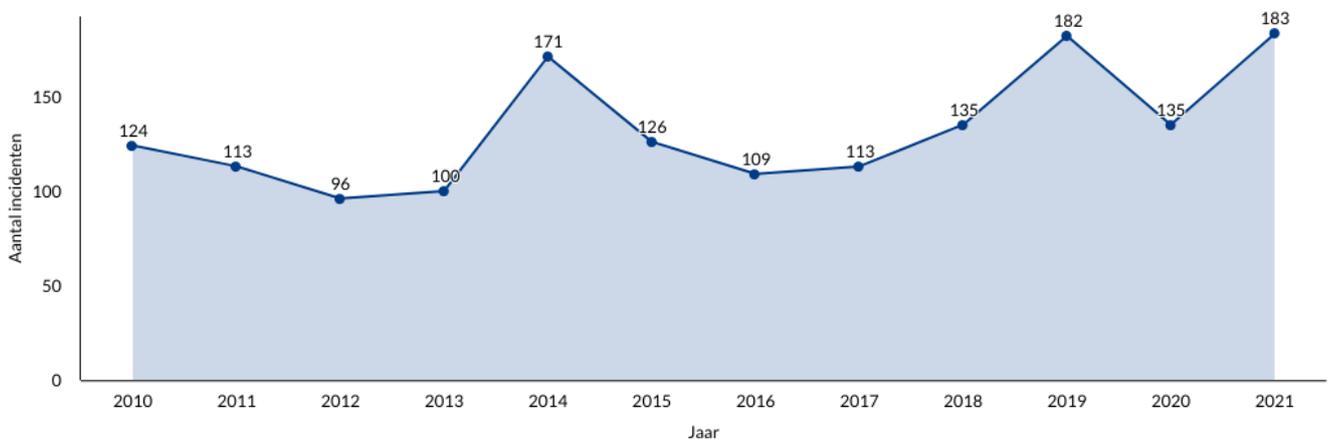# CIDI Antisemitism Monitor 2021: summary

CIDI recorded a total of 183 antisemitic incidents in 2021, the highest number of incidents ever registered by CIDI in a calendar year. This is a substantial increase of 36% compared to 2020 (135 incidents) and practically the same number as in 2019, when a previous all-time peak of 182 antisemitic incidents was recorded.

More importantly, it is important to look at the overall trend in recent years. From this it can be concluded that antisemitism continues to grow slowly but steadily in the Netherlands. Some increase in real life incidents compared to 2021 was to be expected, with the May 2021 Gaza war provoking a new all-time record number of antisemitic incidents.

Total antisemitic incidents recorded in CIDI Antisemitism Monitor from 2010

A closer look at incidents in 2021 reveals the following trends:

- Escalations of violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are used as an excuse to attack or intimidate Jews in the Netherlands. An image of "evil oppressors" is applied not only to Israel or Israeli government policy, but to Jews in general, crossing the line between legitimate criticism of Israel and antisemitism. The Gaza war in May 2021 saw a dramatic increase in the number of antisemitic incidents recorded in the Netherlands and worldwide, compared to the previous months. 50 of the 183 incidents recorded in 2021 took place within four weeks of the start of May 2021's Gaza escalation.

- People who walk down the street who are recognizable as Jewish, such as those wearing a skullcap, often face abusive or intimidating behaviour. Reports of such incidents skyrocketed in May 2021, when the conflict between Israel and Hamas flared up. This explains why many Jews change their attire or appearance in public, or deliberately conceal their Jewish identity in their daily life, such as at school or work.

- The number of antisemitic incidents in schools rose sharply from 3 in 2020 to 13 in 2021. Again, bullies often see the conflict between Israel and Hamas as a reason to turn against Jewish classmates. Among the reports are heartbreaking stories of children who no longer want to be Jewish after being victims of antisemitic bullying, or children who become aware of their Jewish identity for the first time by experiencing antisemitism.

- The memory of Jewish victims of the Holocaust is often abused by people who want to protest the government's COVID-19 policies. Measures taken to reduce the spread of disease were frequently compared to Nazi-era oppression of Jews. Jews or Jewish institutions that speak out against such Holocaust distortion become the targets of antisemitic insults and threats, with MPs from the Forum for Democracy (FVD) party being notable and frequent culprits.

In addition to incidents of verbal abuse in the streets and bullying in schools, we also see these trends in digital hate messages and threats. Within these three categories, the number of incidents has at least doubled compared to 2020.

Online antisemitism not aimed at specific individuals is not recorded (separately) in this CIDI Antisemitism Monitor. The number of online messages is simply too large to keep track of manually. In order to gain insight into the prevalence of antisemitism online, which can no longer be separated from the 'real' world, CIDI commissioned a study by the Utrecht Data School of Utrecht University.

Because the methodology for this study still had to be developed, the report is still behind schedule. The study of online antisemitism in the year 2020 was completed in early 2022, and will be published shortly. In it, 200,395 anti-Jewish posts were identified.

Antisemitism is at odds with basic democratic rights. Jews have the right to be themselves in safety. The following recommendations and best practices, among others, can help counter antisemitism:

- **Include the history of antisemitism in the national educational curriculum:**

If all students are given a basic knowledge of what antisemitism is and how prejudice is passed on, antisemitism becomes easier to recognise as such. This helps society develop a better immune response against group hatred.

- **Increase judicial capacity and investigative powers in cases of criminal discrimination:**

Police should be given more resources to track down perpetrators of criminal discrimination. Too often, perpetrators go unpunished even though the means and evidence are present to investigate these crimes. This weakens the deterrent nature of laws meant to prevent discrimination and hate speech.

- **Invest in research:**

Good knowledge of relevant facts helps to focus interventions on areas where they are most needed or will have the most effect. Ministries and governments can initiate their own studies or repeat previous studies to get a better idea of which policies work best, and what these policies require.