

The Kantor Center Annual Report on Antisemitism Worldwide 2019

GENERAL ANALYSIS

Trends and Developments in Antisemitic Manifestations

First came Halle, and then came Corona

By Prof. Dina Porat and the Kantor Center Team at Tel Aviv University
in Cooperation with the European Jewish Congress
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This report differs from our regular annual reports because of the Coronavirus pandemic. It is concise and additional data will hopefully be added to our full report that will be published later this year.

Although this report deals with antisemitism in 2019, we cannot disregard the implications of the Coronavirus crisis during 2020. It has inspired antisemitic expressions that we must address.

Executive Summary

- Coronavirus-inspired antisemitic expressions take the form of traditional Jew-hatred, originating mainly from extreme right activists, who also call to spread the virus among Jews, plus from Muslim circles.
- **2019 saw a rise of 18% in major violent antisemitic incidents compared to 2018 (456 cases in 2019 compared to 387 in 2018), seven Jews were killed, and a rise in most other manifestations of antisemitism in most countries. At least 53 synagogues (12%) and 28 community centers and schools (6 percent) were attacked. There was also an increase in life-endangering threats (47%) and in attacks on private properties (24 %).**
- The return of traditional, classic antisemitic stereotypes as well as the intensification of anti-Israeli and Islamist antisemitism, both contributed to the growing role of antisemitic discourse and its' migration from the fringes of society into the mainstream public discourse.

- Despite the adoption of the 2016 IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism by more than 20 countries and by a host of institutions and organizations, it is still widely under-appreciated and has not been applied widely enough in order to recognize and define antisemitic incidents.
- The analysis of trends and developments in antisemitic manifestation in 2019, presented here by the Kantor Center team, is based on data and perceptions received from the world at large, and from our own sources. The 2019 audits of Bnai Brith in Canada and The ADL in the U.S.A. are still being awaited. The full 2019 report, about 150 pages, will be published as soon as the present circumstances allow.
- **According to an FRA report, 41% of Jews aged 16-34 have considered emigrating from Europe because of antisemitism over the last 5 years.** Antisemitism is the main push factor for emigration, a decision which may be enhanced by perceptions regarding government' responses to antisemitism, which are overwhelmingly considered inadequate.
- **In Germany, the shooting at the Halle synagogue, on October 9, was a landmark antisemitic attack in Germany which embodies all the current problems. The police registered 1,839 antisemitic incidents nationwide, 5 cases per day, mostly perpetrated by neo-Nazis and extreme right-wing activists.** Additionally, surveys have shown that knowledge about the Holocaust is diminishing in Germany.
- **In the US, a new phenomenon is emerging, one of increased violent antisemitic attacks, with shooting sprees and numerous casualties, inspired by right-wing ideologies as well as by certain groups within the Black Hebrew Israelites and the Nation of Islam.**
- Online antisemitism proves to be increasingly dangerous: The perpetrators of major antisemitic attacks in 2019 were active in disseminating antisemitic propaganda online, through international networks of likeminded activists. "What happens on the internet does not stay on the internet" and the networks that propagate hate speech, whatever ideology inspires them, can have a direct impact on the life of the groups they target.
- A growing discrepancy between on-the-ground reality and governmental efforts.
- Underreporting by Jews in some countries corroborated by unidentified perpetrators.
- Problems facing monitoring agencies remained unresolved.
- Surveys continue to raise awareness about surging antisemitism.

A number of significant achievements during 2019:

- The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief presented a report to the U.N. General Assembly entitled "Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance," warning against growing antisemitism inspired by Nazi and Islamist ideologies;
- The EU established a working group to guide Member States in implementing steps against antisemitism.

- The German and Austrian parliaments defined BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions movement) as a movement that uses antisemitic tactics, and approved a resolution according to which “the pattern of argument and methods of the BDS movement are antisemitic.”
- The Fifth World Holocaust Forum, initiated by Dr. Moshe Kantor, President of the European Jewish congress and the World Holocaust Forum Foundation, was held at Yad Vashem, on January 23, 2020, under the auspices of President Reuven Rivlin. It was a tremendous success, with 50 world leaders attending and declaring their commitment to "Remembering the Holocaust, Fighting Antisemitism".

The Corona Impact:

Since the beginning of March 2020, there have been disturbing examples of Jews, Zionists and Israelis, as individuals and as a collective, being accused of causing and spreading the Coronavirus. However, in the context of the pandemic and its' impact, this must be placed in proportion:

First, blaming Jews for “why things go wrong,” as stated in the IHRA 2016 Working definition of Antisemitism, is a common practice as old as antisemitism itself. Therefore, these manifestations do not represent a new development. In the past, global and national calamities, natural disasters, plagues, tsunamis, earthquakes, as well as world wars and economic crises were followed by accusations against the Jews as their main perpetrators. Our task as researchers is to identify exactly the groups and movements that level these charges, the leaders who support or even spread them, and how much public attention is indeed given to them. Let us map the sources of these accusations but at the same time be careful not to readily attribute to Jews the status of a scapegoat in these exceptional times. **So far, these accusations appear to be promoted mainly by extreme rightists, ultra-conservative Christian circles, Islamists, and to a lesser extent by the far-left, each group according to its narrative and beliefs.**

Here are a few examples, all from March, just after the Coronavirus outbreak began in earnest and the death toll started rising worldwide:

- The old canard of poisoning water wells, originating in Medieval times;¹
- God is spreading the virus in synagogues as a punishment for the rejection of Jesus Christ;²
- Global Jewry and Zionism conspire, as they have always done, to undermine world economic stability in order to facilitate their control over it – a libel which is the essence of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*;³

¹ <https://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/coronavirus-conspiracy-theories-jews/>
https://www.camera.org/article/blood-libels-conspiracy-theories-and-coronaviruses/?fbclid=IwAR14g7JWSe_XLKIWu4t_4X8S_xPCry3Uox4_jf319Ujv5Sp_SrBMmIrOWj0;https://forward.com/news/441421/anti-semitic-coronavirus-response-thrives-online-even-on-mainstream/?fbclid=IwAR333d3wVjvx56hJg7GOT5wKMS1C5qs1AwziqTJWNxnJvopKNM55Qrc1Kg.

² [https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/rick-wiles-says-god-is-spreading-the-coronavirus-in-synagogues-as-punishment-for-opposing-jesus/.](https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/rick-wiles-says-god-is-spreading-the-coronavirus-in-synagogues-as-punishment-for-opposing-jesus/)

³ <https://twitter.com/DrDavidDuke/status/1239953516850040840;https://www.forbes.com/sites/abrambrown/2020/03/16/the-private-goldman-sachs-coronavirus-meeting-thats-setting-the-internet-on-fire/#5f88173050dd.>

- Smart Jewish and Israeli initiatives have already led to the production of a vaccine and a medicine to counter the plague, and they will be sold to the world at large for a huge profit.⁴
- A well-known Italian artist, a short while before Passover, repainted a 15th century famous illustration of the blood libel that depicts tormented Simon of Trento surrounded by old bloodthirsty Jews – Trento is depicted in the midst of the most Corona stricken area in Northern Italy. Although not directly connected to the Coronavirus crisis, this incident demonstrates once again the recent return of classical antisemitism;⁵
- Accusations against Israel and Jews by Turkey and Iran, where regime dignitaries and scientists accuse Zionists and Americans of creating the virus as a weapon against the Iranian people and against Muslims in general.⁶

Beside these accusations, the calls to attack Jews have acquired a new dimension. The FBI warned against calls coming from Neo-Nazis and White Supremacists to spread the contagion among Jews, by using quite ugly personal interactions.⁷ Moreover, cyber-attacks on Jewish institutions and groups trying to congregate online are a novel trend resulting from the increasing use of different digital social platforms.

A Word about Proportion: While it is quite tempting to portray the above-mentioned examples as representative of or at least reflecting a widely accepted public mood and atmosphere, it is important to note that the pandemic has aroused a variety of other reactions:

- People of Asian descent have been attacked and abused in many public places;⁸
- Certain Muslim leaders view the outbreak of the plague in China as a divine punishment against the regime, responsible for oppressing the Muslim Uyghur population;⁹
- White supremacists call for the infection of Jews and police alike;¹⁰
- Radical Imams view the Coronavirus as a God-sent punishment on heathens and infidels;

⁴ https://twitter.com/Speeder_1488/status/1242318961452232705;
<https://twitter.com/DrDavidDuke/status/1241576803334074368>;
<https://twitter.com/DrDavidDuke/status/1243212272245379074>.

⁵ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/prominent-italian-painter-unveils-a-work-depicting-anti-semitic-blood-libel/>;
<https://www.israellycool.com/2020/03/27/italian-painter-giovanni-gasparro-revives-the-original-blood-libel-against-jews/>.

⁶ <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/turkey/.premium-as-coronavirus-cases-spike-in-turkey-so-does-anti-semitism-1.8682725>; <https://www.memri.org/reports/turkish-politicians-press-public-react-coronavirus-virus-serves-zionisms-goals-decreasing>; <https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Iran-News/Irans-regime-pushes-antisemitic-conspiracies-about-coronavirus-620212>.

⁷ <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2020/03/26/white-supremacists-see-coronavirus-opportunity>;
<https://abcnews.go.com/US/white-supremacists-encouraging-members-spread-coronavirus-cops-jews/story?id=69737522>.

⁸ <https://berlininspector.com/2020/02/05/europe-animosities-towards-chinese-and-other-asians-1/>;
https://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2020/01/31/news/coronavirus_spunta_cartello_in_cinese_a_fontana_di_trevi_non_entrare_-247246234/?refresh_ce; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-51581805>.

⁹ <https://besacenter.org/he/perspective-papers-he/מגפת-הקורונה-בעיני-אנשי-הדת-המוסלמים/>;
<https://www.memri.org/reports/nj-friday-sermon-mohammad-abbasi-rutgers-university-faculty-member-coronavirus-divine>.

¹⁰ <https://www.policeone.com/coronavirus-covid-19/articles/fbi-white-supremacists-encouraging-members-to-infect-cops-jews-with-covid-19-j2AAfBOa7l2shUJV/>.

- Some Sunnis consider the high death rate in Iran as a proper retribution for the Shi'a regime's deeds;
 - ISIS considers the plague as an outcome of a divine plan to punish all infidels and forecasts a general weakening of the West which should be exploited in order to renew its major attacks.¹¹
 - In some Arab social media, however, a different discourse is emerging, expressing hope that Jews will find a solution;¹²
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- These are but a few examples, since the material keeps flowing in: **Conspiracy theories, conceived in many political and religious groups, always thrive in times of world crisis, certainly one of such a global destructive nature as the world is currently facing.**

Problems facing the Monitoring Agencies

Before delving into the analysis of numbers and data, let us pinpoint a number of **problems facing monitoring agencies**, and shed light on the difficulties of understanding contemporary antisemitism.

- First, the tendency we have described and warned against in the recent years has been formally recognized as **a shift of the phenomenon of antisemitism from the fringes of society to its mainstream. This shift is evident in many Western societies and especially in regards to social media.**¹³ **The return of traditional, classic antisemitic stereotypes in addition to the intensification of anti-Israeli and Islamist antisemitism, have contributed to the growing role of antisemitism in mainstream public discourse.** As a result, the monitoring of incidents, primarily on social media, has become more difficult, and demands a far wider effort and greater sensitivity.

- Second, the underreporting of antisemitic incidents in some countries has been and still remains a serious problem. According to major FRA (Fundamental Rights Agency) surveys most incidents that occur in E.U. countries, (even up to 75%), remain unreported, and thus do not appear in any statistics or chronology, not even in police or community records.¹⁴ Moreover, the problem of categorization aggravates the difficulty of monitoring, since not all antisemitic cases that are recorded are registered as such. **It should be emphasized that in the Western and Western oriented world, where there are well-established monitoring agencies of antisemitic manifestations, governmental and non-governmental, detailed reporting is common practice, whereas in some other countries the actual reported cases are far from reflective of the real situation, and in others monitoring is sometimes barely or non-existent, or not available for research.**

- Third, the ongoing unresolved problem of unidentified perpetrators. Numerous such cases exacerbate the difficulties of monitoring efforts, let alone the need to apprehend the offenders, bring them to trial and thus increase deterrence. Desecrators of cemeteries and monuments,, people who try to set synagogues on fire or beat Jews on the streets, those who spread their hostility via social media under the cover of anonymity, all operate a "hit and run" method and

¹¹ <https://thediplomat.com/2020/03/divine-retribution-the-islamic-states-covid-19-propaganda/>.

¹² <https://besacenter.org/he/perspective-papers-he/מגפת-הקורונה-בעיני-אנשי-הדת-המוסלמים/>;
<https://twitter.com/EdyCohen/status/1239876492701696001>.

¹³ <https://www.dw.com/de/steinmeier-verurteilt-wachsenden-antisemitismus-in-deutschland/a-47842707>;
<https://www.srf.ch/news/international/juden-in-deutschland-antisemitismus-in-der-mitte-der-gesellschaft-wird-spuerbarer> ; <https://www.asf-ev.de/infothek/themen/begegnung-mit-dem-judentum/antisemitismus-in-der-mitte-der-gesellschaft/>.

¹⁴ https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-fundamental-rights-report-2019_en.pdf;
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-antisemitism-overview-2008-2018_en.pdf.

aggravate the frustration of their victims. **The fact that the majority of perpetrators are not identified or apprehended goes hand in hand with underreporting in some countries – reporting and filing complaints of such offenses often seems pointless to the victims.** Still, in recent years, local police forces have been making increased efforts to install camera systems where needed, and to strengthen surveillance of potential perpetrators.

- Fourth, **despite the adoption of the 2016 IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism by more than 20 countries and by many institutions and organizations, it is still not applied widely as a means to identify antisemitic incidents and define them as such.**¹⁵

- Fifth, many years of monitoring antisemitism have resulted in cooperation between the various agencies and institutes, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. However, this has still not led to the establishment of common criteria, agreed by all monitoring agencies. **Each community or agency operates according to its own criteria** and makes its own decisions on sorting data related to the number of cases. Therefore, differences may occur between the numbers that reach us from diverse sources, and those that we present (see below the Kantor Center methodology).

2019 – Data and Numbers

Despite the obstacles described above these are the findings we have managed to collect from a variety of sources worldwide:

An 18% increase in the number of major violent cases perpetrated in 2019 in comparison to 2018, totaling 456 cases (compared to 387 in 2018). This is a sharp rise, especially in view of the considerable decline in such cases during the years between 2015 and 2017. At least 169 people (37 percent of the major violent cases), were physically attacked, mostly in the public space - on streets, at schools, near Jewish sites, and some close to or even in their homes – a relatively new phenomenon, already noted in 2018 in France.¹⁶

At least 53 synagogues (12%) and 28 community centers and schools (6%) were attacked. These are protected institutions, but unprotected sites suffered a greater number of attacks: 77 cemeteries and memorial sites (17%) were desecrated and 129 private properties were vandalized (28%). A large variety of means was used to attack these targets: **firearms, mainly in the 15 shooting incidents (3%); 21 cases of arson (5%), and 47 cases of cold weapon attacks (10%). The most frequent categories are threats – some of them life endangering – 131 cases (29%), and vandalism in all forms - 242 cases (54%, slightly more than half of the total).**

It should be emphasized that the increase is reflected not only in the total of 456 major incidents, but almost in all related parameters: the number of persons attacked increased in 2019 by almost 30 (a rise of 22%), life-endangering threats by 40 (a rise of 47%!), and 25 more private properties were damaged (a rise of 24%).¹⁷

We would like to emphasize, as we did in previous reports, that major violent events are generally reported and recorded as presented here, whereas more minor violent incidents - threats and harassments, face-to-face abuses, insults, accusations, shaming or graffiti, are underreported in some countries, and cannot be counted even where detailed reporting is available. On the other hand, a number of newly introduced technological tools have begun operating in the attempt to monitor incidents on social media, in which verbal and visual abuse is rampant. The Antisemitism Cyber Monitoring System (ACMS) developed and operated by the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs in

¹⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/Submissions/JBI-Annex1.pdf>.

¹⁶ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2019/11/french-jews-fleeing-country/>.

¹⁷ See attached graphs, compiled by Dr. Haim Fireberg of the Kantor Center.

Jerusalem, has recorded several million antisemitic posts in 2019, written by about a quarter of a million users, in four languages.¹⁸

The Role of Surveys in Promoting Awareness

The monitoring of antisemitism relies not only on data collection and reports. Well-conducted surveys are a major tool for raising awareness of the phenomenon and evaluating the situation. In the course of 2018, especially towards the year's end, tens of thousands of Jews and non-Jews were surveyed and expressed their perceptions. A smaller number of major surveys was conducted in 2019 and the beginning of 2020. We will refer to the major ones, while taking into consideration the limitations of such surveys.

On a general note, **Europe is facing an overall rise in racism and xenophobia. The Council of Europe has sounded the alarm bell over growing racism and violence against minorities and NGOs in Europe, fed by ultra-nationalism, antisemitism, and anti-Muslim hate.** Concerns were increased by the 2019 annual report issued by the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). The report, released on February 27 (2020), found that forms of racism and violence are targeted not only against those deemed "different," but against NGOs working on behalf of the "other" as well. "Europe is facing a shocking reality: antisemitic, anti-Muslim and other racist hate crimes are increasing at an alarming rate," warned Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe. "We must stop the dissemination of toxic rhetoric from racist extremists which strikes at the very heart of our democracies."

According to the report, growing antisemitism is due mainly to widespread rhetoric "by neo-Nazis and political extremists," but ECRI also observed that this same rhetoric is also used as propaganda by some religious extremists, such as Islamists, and has led in the last ten years to dramatic events in some of the countries.¹⁹

In France where antisemitism continues spiraling, a new survey conducted by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) Paris came up with the following findings:

- **Nearly three-quarters, 73% of the general French public and 72% percent of Jews, consider antisemitism a problem that affects all French society.**
- 47% of the general population and 67% of Jewish respondents concede that the level of antisemitism in France is high, compared to 27% and 22% respectively who say it is low.
- 53% of the general population agree that antisemitism has been increasing compared to 18% who thought that it has been decreasing. Among Jews, 77% say it has increased and only 12% that it has decreased.

The extent of antisemitic attacks on France's Jewish community, the largest in Europe, is alarming: 70% of French Jews say they have been victims of at least one antisemitic incident in their lifetime; 64% have suffered antisemitic verbal abuse at least once, and 23% have been the targets of physical violence on at least one occasion, of which 10% say they were attacked several times.²⁰

Another alarming trend is the increasing perception of insecurity among Jews in Europe. The 2019 FRA survey "Young Jewish Europeans: perceptions and experiences of antisemitism"²¹ shows that **41% of Jews aged 16-34 have considered emigrating from Europe because of antisemitism over the last 5 years.**

¹⁸ <http://antisemitism.mda.gov.il/en/projects/antisemitism-cyber-monitoring-system/>.

¹⁹ <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/23103/council-of-europe-launches-alarm-on-growth-in-racist-crimes>.

²⁰ <https://www.ajc.org/news/ajc-paris-survey-french-jews-non-jews-agree-on-scope-of-antisemitism>.

²¹ https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-young-jewish-europeans_en.pdf.

Likewise, 42% of Jews aged 35-59 and 25% over 60 have considered emigration. Of the first group (aged 16-34), 67% contemplate emigrating to Israel, 21% to another country outside of Europe, and only 11% consider remaining in a European country. Similar results also typify the second group aged 35-59, where 64% consider emigrating to Israel, 25% to a country outside of Europe and only 11% consider remaining in Europe. The final group, aged 60 plus, is even more prone to emigrate to Israel (80%).

Antisemitism is the main push factor for emigration, a decision which might be enhanced by the perception that government responses to antisemitism are overwhelmingly inadequate. 75% of those aged 16-34 and 35-59 consider that the state's measures to counter antisemitism are ineffective (roughly half of them are sure that the policies are ineffective and the other half consider such measures “probably” ineffective). In 2018, 70% of the respondents considered governments measures to combat antisemitism ineffective. In both surveys, people were asked about their perceptions over the last five years. The changes, in just one year, show a concerning trend of diminishing trust in governmental responses to antisemitism.

Germany and the United States – Significant Changes and Developments

Germany

Overall antisemitic incidents rose during 2019 and towards the beginning of 2020 in most of the countries and in most of its forms.²² Yet in terms of recent changes and developments regarding antisemitism, Germany and the United States deserve closer attention.

The shooting at the Halle synagogue on October 9, the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, was aimed at perpetrating a massacre on the Jews congregated there to pray and has become a landmark antisemitic act in Germany. It embodies all the present problems.

The killer was apparently no lunatic or “lone wolf.” He acted, according to his own words written in English, as a member of a large, international community of antisemites, neo-Nazis and extreme right-wingers. This community includes supporters of the Alternative for Germany - AfD, the right-wing extremist party that due to its electoral success, has for the first time since its establishment in April 2013, just 7 years previously, changed the German political landscape. AfD politicians played down the Halle attack and its perpetrator. German intelligence investigations revealed attempts by right-wing activists, whose numbers have grown rapidly, to profit from their contacts with the army and the police, even for terrorist goals. **A preliminary police report registered 1839 antisemitic incidents nationwide – 5 cases a day!! - the highest since 2001, mostly perpetrated by neo-Nazis and extreme right-wingers.**²³ Still, this report has been heavily criticized, and **there is still a lot of research and monitoring work to be done to assess the role of Muslims in the perpetration of antisemitic acts as well.**

Surveys have shown that knowledge of the Holocaust is diminishing in Germany. High school students, and 40% of Germans between the ages 18 to 40 know little or have even never heard about it; between a quarter to a third of the Germans surveyed held antisemitic beliefs and stereotypes; and Israel-related antisemitism, mainly originating from Muslim students and staff, is already becoming normalized among school students and teachers. Young teachers cannot cope; World War Two continues to slip away from the memory of the post-war third generation; family

²² See attached summaries of events according to countries.

²³ <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/antisemitische-kriminalitaet-hoehchststand-bei-straftaten-von-;>
https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-young-jewish-europeans_en.pdf.

biographies are undergoing a similar process and children from immigrant families adopt different historical narratives.²⁴

In his speech at Yad Vashem on the occasion of the fifth World Holocaust Forum on January 23, 2020, the German president, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, overshadowed many other statements and moved his listeners with his reflections: “I wish I could say that Germans have learnt from History, but I can't say that when hatred and agitation are spreading, I can't say that when Jewish children are spat on in the schoolyard.” A few days later, **the German minister of foreign affairs, Heiko Maas, expressed fear that Jews might flee due to the rise in antisemitism and violence in his country.**²⁵

Although the higher echelons of Germany's institutions, the presidency, government and Bundestag, let alone the Chancellery, assume historical responsibility for the fate of the Jewish people, and display their constant commitment to the struggle against antisemitism, and although related German legislation is one of the most robust in Europe and BDS activities are widely rejected, the situation in Germany 75 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, appears gloomy and painful to watch.

The United States

The Jewish communities of the United States are adjusting to a situation they have never known before: Increasing antisemitic incidents, violence, shooting sprees and numerous casualties.

In April, in an attack on the Poway synagogue in California, a member of the congregation was killed and three others wounded; in December a shooting at a kosher supermarket in Jersey City ended up with four casualties, including a police officer; five were wounded at a Hanukkah party at the rabbi of Monsey's home. The ADL registered 780 cases of antisemitic incidents in its report for the first six months of 2019, equaling the number of cases during the whole year of 2018. The New York police department announced that half of the hate crimes during January-September 2019 were targeted against Jews.²⁶ The perpetrators are no longer just members of the White Supremacist groups. **A new phenomenon has been emerging: assaults by African-American individuals who act on the spur of the moment or are inspired by certain groups within the Black Hebrew Israelites and within the Nation of Islam led by Louis Farrakhan, previously known for his virulent antisemitic views.**

Anti-Zionism expressed in antisemitic terms was rampant among left wing activists as well, especially in reaction to the warm relations between the Israeli and American administrations, depicted as deliberate Israeli-Jewish attempts to dominate and manipulate American policies and leaders.

US Campuses. The situation on American campuses has been a major issue in 2019, much like in previous years. This is an issue of utmost importance, because it affects the future of American and international leadership, raised and educated on these campuses. Youngsters of all the

²⁴ [https://refubium.fu-](https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/fub188/22444/Naegel_Kahle_University_teaching_about_the_Holocaust_in_Germany.pdf?sequence=7&isAllowed=y)

[berlin.de/bitstream/handle/fub188/22444/Naegel_Kahle_University_teaching_about_the_Holocaust_in_Germany.pdf?sequence=7&isAllowed=y](https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/fub188/22444/Naegel_Kahle_University_teaching_about_the_Holocaust_in_Germany.pdf?sequence=7&isAllowed=y).

²⁵ <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article205353291/Aussenminister-Maas-Damit-es-nicht-zum-massiven-Wegzug-von-Juden-aus-Deutschland-kommt.html>.

²⁶ ADL release, October 18, 2019, <https://www.adl.org/blog/one-year-after-the-tree-of-life-attack-american-jews-face-significant-threats>.

religions and sectors of American society, as well as overseas students, shape their opinions and political inclinations on these campuses.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is still the main issue on campuses. It triggers the dissemination of antisemitism by BDS groups and other mainly left-wing activists, disguised as a legitimate criticism of Israeli policies. The most recent survey by Amcha, the organization monitoring and fighting antisemitism on campuses, registered in 2019 some 300 incidents of harassment, vandalism and assault targeting Jewish students in more than 100 campuses. 60% of them were of an Israeli-related antisemitic nature. The increase in the number of academic BDS-fueled incidents, is much higher than the number of incidents of discrimination, denigration and suppression of expression against Jewish students in 2018.²⁷

The BDS efforts on campuses, which include targeting the Working Definition of Antisemitism and related questions of Jewish identity, were summarized by the Amcha director, Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, as follows: "In recent years, disputes surrounding the definition of antisemitism and related issues have dramatically increased and even taken center stage on some campuses. Specifically, the question of whether anti-Zionism is a form of antisemitism and should be treated as such, as well as the related questions of whether Zionism is an implicit part of Jewish identity and who gets to define antisemitism or represent Jewishness, have been discussed and debated with increasing frequency in the campus square, the student senate and conferences halls, often with negative consequences for many Jewish students."²⁸

The BDS Movement

During 2019, **BDS activities may not have increased in number, but the BDS movement has certainly gained greater prominence on social media and in the public discourse.** A number of factors have contributed to magnifying public discourse on the boycott of Israel. First, major boycott campaigns against events taking place in Israel, such as the 2019 Eurovision Song Contest, and the support by international celebrities for the BDS cause, such as Roger Waters, were instrumental in reaching a wider audience worldwide. Secondly, legal activity against BDS has intensified, especially in the U.S., both in terms of legislation introduced to counter anti-Israel boycotts and in terms of lawsuits questioning the alleged infringement on free speech. Such initiatives triggered a broader debate that also involved political activists, such as Congresswomen Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, who were pivotal in publicizing the anti-Israel cause. Finally, Israel's measures to counter BDS activists and supporters made the news when Israel decided to discontinue the visa permit of Omar Shakir, Human Rights Watch director of the Israel-Palestine Desk, for his support of anti-Israel boycotts.

Significant anti-BDS initiatives were advanced by various actors. In Germany, not only student organizations and local authorities have adopted anti-BDS resolutions, but also organizers of cultural events have countered BDS activists. Also worthy of attention is the "Arab Council for Regional Integration" initiative, which was launched by numerous actors from the Arab world, advancing overtures to Israel, stressing the importance of cooperation and condemning the political use of the Arab-Israel conflict.²⁹

Online Antisemitism

The phenomenon of **online antisemitism proves to be increasingly dangerous.** The numbers of online antisemitic incidents grow higher and higher each year. This increase also reflects an

²⁷ <https://amchainitiative.org/reports>.

²⁸ Tammi Rossman- Benjamin, "A Survey of Antisemitic Activity and Trends on U.S. Campuses in 2019 and the Efforts to Address it," sent to the Kantor center on March 28, 2020, pp.3-4.

²⁹ See Giovanni Quer on the BDS movement in the full 2019 report, to be published in the forthcoming Kantor Center, *Antisemitism Worldwide 2019*.

intensified monitoring of social media and hate speech expressed in digital platforms. It should be noted that what happens online has major consequences in real life. **The perpetrators of the antisemitic attacks in Halle and in Poway were active in disseminating antisemitic propaganda online, through an international network of likeminded extreme right activists.** Likewise, the perpetrators of other racist crimes, such as in the Christchurch, New Zealand, mosque shooting in March 2019, were active in spreading online hate speech. Moreover, online media outlets are increasingly becoming the major source of information especially for the younger generations, with major consequences on their views of the world. Therefore, one can say that **“what happens on the internet does not stay on the internet” and the networks that propagate hate speech, whatever ideology inspires them, can have a direct impact on the lives of those they target through various forms of hatred.**

Achievements in Combatting Antisemitism

Several days after the Halle shooting, in mid-October 2019, **Ahmed Shaheed, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, presented a report to the U.N. General Assembly entitled “Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance,” focusing on antisemitism.** “I am alarmed,” he summarized, “by the growing use of antisemitic tropes by white supremacists, including neo-Nazis and members of radical Islamist groups, in slogans, images, stereotypes, and conspiracy theories to incite and justify hostility, discrimination, and violence against Jews.” He expressed concern, or even alarm about what all societies are experiencing due to the increase of antisemitism worldwide. Jew-hatred, he warned, “is toxic to democracy if left unaddressed.”³⁰ **Kantor Center research was extensively quoted in this report,** which was presented to the U.N. General Assembly by the Special Rapporteur, who spoke for the first time in such clear-cut terms, pinpointing the perpetrators from all sides, and warning against the consequences.

The European Commission coordinator on combating antisemitism, Katharina von Schnurbein, called attention to major surveys conducted by her office, such as the Eurobarometer, which reflected the magnitude of the problem – every second European considers antisemitism as a problem. **Following the survey and the unanimous declaration of all E.U. member states to act against antisemitism and for the security of the Jewish communities, a working group was established to support the member states in implementing this declaration.**³¹ Special envoys on antisemitism, appointed in 14 out of the 16 states (*Länder*) in Germany, work in coordination with Felix Klein, the Federal Commissioner for Jewish Life.³²

The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism has been adopted by more than 20 countries, and by a host of institutions, such as the European Union, the State Department, the Church of England, and the French parliament. It has become a sort of a yardstick for standing against discrimination, a test of values promoting the rights of minorities. **The German and Austrian parliaments defined the BDS as a movement that uses antisemitic tactics, passing a resolution according to which “the pattern of argument and methods of the BDS movement are anti-Semitic.”** Boris Johnson announced, following his election as UK prime minister, that he would forbid any bans, alluding to the BDS attempts to ban Israel.³³

³⁰ Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, *Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance*, September 20, 2019, accessed March 17, 2020, at <https://undocs.org/A/74/358>.

³¹ A summary of "European Union Activities in Combating Antisemitism in 2019," sent by Katharina von Schnurbein to the Kantor Center on March 20, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/news_and_blogs_related_to_aid_and_fundamental_rights/documents/programme_working_group_on_antisemitism.pdf.

³² <https://www.dw.com/de/antisemitismusbeauftragter-strategien-im-kampf-gegen-judenhass-n%C3%B6tig/a-51229952>.

³³ <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/german-antisemitism-envoy-felix->

A Code of Conduct against illegal hate speech on the web was signed in 2019 with nine internet platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and others, who are obliged to scan the material identified as such and to remove it within 24 hours. According to von Schnurbein, 72 percent of such material is already being removed. The 2019 draft of a French law, inspired by a 2018 German law, stipulates heavy fines for violators if the 24-hour obligation is not respected, and calls for the establishment of a monitoring agency. In a ground-breaking decision, the European Union Court of Justice has enabled states to require a Facebook branch located in a certain country to remove materials in countries beyond its borders.³⁴ These are all achievements of the highest importance, yet the question remains when and to what extent their impact will be felt.

In conclusion, we would like to pose a cardinal question: Will 2020 continue the trend observed in 2019 of violence and abusive language against Jews, or that of growing awareness and finding solutions? **Will the Coronavirus crisis result in more accusations of the lowest kind against the Jewish people and its state, or will the understanding prevail that the fate of all mankind is intertwined, and that there is no way out of it but in cooperation and mutual support?**

The Kantor Center Methodology

The report is based on the ongoing Kantor Center for the study of Contemporary European Jewry and the Moshe Kantor Database team's work, and on the various reports and data sent to us by organizations and contact persons in about 40 countries – a network we established during more than 25 years of activity. It should be noted that The Kantor Center and database is the only center, in Israel and abroad, that monitors and analyzes antisemitic manifestations worldwide, according to the same criteria, over such a long period of time that make a multi-year comparison possible. Nevertheless, we are aware of the possibility that not all the relevant data on antisemitic manifestations has reached us, because in many countries monitoring is not consistent or systematic; or because their databases are restricted to free public study because of States' rules; and because – as all monitoring agencies agree – not all manifestations are reported. Still, we do believe that information about the major manifestations has reached us.

The data and numbers presented herein on major violent antisemitic cases are the result of a specific monitoring and analysis system developed by the Kantor Center team, using specific criteria:

1. Proven antisemitic motivation;
2. Counting a multi-event as one case;
3. No exaggeration or diminishing the severity of the situation;
4. Distinguishing between violent cases and verbal and visual manifestations.

Differences might occur between our published data on the number of violent incidents and those released by other monitoring communities and institutes. Monitoring communities and agencies sometimes present numbers of all types of antisemitic manifestations put together, violent, verbal and visual.

We are aware of the necessity to analyze antisemitism in the broadest possible context. Therefore, there can be no understanding of antisemitism without a solid background knowledge of the political, economic and social developments in any given country and in the international arena, and for this we are indebted to our contributors from the world at large.

klein-warns-against-spread-of-antisemitic-coronavirus-conspiracy-theories-3-4-2020.

³⁴ See Talia Naamat and Giovanni Quer, "Combating Online Hate-Speech - Recent Developments and Policy Recommendations, on the TAU Kantor Center site.

APPENDIX A

Country Reports Summary

Arab Countries

The regional turmoil marginalized the Palestinian question, resulting in a general decrease in antisemitic discourse. Antisemitic tropes of Holocaust abuse were mainly expressed in connection to Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Other antisemitic tropes, rooted in Islamist anti-Jewish views, were more prevalent among religious literature and sermons, including conspiracy theories and the blood-libel.

Argentina

The approximately 1000 incidents recorded in 2019 constitute an increase of 10% compared to 2018. 90% of them took place on social networks. Among the major incidents, were a physical assault on a rabbi in Rosario and a Nazi parody in a school.

Australia

16 violent incidents of the total 225 incidents were recorded, a significant increase compared to 2018. Harassment and verbal assaults were the largest category of incidents, whereas the number of threats decreased. A large number of antisemitic incidents were perpetrated by far-right and neo-Nazis, while Israel-related antisemitism is prevalent on social media among anti-Israel activists. Other online antisemitic incidents included Islamist anti-Jewish tropes.

Austria

The 172 recorded incidents constitute a decrease of almost 26% compared to 2018, among which 87 were online hate speech incidents and 96 of them were in violation of the anti-Nazi legislation. Holocaust abuse and Israel-related antisemitism are the main antisemitic tropes. Additionally, surveys conducted in 2019 show the broad dissemination of traditional antisemitic tropes and the spreading of ignorance on the Holocaust. The intensification of extreme right activism has also caused an increase in antisemitic and xenophobic speech.

Brazil

Of the 123 recorded incidents, more than half took place on social media, mainly involving Nazi glorification and other far-right discourse. Israel-related antisemitism emerged in a number of occasions in anti-Israel demonstrations.

Bulgaria

While the government undertook major efforts to combat antisemitism, a number of incidents took place during football matches.

Canada

The increase in incidents during 2019 confirms and continues the trend of the ongoing increase in antisemitism over the last 4 years, including in violent incidents. Moreover, Israel-related antisemitism is increasingly accepted in the mainstream news media and classic antisemitic tropes such as Jewish conspiracy theories are becoming increasingly prominent in the public discourse.

Chile

Recorded antisemitic episodes are mainly characterized by anti-Israeli sentiment, including online antisemitic expressions which transpired after a deadly incident involving Israeli tourists and anti-Zionist demonstrations.

Czech Republic

The low rate of violent antisemitism has not changed. However, a significant increase in online antisemitism was recorded, spreading mainly conspiracy theories, but also far-right and Catholic traditional antisemitic tropes.

France

The 687 antisemitic acts recorded in 2019 represent an increase of 27% compared to 2018. Remarkably, 60% of the overall 1142 racist hate crimes were antisemitic incidents. Incidents involving physical violence increased by 17%, and threats increased by 50%. Moreover, two major cases involved desecration of Jewish cemeteries. In the context of the social unrest sparked by the “Yellow Vests” movement, a number of antisemitic incidents were recorded, including Israel-related antisemitism.

Germany

The police recorded 1839 antisemitic incidents nationwide compared to 1799 incidents in 2018, an average of 5 incidents a day. The intensified online antisemitic activities of extreme-right networks led to the first deadly attack in years, which took place in Halle in October 2019. Despite the major efforts in combating antisemitism, the alarming trend of growing anti-Jewish hatred and xenophobia continues, with a considerable increase in far-right activism and terrorism. In schools, antisemitic incidents among pupils are a common occurrence, including Israel-related antisemitism among Muslim communities – a phenomenon that teachers are unprepared to handle.

Greece

While the number of vandalism incidents targeting Jewish properties and cemeteries decreased, Holocaust memorial sites were increasingly targeted. Out of a total of nine cases prosecuted against hate crimes, 2 concerned antisemitic hate speech.

Hungary

Although the government distances itself from antisemitism, the growing far-right discourse on public platforms also includes antisemitic tropes. Antisemitic incidents also included vandalism and verbal attacks.

India

Historically, antisemitism in India has been a largely marginal phenomenon, but has recently increased as part of the discourse developed by certain Hindu nationalists, including Holocaust trivialization and Nazi glorification. Often mistaken for Muslims, which are primary targets of hate crimes, Jews have become by-victims. Additionally, Islamist antisemitism has emerged among certain groups of Indian Muslims, with consequences on Muslim Asian communities in the West.

Iran

In 2019, the Iranian regime has promoted antisemitic discourse and imagery to a larger extent compared to previous years. A number of high-ranking clerics promote Holocaust denial and trivialization. The political developments in the region were the opportunity to promote conspiracy theories against Israel and the US, while using traditional antisemitic imagery to portray Israelis and Jews. Moreover, traditional antisemitic narratives portray Jews as enemies of Islam and of Iran in particular. Furthermore, neo-Nazi websites promote Nazi glorification.

Italy

In the context of the profound social crisis, old antisemitic tropes of Jewish financial power have emerged. The 251 recorded incidents show a clear increase compared to the 197 of the previous year. Besides 5 violent incidents, 2 of which were physical assaults and 3 cases of vandalism, the great majority of cases are online incidents. A growing trend among the younger generation is Holocaust trivialization and Nazi glorification.

Lithuania

The nationalistic narrative that includes the glorification of Nazi figures negatively affects Holocaust memory and, consequently, Jewish persons.

Mexico

The overall number of antisemitic incidents has decreased, especially in the traditional newspaper and television media; however, antisemitic expressions have increased in the new and social media, including Holocaust trivialization, glorification of Nazism, and Israel-related antisemitism.

The Netherlands

The 182 recorded incidents recorded in the country constitute the highest number of antisemitic episodes over the last 30 years, and an increase of 35% compared to 2018. Additionally, 127 online incidents took place on social media, confirming the growing prevalence of online anti-Jewish hate speech. An increase of 126% in physical and verbal assaults, and public manifestations of antisemitism have more than doubled, while cases of vandalism decreased by a third.

Poland

Antisemitic hate-speech by public figures and vandalism incidents were prevalent among the recorded antisemitic episodes. A number of these incidents related to the controversy about Polish antisemitism in history.

Portugal

Antisemitic tropes of conspiracy theories and Jewish domination emerged following the acquisition of Portuguese citizenship by Jews of Sephardic origin, at times smeared as an "invasive wave." Antisemitic hate-speech is particularly spread in the Internet. Israel-related antisemitism is diffused in the political discourse of the extreme left, which also advances numerous anti-Israel boycott initiatives.

Russia

Despite the low number of recorded antisemitic incidents, the local Jewish community, especially from smaller cities has experienced various forms of antisemitism. Authorities have increasingly acted against cases of antisemitism, vandalism and hate speech in particular. As part of the political discourse involving the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, each state accuses the other of antisemitism.

Slovakia

A number of people engaged in antisemitic discourse in connection to Nazi glorification and Holocaust denial.

South Africa

Recorded antisemitic incidents decreased by 40% compared to 2019, with 1 case of physical assault and 7 cases of verbal assault. Israel-related antisemitism was relatively low, although expressed in a number of political platforms. Other cases were inspired by Nazi glorification and Islamist ideology.

Switzerland

Violent incidents more than doubled in 2019 (including vandalism and physical assaults), amounting to 14 compared to 6 of 2018. The 114 recorded incidents also show a decrease in online antisemitic activities.

Spain

In at least 10 cases, tribunals have confirmed that local authorities do not have the power to adopt BDS policies, in part because it generates discrimination. Israel-related antisemitism, also involving BDS activists, is the subject of a number of lawsuits related to incitement to hatred.

Turkey

Antisemitism spreads mainly in the traditional and social media, where anti-Jewish tropes such as world domination conspiracy theories, blame for disasters, and falsification of the Torah go hand in hand with Israel-related antisemitism. Regarding hate speech in the press, it appears that Jews are among the five groups that are majorly targeted, along with Syrians, Cyprus Greeks, Greeks, and Armenians.

The UK

The 1,805 recorded cases constitute an increase of 7% compared to 2018 and continue the trend of an ongoing increased in antisemitism over the past four years. Online incidents constitute 39% of the total cases, and increased in 82% compared to the previous year. Physical assaults increased by 27%. The Labour Party controversy was among the major triggers of antisemitic incidents, and antisemitic expressions many times involved conspiracy theories.

Ukraine

Antisemitic incidents included mainly vandalism against Jewish properties and verbal attacks against Jewish persons. The glorification of Nazism is a growing concern, as a part of the anti-Soviet, nationalistic historical memory.

BDS – developments

Although BDS activities were largely unsuccessful, anti-Israel activities gained prominence in the public discourse, especially in the US, and through online campaigns. Academic institutions have rejected BDS initiatives, triggering attacks against their governorship. The legal debate on the alleged infringement of freedom of speech by anti-BDS laws is still ongoing in the US, while in Spain tribunals have confirmed the unconstitutionality of BDS policies adopted by local authorities. Anti-BDS initiatives have increased among student organization, local authorities, and cultural institutions in Germany.

The E.U.

The survey on the perception of antisemitism among young Jewish Europeans (16-25) shows that 50% have experienced antisemitism. The European Commission created in January 2019 a working group to support Member States in drafting and adopting national strategies against antisemitism, which has so far met three times to discuss security, education, and data collection. The internet remains the number one place where Jews experience antisemitic incidents.

U.S. Campuses

Approximately **300** antisemitic incidents were registered in 2019, constituting a decrease of 49% in classic antisemitism and an increase of 60% in Israel-related antisemitism compared to 2018. The efforts to challenge the legitimacy of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism reflect the growing trend of questioning whether the phenomenon of antisemitic anti-Zionism actually exists.