



Antisemitism fact sheet

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- Three-quarters of a century after the end of the Second World War, Europe – and indeed the rest of the world – has not forgotten the horrors inflicted under Hitler.
- Six million Jews across the continent were exterminated in a brutal and systematic attempt to rid the Nazi empire of a race the regime regarded as sub-human.
- The Final Solution, as it was deemed, was the murderous culmination of an antisemitic agenda first introduced by the Nazis when they came to power in 1933 and introduced a series of laws to restrict the public and private lives of Jewish citizens.
- Today the Holocaust is a compulsory part of the history curriculum in British secondary schools. Yet despite this investment in education, there has in recent years been an increase in antisemitic incidents and attacks.
- Just a couple of generations after the Second World War and within living memory for some, news headlines once again report rising antisemitism not only in Germany, but also here in the UK, across a significant part of Europe, in America and further afield.
- So how bad is the situation, how concerned is the Jewish community and what is being done to turn the tide on prejudice, hatred and intolerance?

WHAT IS ANTISEMITISM?

- The [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance](#) (IHRA) is an intergovernmental body comprising 31 members that promotes the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research. In May 2016 its new definition of antisemitism was adopted during a meeting in Bucharest.
- Though not legally binding, the definition has been adopted by many governments and institutions. On 12 December 2016, the UK Government formally adopted the IHRA's working [definition](#) of antisemitism:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities”.

- In a speech that day, Theresa May, then prime minister, said: “There will be one definition of antisemitism – in essence, language or behaviour that displays hatred towards Jews because they are Jews – and anyone guilty of that will be called out on it.”

ANTISEMITISM IN BRITAIN

- Antisemitism has played an “unprecedented role” in public life since 2018, according to a report by the Community Security Trust (CST), an organisation set up to protect British Jews.
- The report, published at the end of last year, found that antisemitism “became a regular feature in national politics and media to an extent not seen before” in 2018. The problem is partly attributed to the allegations of antisemitism within the Labour Party led by Jeremy Corbyn.
- The findings were published as police investigated a spate of [graffiti](#) attacks in north London where vandals had daubed the Star of David and the date 9.11 on shops and a synagogue.
- In the first six months of 2019, the CST [recorded](#) 892 antisemitic incidents across the United Kingdom – the highest it had registered for a January-June period. Of those, 576 occurred across the regions of Greater London and Greater Manchester, the UK cities that are home to the largest Jewish populations.
- The CST recorded more than 100 antisemitic incidents in every one of the six months from January to June 2019 for the third consecutive year. This, it says, is unprecedented: for comparison, CST recorded monthly totals above 100 incidents on only six occasions between 2006 and 2016.
- Other incidents recorded by the CST included an incident where elderly Holocaust survivors returned from holiday to find their house had been “ransacked and desecrated” and daubed with antisemitic graffiti.
- While more than a third of incidents involved social media, the CST does not trawl for online hatred and records only antisemitic episodes that have been reported. Among the other episodes reported are incidents where Jewish victims have been punched, kicked and attacked with stones, bottles and eggs. Swastikas and anti-Jewish slogans have also been sprayed on a range of Jewish buildings.

- The CST’s findings were reflected in a Home Office [report](#) about the level of hate crime in Britain. In 2018-19, where the perceived religion of the victim was recorded, 47 per cent of religious hate crime offences were targeted against Muslims (3,530 offences). The next most commonly targeted group were Jewish people, who were targeted in 18 per cent of religious hate crimes (1,326 offences).

ANTISEMITISM IN FRANCE

- Speaking at the Fifth World Holocaust Forum in January 2020, President Emmanuel Macron described antisemitism as a “scourge” that had returned in the 21st century.
- That resurgence is on the rise in France, according to a recent survey by the country’s interior ministry. The study revealed a 27 per cent increase in antisemitic incidents in the year to 2019 – 687 were recorded last year, compared with 541 in 2018 and 311 in 2017.
- The study, released on Holocaust Memorial Day, revealed that the incidents included 151 antisemitic acts such as violent attacks on people and damage to property. A further 536 were described as “threats”, whether they took the form of words, gestures or graffiti.
- After Israel and the USA, France is home to the world’s third-largest Jewish population. Yet the rise in antisemitism in recent years has led to a wave of emigration of French Jews to Israel.
- This exodus was sparked in 2012 after a French-born Islamic extremist opened fire at a Jewish day school in Toulouse. Three years later a supporter of the so-called Islamic State opened fire at a kosher supermarket in Paris, killing four.
- Other high-profile incidents included the murder of a Holocaust survivor in 2018, while the gilets jaunes (yellow vest) protest movement displayed a dark side when in some places anti-Jewish rhetoric emerged. On a smaller scale, desecration of cemeteries and intimidation of young men wearing yarmulkes has become increasingly frequent.

ANTISEMITISM IN GERMANY

- Anti-Jewish insults and attacks, online and off, have become “a daily occurrence” in Germany, according to the country’s foreign minister Heiko Maas. In an article for Der Spiegel in January, Mr Maas revealed that almost one in two Jews had considered leaving the country because of mounting antisemitism.
- In 2018 police [recorded](#) 307 antisemitic crimes in Germany, an increase of almost a third from 233 the previous year.
- “We need to take urgent countermeasures to make sure that such thoughts do not turn into a bitter reality and lead to a massive departure of Jews from Germany,” wrote Mr Maas on the eve of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.
- His words came three months after a gunman tried to storm a synagogue in the eastern city of Halle on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. Failing to enter, the far-right attacker turned his gun on a passer-by and a man in a kebab shop, both of whom were killed.
- Days earlier a man wielding a knife climbed over a barrier at Berlin’s New Synagogue. He was overwhelmed by security and arrested, but was later released without charge.
- In addition to rising hate crime, there is a public perception of increased antisemitic attitudes. After the attack in Halle, a poll by public broadcaster ARD revealed that 59 per cent of Germans believed antisemitism was spreading. Meanwhile, a study by the World Jewish Congress suggests that more than a quarter of Germans hold antisemitic beliefs.

ANTISEMITISM IN AMERICA

- Five orthodox Jews were seriously injured when a man armed with a knife went on the rampage during a Hanukkah celebration just outside New York in December 2019.
- The attacker is said to have burst into a rabbi’s house in Monsey armed with an 18in machete. The victims’ injuries ranged from slash wounds to a severed finger and a skull fracture, according to federal prosecutors.
- The horrifying incident was the latest in a growing trend of antisemitic attacks in the USA.

- The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was founded in 1913 “in response to an escalating climate of antisemitism and bigotry”. More than a century later, the organisation is busier than ever. Following the Monsey incident, the ADL issued a statement saying the attack was “at least the 10th antisemitic incident to hit the New York/New Jersey area in just the last week”.
- Earlier that month, six people were killed when two gunmen opened fire at a kosher supermarket in Jersey City.
- In 2018 11 people were shot dead at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, the deadliest attack on Jewish Americans in the United States. The suspect, a 47-year-old man from Pennsylvania, is awaiting trial. The attack was one of 1,879 antisemitic acts in 2018, says the ADL.
- “Assault, harassment and vandalism against Jews remain at near-historic levels in the US,” the ADL announced. “The deadly attacks in synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway have made American Jews feel more vulnerable than they have felt in decades.”
- Jewish schools, synagogues and cultural centres have been among the institutions targeted. In August 2017, the country saw a disturbing manifestation of antisemitism at the alt right “Unite the Right” [rally](#) in Charlottesville, Virginia. According to an audit by the ADL, hundreds of marchers threw Nazi salutes, waved swastika flags and shouted “Sieg Heil” and “Jews will not replace us!”

THE WIDER PICTURE

- In 2018 Tel Aviv University's Kantor Center published a [report](#) on antisemitism worldwide. Researchers revealed that the number of major violent incidents was relatively high, though still below levels seen around the times of Israeli conflicts in Gaza in 2008-09 and 2014, for example.
- It found that the countries with the highest number of major violent cases were the US (more than 100 cases), the UK (68), France and Germany (35 each), Canada (20) Belgium (19) the Netherlands (15) and Argentina (11).
- By way of contrast, it noted that the number of cases in Eastern Europe have been much lower than in the western part of the continent.

- The report stated: “The main modus operandi remain cases of vandalism (216, 56 per cent), threats (89, 23 per cent) and weaponless means (55, 14 per cent). These numbers show that while the use of weapon and arson is in lower numbers, most of the attacks are against people and their property. Indeed, at least 138 people were attacked (36 per cent), private property was damaged (104 cases, 27 per cent). The reason is that people and their property are less protected than synagogues (47 cases, 12 per cent) and community centres (22, 6 per cent). Cemeteries and monuments are still a traditional target: 76 cases, 19 per cent

CONTACTS

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