

# I AM YOUR PROTECTOR

**THANK YOU FOR BECOMING A PROTECTOR!**  
**I AM YOUR PROTECTOR IS SO EXCITED TO HAVE YOU INVOLVED.**

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## What is the I Am Your Protector **Toolkit**

The I Am Your Protector (IAYP) toolkit was created to help individuals and communities stand up for each other, and grow the community of people who across nationalities, religion, ethnicity, gender, have each other's back.

Anyone, anywhere can be a #Protector, and stand up for the "other". Faith communities, college campuses, community centers, and advocacy organizations can engage in #IAmYourProtector from disseminating this toolkit to organizing public events or helping to amplify our protector messages in the media and on social media.

#IAmYourProtector needs you. You are the most important part of growing this community and movement. The team of I Am Your Protector and allies have put together this toolkit to provide you all of the resources you need to get started, including:

- How misperception and hatred is Build and can be deconstructed
- The I Am Your Protector Model
- I Am Your Protector Messaging
- Ideas to Get Involved
- How To Be a Protector as an individual
- How To Be a Protector as a community
- Social Media Tips
- Sample Outreach Email
- Press Release Template
- Examples of IAYP Public Campaigns and Events

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# How hatred is **Built** and can be **Deconstructed**

A common denominator of wars, conflicts and genocides is that hatred, over time, became legitimate and acceptable. Cumulatively, when a group is depicted as a monolithic bloc and perceived as representing a threat, hateful attitudes and actions against this group grows.

Whether the Second World War, the Balkan war or the Rwandan genocide or any other conflict, the narratives used to mobilize and galvanize masses was that they were protecting themselves from an enemy. Hitler did not just implore people to kill various minority groups; instead he warned that they were a threat to the Aryan race and thus must be destroyed to prevent their own loss. The concept of "enemy" is a constructed one, thus it can also be deconstructed. The root of a hateful narrative is really about defending and protecting, and so it is necessary to deconstruct the threat and fear that the narrative is based on.

Since the root cause of indiscriminate hatred is built on the depiction of a group as being a monolithic bloc that represents a threat, a powerful element to trigger transformation is to expose people to stories of their perceived "enemy" who protected their identity group. This emotional and cognitive dissonance triggers a response and makes it very hard to depict a whole group as a monolithic bloc who represent a threat.

Stunning testimonies by many people who held hateful views saw their views change and became engaged in constructive actions after they have been protected by someone from the perceived "enemy" group.

In times and places where people spoke up and stood up for the "other", the effects were that hatred, discrimination and persecution were halted, for example during the Second World war in Denmark, Morocco and Albania.

Today we see many examples of individuals who stand up for the other across lines of perceived divide or conflict. Muslims making a human shield to protect Christians in Pakistan, Jews in London who guard a mosque to protect the Muslims worshippers from Islamophobic acts, Muslims who created a human chain around a synagogue to protect Jewish worshippers in Copenhagen. A Syrian refugee in the Netherlands who jumped in the freezing water of a canal to rescue a man drowning. Exposure to those testimonies have demonstrated to trigger change in the way people perceive the "other" they used to think of as a threat or an enemy.

Every day we are bombarded by information, images that create narratives. The human brain has the amazing ability to reshape reality based on what information it concentrates on and what information it excludes. One of the most transformative acts is to expose people to stories of their perceived « enemies » as Protectors. Learning about the « other » as a protector of their identity group makes it hard to hate indiscriminately, and makes it no longer

possible to perceive and depict a community as a monolithic block. Since hatred is emotional, the response to hatred also has to engage the heart, since facts alone are not compelling.

Both historical record and our contemporaneous examples that surround us have amazing stories to tell, hiding in plain sight. The power of those stories is to change the way people perceive the "other" often portrayed as a threat or the enemy. We hear about stories that lead to suspicion, fear, hatred. We can change that by bringing to light the numerous stories of Protectors breaking this idea of a groups being a monolithic bloc and a threat and share the tools to speak up and stand up for each other.

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## The IAYP Model

I Am Your Protector is a community of people who speak up and stand up for each other, in particular across lines of perceived divide, deconstructing misperception.

The Mission of I Am Your Protector is to:

- **Deconstruct the root cause of misperception and hate** challenging the way people perceive the "other" they used to think of as the "other", a threat or an enemy. A high number of people holding prejudiced views towards specific communities, changed after being protected by their perceived enemy whether in conflict zones or among people with hateful views and behaviors.
- **Develop and continuously create tools for individuals and communities to be each other's protectors.** When people rise against indiscriminate hatred and hurtful behaviors it becomes a force that can halt hate. Even in time of war for example during the Balkan war, the village of Baljvine in Bosnia, which was half-Muslim, half-Serbian (main communities at war) didn't have casualties, because they actively protected each other.

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# Why is it crucial to be a **Protector**

## **Silence is harmful because:**

1. It leaves the victim vulnerable and alone, which deeply affects the victims during and after the harassment/attack. The silence of the surrounding people is often more hurtful and traumatizing than the act of hatred itself.

2. It gives the powerful message to the perpetrator that hateful behavior is acceptable and accepted and opens the way for more. Haters if not halted usually, continue to hurt more people and/or escalate to more violent forms of hatred.

3. It gives a strong message to the bystanders that the act of hate is acceptable, thus opening the way for bystanders to feel emboldened to become harassers themselves. But, if a bystander rises up, it sends a strong message to the other bystanders that it is not acceptable, encouraging others to be Up standers. When one bystander speaks up, it encourages others to join in!

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# How you can get **Involved**

**1. Join the I Am Your Protector team**

**2. Start an I Am Your Protector chapter in your city**

**3. Land your expertise, if you are in PR, a journalist, an architect, a teacher, a scholar, an influencer, a social media expert, a lawyer or a community leader...**

**4 Join an #IAmYourProtector Task Force to:**

- Disseminate the toolkit to faith communities, college campuses, community centers, advocacy organizations, and more.
- Help communities to organize events.
- Create content about #IAmYourProtector that can be shared on social media by sharing posts, writing a blog, getting journalists to write news stories.
- Curate a tailored exhibit of #IAmYourProtector featuring Protectors from your community
- Organize or be part of a planning committee for an event to spread awareness about Protectors or large scale public event to draw media attention and help change the narrative.

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# Become a Protector

No one is born hateful, we are thought to hate, hatred can be deconstructed and each one of us has the power to do it. We have the power to be each other's protectors, bring safety, create a community where we have each other's back.

## Assess the situation :

1. Before you decide how to react, measure the threat. Should you not intervene, call for help or can you speak up?
2. Assess if the perpetrator has mental illness, or if they are intoxicated, if that is the case probably the best thing to do is to not engage the perpetrator, and just surround the victim.
3. If you decide to intervene, do not use insults or humiliating language (such as you are stupid, curse words...) that is counter to your effort and will only inflame an already volatile situation.

## If you intervene as an individual -in real life and on line:

1. Be the first one to speak up. Few are the one ones who initiate a reaction but then more follow; so be the one who leads more to stand up. The Asch social experiments on conformity suggest that most often the first person aiding the victim, draws support from other bystanders, rallying more support from bystanders.
2. Reach out and get closer to the victim talking about a random subject, which will break the dynamic between the offender and the victim, sending a strong message of support to the victim and to the offender deescalating the situation without engaging directly with the offender.
3. If you feel you can start a conversation with the person who said the hateful thing, engage in a non confrontational way, for example: "I can see you feel hurt and threatened... I understand you feel... with what we see in the news the feeling can be, anger, fear... but this is not a threat..."

The most counter productive thing to do is to aggress, humiliate, insult the offender, who will have her/his rage go up and won't deescalate in the moment and won't contribute to melting their hateful feelings in general.

You can share stories of the victims group who protected the perpetrator group, for example if the victim is Muslim and the perpetrator is white, share stories of Muslims who protected white people such as Muslim communities bringing water to Flint.

4. Rally support from peers, witnesses, bystanders to speak up, stand up and take action, whether it is to join in to surround the victim, call for help, call the police...  
Social science experiment shows that when we call for a general ask such as "come help" people rarely react or they take time, if we ask specific things to specific people, the reaction tend to be very effective such as "you in the red t shirt, call 911"
5. Document the hateful act for reporting (if you can take a picture...)

6. Offer to walk the target of hate to a safe space or until joined by someone he/she knows.
7. Call the police if needed
8. Report the hateful act first to your local police and to the Southern Poverty Law Center (<https://www.splcenter.org/repothate>)
9. Share around you in your different networks and on social media how people can be Protectors and share stories that deconstruct hatred, for examples, posters of Protectors, the video, or articles linked to that.
10. Smile to people from minority communities crossing your way, they get a lot of negative attention, finding warmth in you will be invaluable.
11. Share with us what was said and done and what was the outcome so our community can learn best practice, gain ideas, learn what didn't work. If we get the testimony a picture and a source we can turn the protector's action in a posters to inspire others.

**If you intervene as a collectivity -as a community, a place of worship, a university... :**

1. Reach out, send message of support to the community victim of the hateful act that you are there if they need anything and will be looking out for them; for example if you are a store owner next to a mosque you can reach out and say you are there as an ally.
2. Offer to help the targeted community by asking them what they need.
3. Offer to do a human chain around the community threatened for example
4. Invite the group who was targeted to be hosted in your space that might be safer or just as a way of welcoming them and make them feel surrounded.
5. Organize to walk members of communities who are targeted to university, school, work, shops...
6. Encourage peers, friends, family, and colleagues to speak up and stand up when they witness an act of hatred, share best practices and the toolbox that might give them ideas.
7. Connect with other communities, schools, religious communities, NGO, student unions in your area to explore ways to join as a broader community to have each other's back.
8. Share with your different networks and on social media how people can be Protectors and share stories that deconstruct hatred, for examples, posters of Protectors, videos, or articles linked to that.
9. Bring I Am Your Protector to your community, university campus, religious community; an IAYP exhibition or create an event and I Am Your Protector will provide you all the material and content. (see below)
10. If you witness and attack call for help, the police 911
11. Document the hateful act for reporting (take a picture if you can)
12. Report the hateful act first to your local police and to the Southern Poverty Law Center (<https://www.splcenter.org/repothate>)
13. Share with us what was said and done and what was the outcome so our community can learn best practice, gain ideas or learn what didn't work. If we get the testimony a picture and a source we can turn the protector's action in a posters to inspire others

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## Social Media Tips

Social media is a good tool for amplifying #Protector stories. It is also a great way to celebrate Protectors in your own community and history. Remember to use the hashtag #IAmYourProtector on social media when talking about your events and actions.

We want to hear your story. Find us on Facebook or Twitter and we will retweet or share your messages. Please refer to our Social Media Toolkit for more tips and ideas for social media.

Some sample messages include:

- Twitter: "Syrian refugee jumps in river to save a Dutch man drowning [#IAmYourProtector](#)"
- Facebook: "By speaking up and standing up for each other, we can create a new reality " [www.IAmYourProtector.org](http://www.IAmYourProtector.org)"

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## The IAYP Messaging

You can use these messages when talking to communities, individuals, or volunteers:

- #IAmYourProtector is a community of people who speak up and stand up for each other in particular across lines of perceived divides.
- Bystanders' actions make a critical difference. Each one of us can think ahead about what we can do if/when we witness hate.
- No one is born hateful, we are thought to hate, hatred can be deconstructed and each one of us has the power to contribute to it, to be each other's protectors, and create a community where we have each other's back.
- In times and places where people spoke up and stood up for the other, the effects were that hatred, discrimination and persecution could event be halted, for example in Baljvine or during the Second World war in Denmark, Morocco and Albania.

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# Sample Email

Dear ,

I Am Your Protector (IAYP) is a community of people who speak up and stand up for each other in particular across lines of perceived divide.

The organization works to deconstruct hate and share tools for individuals and communities to be each other's protectors.

IAYP currently is working to help communities organize events and programs to counter the rise of hatred in their communities, and we have a toolkit that includes everything needed to bring #IAmYourProtector to your community.

Some ideas include:

1. Public exhibition of I Am Your Protector posters showcasing stories of protectors.
2. Event honoring protectors, showcasing protectors in the community or throughout history who have stood up to protect the other.
3. Invisible screen event featuring stories of protectors and playing with the concept of inviting people to see things differently.
4. Pop-up museum as a creative and outside the box way to use the stories and posters of protectors to attract visibility and media coverage.

Below is the video of an I Am Your Protector's campaign in New York with its screen on which the images were invisible unless seen through special glasses, inviting people to "see things differently," exposing stories of Protectors that challenge misperception of the "other" often depicted as an enemy. <https://youtu.be/eEX4B9hv7HE>

The website is [www.iamyourprotector.org](http://www.iamyourprotector.org)

Warmest,

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# Large scale Public Events Ideas

Each of the events listed below can be carried out with a very small budget, yet will be highly visible. (see below some past events that can give more ideas)

## Invisible Screen

The “invisible screen” tells the stories of different protectors, using a screen on which the images were invisible unless seen through special glasses, inviting people to “see things differently,” exposing stories of Protectors that challenge misperception of the “other” often depicted as an enemy. We did this event in major locations around NYC with great success, <https://youtu.be/eEX4B9hv7HE> Reach out to us if you would want your organization or community to bring the screen to your city or community.

## Public Exhibition of Posters

The posters of #IAmYourProtector can turn any space into an exhibition. The poster files can be downloaded from the website and enlarged and matted on a foam backing, so that they can be stuck or hung on any wall. The size for printing is 16x20 inches. Reach out to us if you would want your organization or community to the exhibition to your city or community. We will be delighted to send you the material, you can choose a general exhibition with all kind of stories or specific collections for example “Refugee Protectors” or “Muslim Protectors during the Holocaust” or we can create a collection tailored to your community or city with local protectors.

## Event Honoring Protectors

Engaging with communities in a tailored and meaningful way for example with having simultaneous events in public places and in religious spaces. Public guest speakers sharing testimonies such as Johanna Neumann (Holocaust survivor who was saved by Muslims), Gerhard Baader (Holocaust survivor who travels every week to teach German to refugees at a center in Berlin), descendants of Muslim Protectors who could tell about the actions of their family...

## Living Room in the Street

The living room in the street will transform a visible public space into an intimate shared space where people will remove their shoes, recline on oriental rugs, and speak with refugees to hear their stories.

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## Sample of past IAYP Events

### LARGE SCALE CAMPAIGN IN NEW YORK WITH INVISIBLE SCREENS

Large scale campaign in New York featured large screens in key locations on which the images were not visible unless seen through Special glasses, which were distributed. The format echoed the content – inviting people to “see things differently” revealing stories of Protectors that deconstruct the perception of the other depicted as an enemy and a threat.

### LARGE SCALE EXHIBITION IN THE HEART OF GENEVA

The City of Geneva hosted a two week long large scale public exhibition "Se souvenir pour réinventer l'avenir" featuring Protectors of the I Am Your Protector Collection. Among the speakers for the opening were the Mayor of Geneva, Guillaume Barazzone and the President of the Federal Commission Against Racism, Martine Brunschwig Graf who expressed the importance of being each other's protectors and standing up for each other.

### EXHIBITION AT THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS IN GENEVA

Launch with 350 ambassadors and dignitaries for the two weeks long exhibition at the headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva featuring I Am Your Protector with the Director-General of the United Nations Headquarters, Geneva expressing the importance to be Protectors.

### EXHIBITIONS IN PAKISTAN

Exhibitions in several cities in Pakistan featured Protectors from different communities protecting each other.

### IAYP EVENT WITH THE PRESIDENT OF ALBANIA

I Am Your Protector honored the President of Albania and the people of Albania for their outstanding moral code, Besa in a New York Synagogue with 800 people. Albania a Muslim majority country saved all the Jews on their territory during the Second World War, as Besa calls to protect the stranger.

### IAYP IN SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

I Am Your Protector was featured in schools and universities in varying formats such as exhibitions, panels, discussion, campaigns and actions on campuses including NYU, Princeton, Drew...

### HONORING HOLOCAUST PROTECTORS IN WASHINGTON

I Am Your Protector featured Johanna Neumann in the Washington DC Muslim Community Center on the International Holocaust Memorial Day with a ceremony honoring Protectors during the Holocaust in particular Muslim Protectors whose stories are often unknown.

Johanna Neumann, Holocaust survivor, shared her story about how she was rescued and protected by Muslims during the Second World War.

#### HONORING HOLOCAUST PROTECTORS IN NEW YORK

On the International Holocaust Day, I Am Your Protector featured Imam Khalid Latif and Rabbi Yehuda Sarna in New York highlighting the stories of Protectors during the Holocaust, who often risked their own lives to save the "other", in particular Muslim Protectors whose stories are often unknown. Rabbi Yehuda Sarna shared the story of his wife's family who were protected during the Holocaust by Mohamed Helmy an Egyptian Muslim doctor who hid them until the end of the war.

#### HONORING HOLOCAUST PROTECTORS IN ALBANIA

I Am Your Protector honors Albanian Protectors in presence of Prince Leka Zogu II, the grandson of King Zog I who were protectors during the Second World War in Albania, both king Zog I and the people of Albania saved many Jews. Albania was the only country in Europe that had more Jews after the war than before, they welcomed Jews and protected them as their moral code Besa guides them to protect the "other" as much as their own.

#### PUBLIC THEATRE PERFORMANCE

I Am Your Protector presented a theater performance led by the Living Theater in Times Square with 1,000 spectators re-enacting thought-provoking testimonies and stories of Protectors such as Black, Latino, Muslim, Jewish Protectors.

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## About I Am Your **Protector**

I Am Your Protector is a community of people who speak up and stand up for each other in particular across lines of divide and conflict to change the way people perceive the "other" they use to think of as an enemy and give tools to be each other's protectors.

- I Am Your Protector is a non-profit registered as a 501C3
- With chapters in the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Albania, Pakistan, expanding in more countries
- The team is composed of 55 members from over 25 countries
- I Am Your Protector reached it's 3 years goals after 8 month
- Reached more that 4 million people
- created and was featured in more than 50 events across 25 cities, including large scale campaigns, exhibitions and public events
- was covered by national and international media outlets such as CNN, Huffington Post, Al Jazeera, Al Arabia, Haaretz, the Independent and many more
- I Am Your Protector was endorsed by people such as Kofi Annan, Nobel Peace Laureate and former Secretary General of the United Nations, Jim Dratwa, Head of the Ethics department of the European Commission.

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## Contact Us, Get **Involved**

Website: [www.IAmYourProtector.org](http://www.IAmYourProtector.org)  
Facebook: [www.Facebook.com/IAmYourProtector](http://www.Facebook.com/IAmYourProtector)  
Twitter: [#IAmYourProtector](https://twitter.com/IAmYourProtector)  
Email: [Info@IAmYourProtector.org](mailto:Info@IAmYourProtector.org)