERVICES

April 20, 2020 -- Westchester County District Attorney Anthony A. Scarpino, Jr. announced an investigation into recent anti-Semitic “zoom-bombing” of Jewish religious services in Westchester, which were being video streamed in an effort to bring people together while following social distancing directives.

The incidents took place via a Jewish center video stream Friday, April 3, 2020, and a second incident the following week from another congregation. In both cases, congregation leadership had sent email invitations for anyone to join the interactive video stream. In both incidents, an unknown person or persons logged into the Zoom-based video conference and interrupted the services with anti-Semitic acts, including posting swastikas and other offensive material for all participants to see.

The DA’s Office is working with local police in Pelham Manor and Scarsdale to identify who is responsible. We have issued subpoenas and are reviewing a recording and other materials of the events. Together, our Cybercrime Bureau is working hard to trace the digital footprint of the perpetrators and our Hate Crime Unit is looking into the specific aspects of the incidents and what criminal charges might apply.

“Everyone during the COVID19 crisis is trying to bring people together using technology but there will always be bad actors who find ways to exploit it. These anti-Semitic attacks are hateful and hurtful. My office is working with local police and federal authorities to find out who may have done this and whether they will be charged with a crime. As always, we stand with our friends in Westchester of every faith to protect their freedom to worship uninterrupted whether in person or online. We continue to work with our community partners to stop hate in Westchester.”

These acts follow continuing investigations into hateful emails sent to residents and a business owner in New Rochelle in February after the COVID19 outbreak began.

At this time, we would like to remind everyone using video conferencing software to always record the video stream to have a digital record of any issues that may take place. If your organization has been similarly affected please report it to your local police or the District Attorney’s Office.

Meanwhile, the ADL, working with the Zoom platform experts, has published best practices in using Zoom video conferencing software. Find more information [here](#).

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Stay Healthy!

Helen

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