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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS PRESS GAGGLE ON RECENT EVENTS
AFFECTING THE JEWISH COMMUNITY**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: So, everybody, I want to say I am joined by leaders of the Borough Park community. Councilman Kalman Yeger, thank you, and all the other leaders of the community who are here. There was a horrible act of hate committed last night in the Union Temple here in Brooklyn. It's deeply disturbing to all New Yorkers. It's something we don't accept here in this city. But it is particularly painful for members of the Jewish community who feel very vulnerable right now, who feel under attack. We just saw last week the worst attack on any Jewish community in the history of the United States. People in this city, the city that has the largest Jewish population of any city on the Earth, feel the pain of what people in Pittsburgh went through. Now to see an act of hate inside a Temple, inside a house of worship here in New York City is deeply, deeply disturbing.

I know that Chief Dermot Shea is giving a briefing as we speak at One Police Plaza that this is being treated as a hate crime – that the perpetrator will be found and will suffer the consequences of this action. But most importantly, I want all New Yorkers to know and all the members of the Jewish community in this city to know we will protect you. We have the finest police force in the United States, and in the whole world, focused on making sure that in this painful moment the Jewish community is secure. And all of us are committed to the protection of the community.

So it is a painful day, but I know that all Jewish New Yorkers will know that there's solidarity in this city on behalf of the Jewish community and that the City government and our police force will be there to protect the community as we go forward.

Question: Mayor – can I ask you? You, after terror attacks in the City, you've talked about the resilience of New Yorkers, right, the importance of continuing to go about our days. Last night at Union Temple, an event that was scheduled to take place there was cancelled out of security concerns. Was that the right decision and does that – what kind of message does that send to the rest of the city about sort of how we should behave when we see hatred like this?

Mayor: I would certainly say – first of all, I would defer to Chief Shea on the question of what the particular dynamics of that decision were, because my understanding is that in effect because an active crime scene. And there was a lot of concern to make that evidence was protected, and

also in a moment where something had just been discovered – concerned to make sure there were no other immediate ramifications or dangers. So I would say in that unusual situation, caution was called for. I would say you're right. That in general our response to any terror act, any threat is to keep going and showing we will not be intimidated. But you know, there are obviously some exceptions. From what I've heard about last night I think it was a valid exception.

Question: Most disturbing to the fact, as you point out, that it was inside –

Mayor: Inside, right. Look, houses of worship in this city are often very open to allow their congregants to come and practice their religion, and that is honored day-in and day-out. People don't do horrible acts like this. This is really exceptional and rare, but deeply troubling. Again, there will be real consequences for the perpetrator. But it's also important to say we're not going to change who we are. The free practice of religions must be respected. This is why when I first heard the suggestion that somehow synagogues should all have to have armed guards, I said – no, that's not America. Our synagogues should be protected by all of us and not have to have armed guards. We shouldn't have to close off our houses of worships – they are supposed to be open places. So this is a very upsetting act, even though it's very rare, it's very upsetting. I think the best answer to it is to show that the perpetrator will be caught and there'll be consequences and we take hate crime seriously, and we're going to stand in solidarity with this community.

Question: Mr Mayor, there's been a rise in antisemitism over the past few years –

Mayor: Yes, there has been.

Question: – over 90 percent. What is being done on a government level to ensure that these – not only that people feel secure, but also that these acts don't continue and also what should be done on a leadership level, if it's local leaders and if it's national leaders, about speaking out about this and trying to tone down the rhetoric?

Mayor: Yeah. Excellent question, so first on the local level – one of things I think New Yorkers should be really proud of is we send a message of mutual respect, always. Whether it's me as Mayor, the Police Commissioner, any of the other leaders, elected officials – the constant message when any community is under attack is we respect all communities, we all have to stand together. When a mosque is under attack, a church, a synagogue – it's the same exact response. That is part of how we send a message that we won't except hate, that we are going to do something all of us together to address it. If that were done everywhere, all the time, we would have a very different reality. If that were done all over the world, anytime a Jewish community came under attack, you wouldn't see so many attacks. But unfortunately we all know, in many parts of the world, when the Jewish community comes under attack, the authorities don't speak out and don't show that solidarity and respect for the community.

So one of the things I think we're doing right here is never allow any attack to go unanswered, make sure there are consequences, always show that solidarity, we're going to keep to doing that. The message matters, the words matter. On the national level, we clearly need change. The fact is we're not seeing a bipartisan respect – excuse me, a bipartisan response to this atmosphere of hate. It's un-American to see this amount of hatred directed towards the Jewish community or

any other community. This should be something where you see equal outrage from both parties and people across the ideological spectrum. We are not seeing that. We're not seeing that, I believe, because unfortunately the president has set the tone that others in his party feel unwilling to challenge, it must be challenged, and I do believe there's a lot of Republicans of conscience who know better. They have to start speaking up. Ultimately, we have to make a change in the coming years because this atmosphere of hate will drive us into the ground. Look, people are being turned – the American people, by these voices of hate directed against Jews, directed against immigrants, directed against women, directed against Muslims – where does this end? So it is a leadership question and the current leadership is not addressing it, but in fact fomenting an atmosphere of hate.

Question: What would you say to those that say that it's also antisemitism on the left which is not being challenged?

Mayor: There is antisemitism all over the world, and there's antisemitism in this country, and I'm sure it is across the political spectrum. It's unacceptable on the left – it's unacceptable on the right. I think it is also right to say there are people who have differences on policy matters who are not anti-Semitic. They may disagree on a different policy matter – they may disagree with the government of Israel on something, that's not antisemitism. But anyone who speaks against the Jewish people, anyone who does not believe in protecting the Jewish people as part of the democratic society – that's when you cross over into antisemitism. It's unacceptable wherever we find it on the ideological spectrum.

Thank you, everyone.