

Report on Antisemitism 2023

for the German, Italian and
Romansh language areas
of Switzerland



Stiftung gegen
Rassismus und
Antisemitismus

Fondation contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme
Fondazione contro il razzismo e l'antisemitismo
Foundation against racism and antisemitism



Table of Contents

Foreword	3	8. Guest article: What happened at some universities after 7 October 2023: an attempted analysis	23
Overview	5	9. Attachments	25
1. General analysis	6	9.1 Data	
2. Statistics	11	9.2 Methods	
2.1 Incidents in 2023		9.2.1 How does the SIG find out about incidents?	
2.2 Online incidents		9.2.2 Processes involved in online research	
2.3 Triggers		9.2.3 Geographical scope	
3. The most serious incidents	18	9.2.4 Nature of reporting	
4. Safety of the Jewish community	19	9.2.5 Definitions: antisemitism, anti-Zionism, criticism of the state of Israel	
5. Recommendations and action areas	21	9.2.6 Incidents and their categories	
6. Prevention of antisemitism	22	9.3 Summary of incidents and analysis	
7. Positive developments in 2023			



[Official website](#)

Foreword

As a result of the horrific terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas on 7 October 2023, antisemitism has manifested itself in Switzerland in a way that we could not have imagined. People wearing Star of David necklaces have been beaten, spat on and verbally abused. Walls of buildings have been defaced with graffiti bearing slogans such as “Death to Jews”. Demonstrations compare Israel under attack with the Nazis and demand the violent extinction of the Jewish state. All of these events have left us stunned.

Nonetheless, surveys also show that the proportion of the Swiss population with strong antisemitic prejudices has not increased in recent years and remains at around 10%. This latent antisemitism ferments beneath the surface, but usually does not come to light. However, if there is a trigger, as we have seen in recent months with Israel’s war against Hamas, it breaks through and manifests itself in appalling physical attacks, letters, social media posts and graffiti.

The last few months have been difficult for Swiss Jews. It is not only the events in Israel that have been a great burden. The feeling of no longer being safe when recognisable as Jewish has also affected the lives of many. As a society, we must not allow this to happen. We must not allow the Middle East conflict to be fought here in Switzerland. We cannot tolerate people having to hide their religion and their origin because they are afraid of being beaten, spat on and insulted. We must ensure that Switzerland remains a peaceful and free country in which all people are respected and treated equally.

This is the task of civil society, which must stand up to hatred of all kinds with counter-arguments, civil courage and dialogue. But it is also a key task of politicians and the

authorities. Unfortunately, the same demands need to be repeated and emphasised here. We urgently require more government involvement in monitoring antisemitism and racism (particularly at the federal level) and an examination of the legal means of recording and restricting hate speech. These tasks cannot be the sole responsibility of NGOs and associations. We need political measures to influence social media platforms. These must prevent, or at least limit, the dissemination of messages of hatred towards minorities. The federal government also needs to swiftly implement the required action with a clear strategy against antisemitism. Finally, we need a ban on Nazi symbols. Although the will is there, the various, sometimes competing, initiatives in Parliament on the subject are causing delays. A solution is being jeopardised by a debate that is in danger of drifting into irrelevance. We very much hope that Parliament will take a constructive approach.

**Dr Ralph Lewin, President of the SIG, and
Dr Zsolt Balkanyi-Guery, President of the GRA**



Report an antisemitic incident



Have you experienced or witnessed an antisemitic incident?

Have you seen an antisemitic post on social media?

Contact us via

+41 43 305 07 77

incident@swissjews.ch

swissjews.ch/reportincident

[Report incident](#)

Any antisemitic incidents you have personally experienced or witnessed in the German, Italian or Romansh language areas of Switzerland can be reported to the SIG Office. These may include physical assaults, verbal abuse, offensive graffiti, letters and messages, or posts or comments seen on the internet or social media. The incidents will be analysed and classified by us, and counselling offered to those affected.

Please get in touch even if you are unsure whether the incident is antisemitic in nature or not. We will gladly help you with the classification.



Overview

155

incidents
(real world)

of which

10

Physical assaults

42

Offensive graffiti

47

Verbal abuse

38

Comments

8

Public acts

10

Posters/banners

975

incidents
(online)

of which

45.5%

Conspiracy theories

31.5%

General antisemitism

18.5%

Israel-related
antisemitism

4.5%

Shoah denial /
trivialisation



1. General analysis

Antisemitism in the real world

Compared to the previous year, there was an enormous and unprecedented increase in registered real-world antisemitic incidents to 155 cases (2022: 57). That means that within a year, the number of incidents almost tripled. The vast majority of these occurred after the Hamas terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023. 114 incidents were recorded in the period of nearly three months between 7 October and the end of the year. During the whole of the year under review, there were ten physical assaults (compared to only one in 2022), six of them in October alone, and a total of seven by the end of the year. The large increases in the categories of offensive graffiti, public acts and posters/banners can also be attributed to the period after 7 October: 34 of the 42 registered pieces of graffiti (2022: 9), seven of the eight public acts (2022: 1) and all 10 posters/banners (2022: 1) originate from that period. In the case of verbal abuse, the unequal distribution over the year is less pronounced: 18 of the 47 incidents (2022: 16) were registered after 7 October. The only category which did not record an unusually high number of incidents in the fourth quarter was comments, with 11 of 38 reports coming after 7 October. This leads to the assumption that people with antisemitic ideas gave free rein to their hatred after the attacks by using stronger forms of expression than statements alone.

In summary, antisemitism manifested itself clearly and noticeably in terms of real-world incidents in Switzerland in 2023. Such an accumulation of assaults, offensive graffiti, verbal abuse and antisemitic incidents during demonstrations in such a short period of time is unprecedented in our period of investigation. The content of the graffiti and letters, with death threats and Shoah extermination fantasies, has also reached a level of vehemence not previously seen.

As in recent years, a number of unreported cases is to be expected, particularly as regards verbal abuse and comments, as some incidents are probably still not made known to the SIG or the police. This is unavoidable in any collection of data based on voluntary reporting.

The SIG recorded 85% of all antisemitic incidents through its own monitoring and 15% through reports. This roughly coincides with the fact that 86% of all incidents happened online and 14% in the real world. However, there were slight variations here too in 2023. While almost all incidents in the real world are usually reported to us, in the last three months of 2023 SIG also frequently recorded incidents at demonstrations and offensive graffiti through its own monitoring of media reports. At the same time, more online incidents were reported than usual, so the figures evened out.

Antisemitism online

Throughout the year under review, there was only a relatively small increase in the number of antisemitic incidents in the digital world, from 853 to 975 incidents. But here too there is a major imbalance in distribution: 459 incidents, almost half, were recorded in the three months after 7 October. Telegram continues to account for the majority of incidents observed and reported, although the percentage decreased slightly from 75% in 2022 to 68% in 2023. The proportion on X (formerly Twitter) remained the same at 17%. Facebook's share rose slightly from 5.5% (2022) to 7.3%. Unfortunately, the proportion of cases in comment sections on online media almost doubled to 3.2% compared to the previous year. However, these incidents are spread throughout the year. There is no link to 7 October.

Telegram continues to be the platform in Switzerland on which open antisemitism is possible without posts being deleted and

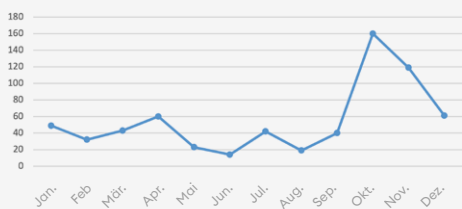


users blocked. This is where the anti-state, anti-society and conspiracy-theory subculture described in last year's antisemitism report continues to operate, in which antisemitism is practised almost unopposed. In terms of content and appearance, it adapts to current issues, be it Covid, the war in Ukraine or, most recently, Israel's war against the terrorist organisation Hamas.

Most of the same Telegram groups were observed as in recent years. This enables figures and topics to be compared. As with the war in Ukraine, when many of these groups turned from opponents of Covid policy to Putin propagandists, a new shift to pro-Palestine and anti-Israel took place after 7 October 2023. However, the basic idea of these people remains the same: they are against the mainstream, against the West and believe that all crises and wars are orchestrated by an elite in order to turn humankind into mindless slaves once and for all.

The number of antisemitic incidents in the Telegram groups remained steady in the first nine months, with some fluctuations. In October, a huge peak followed the Hamas terror attacks. Since then, the number has been falling again.

Number of incidents in Telegram groups 2023



The number of antisemitic posts directly related to Israel's war against Hamas averaged just under 50% in the Telegram groups between October and December. Over the course of the year, the proportion of antisemitic posts directly

related to Covid and the war in Ukraine were 5.5% and 9.4% respectively. These two issues are therefore no longer at the forefront, but they still retain a place in these groups.

It is often not easy to ascertain the political views of the authors of antisemitic comments. The usernames chosen or the antisemitic statements themselves may allow for certain political views to be assumed, but this is not possible in the majority of incidents. The figures are therefore too small to make a statistically valid comment. Where conclusions can be drawn, they still point to known groups: the far right, the far left, Islamists, so-called "mainstream society" and the aforementioned subculture that does not clearly fit in with the traditional right-left framework.

The SIG has reorganised its online monitoring as of 1 January 2024. Software enables us to examine social media and the comment sections of online media more widely. This will allow a more comprehensive picture of online antisemitism in Switzerland and a more detailed analysis of it. The first results will be published in the report for the year 2024.

Conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories have gained a great deal of popularity in recent years. This has also led to an increase in antisemitic conspiracy theories. Their share in the number of online incidents fell slightly this year to 45.5% (2022: 57%). However, this is mainly due to the sharp increase in the number of Israel-related incidents. It is also the case, however, that many Israel-related incidents contain elements of conspiracy theory and can therefore be classified under both categories. Conspiracy theories, which circulate almost exclusively on the internet, remain as in recent years by far the largest of the four content categories (see section 10.2.6 for an explanation of the content categories).

In 2022, the Khazar conspiracy theory gained significant popularity, particularly in relation to the war in Ukraine. This claims that Eastern European Ashkenazi Jews are not descended from the Jews expelled from ancient Israel, but from the nomadic Turkic Khazars, who founded an empire in the North Caucasus in the 7th century and converted to Judaism. While in 2022 “Khazar” or “Khazar mafia” were mainly used as a code word for “Jews,” this conspiracy theory is once again being used in its original sense in the wake of Israel’s war against Hamas in an attempt to delegitimise the Israeli state. A large part of the Israeli population, and above all the founding fathers of the state, are Ashkenazim. If they were not descended from the original population of ancient Israel, they would not have the right to resettle in that area. This line of reasoning is thus intended to deny Israel the right to exist.

- Conspiracy theories that Israelis or “the Zionists” are not real Jews, but have only adopted Judaism in order to colonise the territory of Palestine. This is a variation of the Khazar theory, which is also often employed directly.
- Conspiracy theories that “the Zionists” financed Adolf Hitler and the Nazis and instigated the Holocaust so that Europe would allow the founding of the state of Israel out of guilt.
- Comparisons of Israel and the Israeli government with the Nazis and Israel’s war against Hamas with the Holocaust.

Israel-related antisemitism

Unsurprisingly, there was a large increase in incidents in the category of Israel-related antisemitism in 2023. The 227 incidents represent a fourfold increase compared to 2022 (58). At 20%, the proportion of the total number of incidents was also significantly higher than in 2022 (6.4%). This increase can be traced to the last three months of the year and the many antisemitic incidents associated with Israel’s war against Hamas.

Israel-related antisemitism after 7 October manifested itself in several ways:

- Representation of Israelis with classic antisemitic stereotypes: they are blood-thirsty monsters who like to kill children. Israelis are allowed to do whatever they want because “the Jews” or “the Zionists” are in control of the governments of Europe and the United States. The Western press are biased in their reporting of the war, as Israel, “the Jews” or “the Zionists” supposedly control the media.

Survey results from November 2023

In mid-November 2023, Blick commissioned Sotomo to conduct a representative survey on Israel’s war against Hamas. It showed that 10% of participants responded “agree” with the statement “Jews have too much influence in Switzerland”, and a further 12% responded “somewhat agree”. To the question “What feelings do you have towards people who belong to Judaism?” 8% answered “very negative” and another 12% “somewhat negative”. These two answers are basically consistent with the statistics collected regularly by the federal government since 2010, according to which around 10% of the Swiss population have a strong antisemitic attitude.

A good example of the adaptability of the Telegram groups studied and their turn towards Israel-related antisemitism is the personal channel of a well-known opponent of Covid policy. He regularly makes posts that his channel’s followers can comment on. After a long period of focus on the Covid-19 response, the WHO and the WEF, he became a supporter of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine in February 2022. His own posts at the time contained very little antisemitic content, but he tolerated the many antisemitic comments on his posts from his followers. Occasionally, however, he did show his sympathy for Palestinians and, conversely, his distaste for Israel and “the



Zionists". After 7 October, a veritable wave of antisemitism could be seen on his channel. He posted about Israel's war against Hamas several times a day, and his followers posted numerous comments. By the end of the year, there had been 200 antisemitic incidents. Now not only the comments but also many of his own posts had to be classified as antisemitic.

Time and again, the operator of the Telegram channel protested against accusations that he was antisemitic. He purported to have nothing against Jews: he only hated "the Zionists". Reading his posts, however, it quickly becomes clear that he is not simply referring to Israelis or Jews who are in favour of an Israeli state. For him, "the Zionists" are the all-powerful group that dominates everything and only pretends to be Jewish in order to profit from the victim status of the Holocaust and to oppress the Palestinian population in Israel. He also claimed several times that the media in Switzerland were "Zionist-controlled". For the operator of the Telegram channel, many supposed "saviours" of the anti-government scene, such as Donald Trump and Argentina's President Javier Milei, are also "Zionists" to be regarded as a "controlled opposition". His fixation on "the Zionists" is thus a mixture of the Khazar conspiracy theory and the use of the term "Zionists" as a code word for "Jews".

Antisemitic slogan according to the IHRA's definition

Since the outbreak of Israel's war against Hamas, the slogan "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" has appeared very regularly in various contexts. It is chanted at demonstrations and appears on banners and signs. On flyers or in appeals, it is used as an overarching battle cry. It is also ubiquitous on social media and as graffiti on buildings. However, the postulated freedom for Palestine has a deeply dark side, which seems to be unclear to many people. "From the river to the sea" is not a criticism of the Israeli state, but rather clearly antisemitic.

This finding is based on the IHRA definition of antisemitism, which is recognised and applied by many countries and organisations around the world and which the SIG and the GRA reference in their work. The decisive factor is what the slogan actually insinuates and invokes as a demand. The "river" and the "sea" referred to are the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. In between the two today lie the state of Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A Palestine from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean can only exist if the state of Israel is first wiped out. This denies the Jewish state the right to exist. This is where the definition of antisemitism comes into play. In a second step, the real-world consequences of such a dissolution of the state of Israel must be taken into account. There are about seven million Jews living in Israel, whose security is linked to the state of Israel. In this way, the slogan is tantamount to a call for violence. On 7 October 2023, the world was shown what such an extermination could look like. Hamas, too, uses this concept of struggle in its 2017 charter, in which it also explicitly proclaims the destruction of the state of Israel.

Shoah denial/trivialisation

There were 53 incidents in this content category in the year under review. It remains the smallest of the four content categories. Nevertheless, the number of incidents increased again during the year (2022: 46). However, due to the general increase in incidents, the proportion remained roughly the same. There were clear statements that directly denied the Shoah. For example, it was denied that six million Jews were murdered and that extermination camps with gas chambers existed. In the year under review, this was often attempted in Telegram groups, particularly through the use of official-looking documents that were either forged or taken out of context. These documents either recorded very low numbers of victims or confirmed that there were no gas chambers in a particular concentration camp. The missing context here is the fact that not all

concentration camps were designed as extermination camps with gas chambers. That does not mean that there were no extermination camps with gas chambers. Further “proof” is the number of Jews living in Germany around 1933. There were approximately 560,000. This leads to questions regarding how the Nazis could have murdered six million if there were only half a million Jewish people in Germany. Here, too, those making the argument deliberately conceal the fact that the victims of the Shoah came from almost all parts of Europe and were mostly not German but Eastern European Jews from Poland (three million murdered) and the Soviet Union (one million).

Shoah trivialisation includes comments and posts with distasteful jokes and statements to the effect that the concentration camps were “not that bad”. In addition, phrases such as “Hitler didn’t manage to finish the job, unfortunately” appear again and again. Of the 53 incidents in this content category, 35 denied the Shoah and 18 trivialised it.

Such statements are made in a wide variety of environments. In the far-right scene, there are both people who deny the genocide of the Jews and those who advocate it. Many of the posts denying or trivialising the Shoah come from the Telegram groups studied. However, the content and authorship of the posts (which described the Shoah as the “greatest lie in German history”) suggest that the authors have a far-right background.

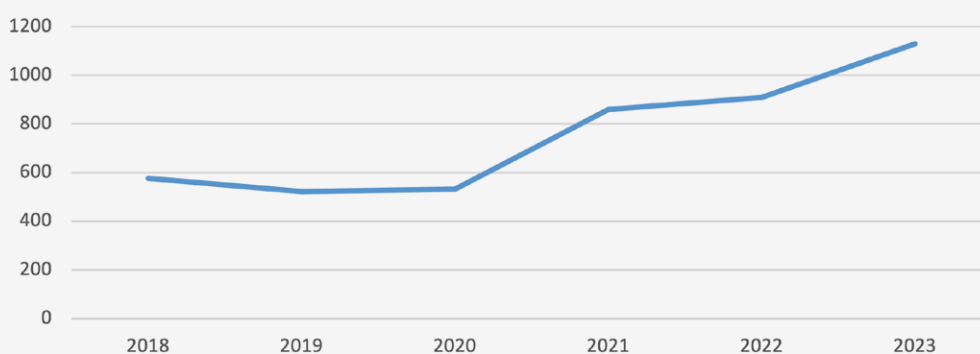


2. Statistics

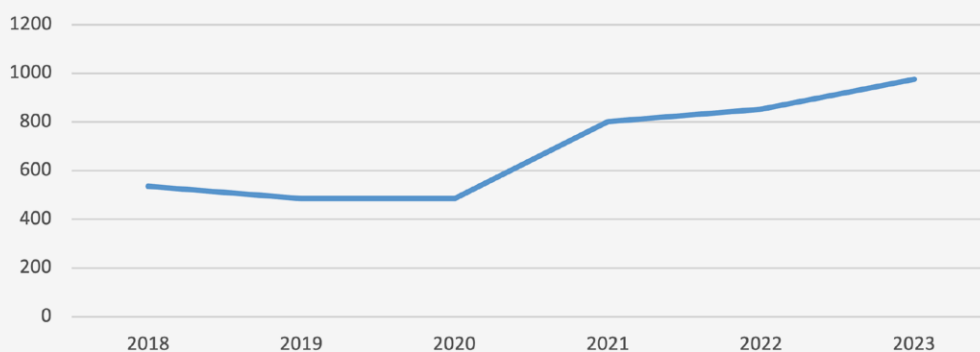
2.1 Incidents in 2023 in the German, Italian and Romansh language areas of Switzerland

Antisemitic incidents – en dash here, not hyphen trends over time

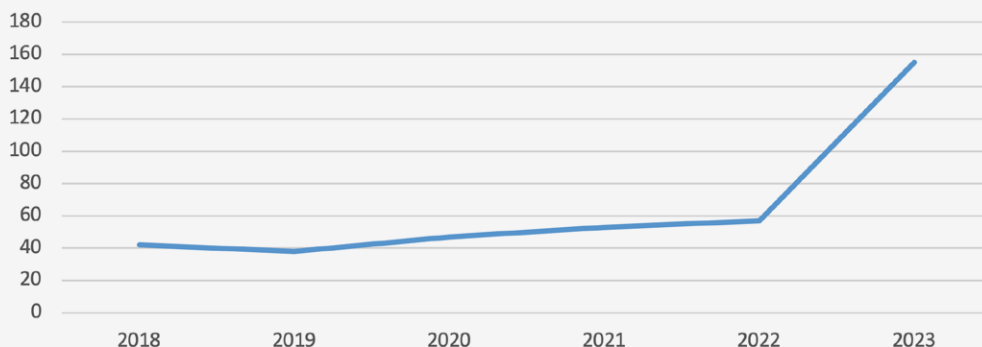
Change in the number of antisemitic incidents
2018 – 2023 (all incidents)



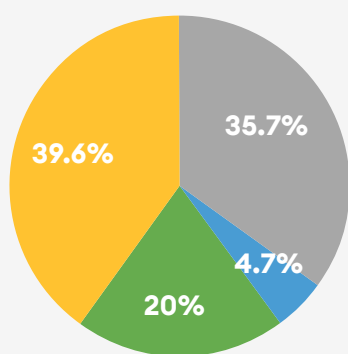
Change in the number of antisemitic incidents
2018 – 2023 (online)



Change in the number of antisemitic incidents 2018–2023 (real world)



Distribution of incidents by content

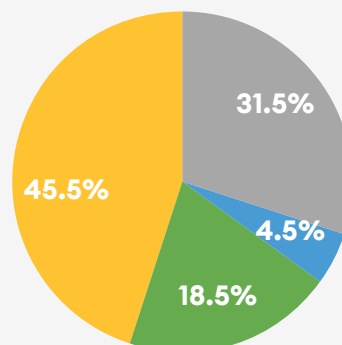


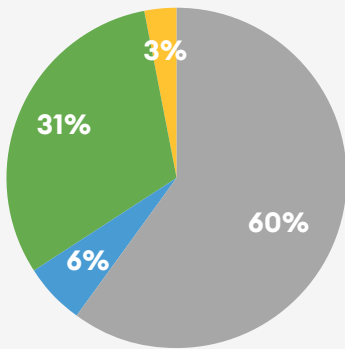
Distribution by content (all incidents)

- General antisemitism **35.7%**
- Shoah denial/ trivialisation **4.7%**
- Israel-related antisemitism **20%**
- Antisemitic conspiracy theories **39.6%**

Distribution by content (online)

- General antisemitism **31.5%**
- Shoah denial/ trivialisation **4.5%**
- Israel-related antisemitism **18.5%**
- Antisemitic conspiracy theories **45.5%**

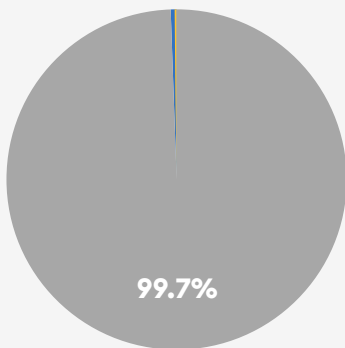




Distribution by content (real world)

- General antisemitism **60%**
- Shoah denial/ trivialisation **6%**
- Israel-related antisemitism **31%**
- Antisemitic conspiracy theories **3%**

Distribution of incidents by type

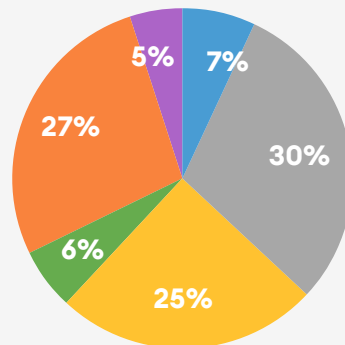


Distribution by type (online)

- Comments **99.7%**
- Caricatures **0.2%**
- Verbal abuse **0.1%**

Distribution by type (real world)

- Physical assault **7%**
- Verbal abuse **30%**
- Comments **25%**
- Posters/ banners **6%**
- Offensive graffiti **27%**
- Public acts **5%**

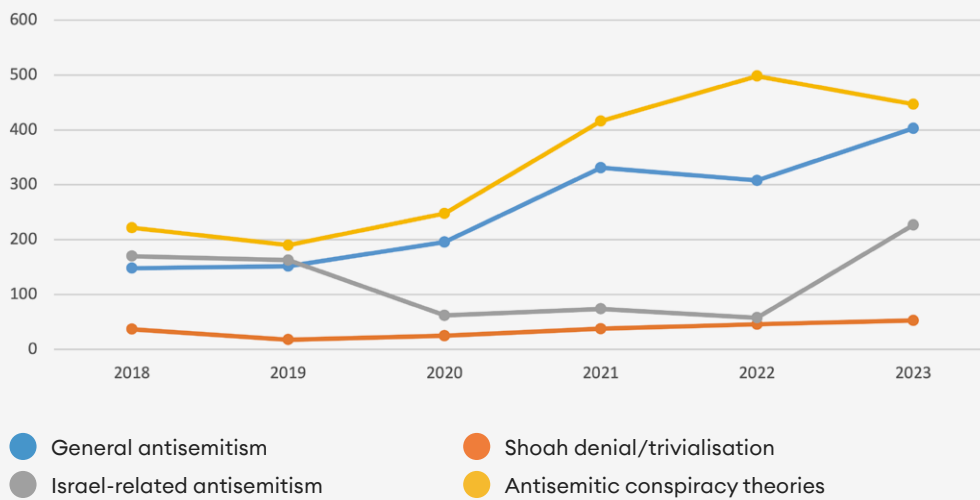


Distribution of all incidents by month for 2022 and 2023

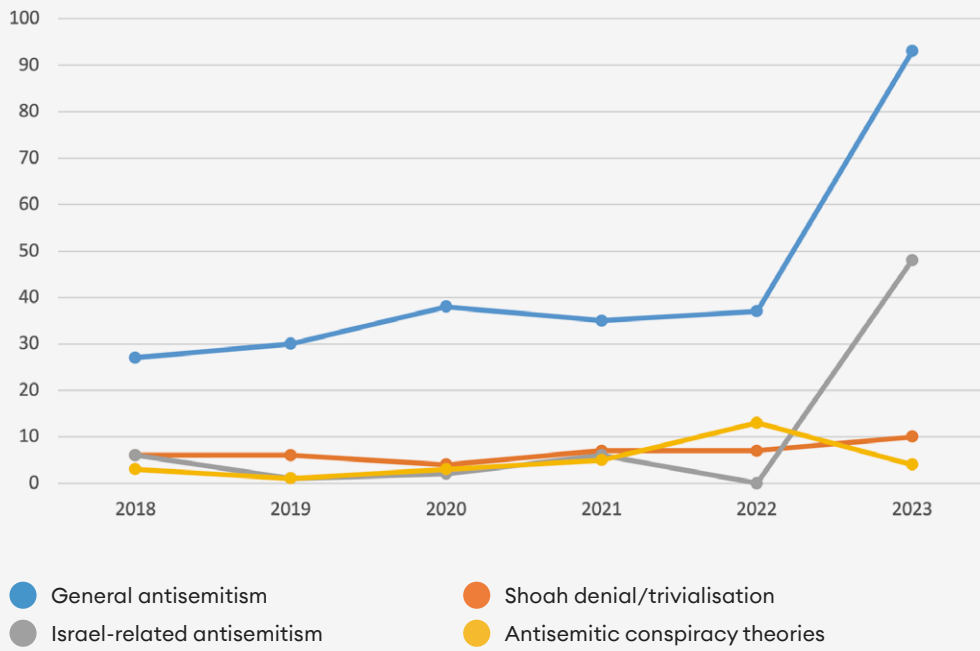
Month	Total incidents		Actions		Sent items		Online	
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
January	68	73	2	1	1	3	65	69
February	64	83	2	4	1	4	61	75
March	68	104	1	2	3	0	64	102
April	107	86	6	3	2	2	99	81
May	45	80	4	2	1	2	40	76
June	28	62	2	4	0	12	26	46
July	57	50	2	3	1	0	54	47
August	56	57	7	3	1	1	48	53
September	49	75	6	3	0	0	43	72
October	239	119	37	3	13	0	189	116
November	238	82	37	3	10	1	191	78
December	111	39	13	0	3	1	95	38
Total	1130	910	119	31	36	26	975	853

Trends of incidents over time since 2018

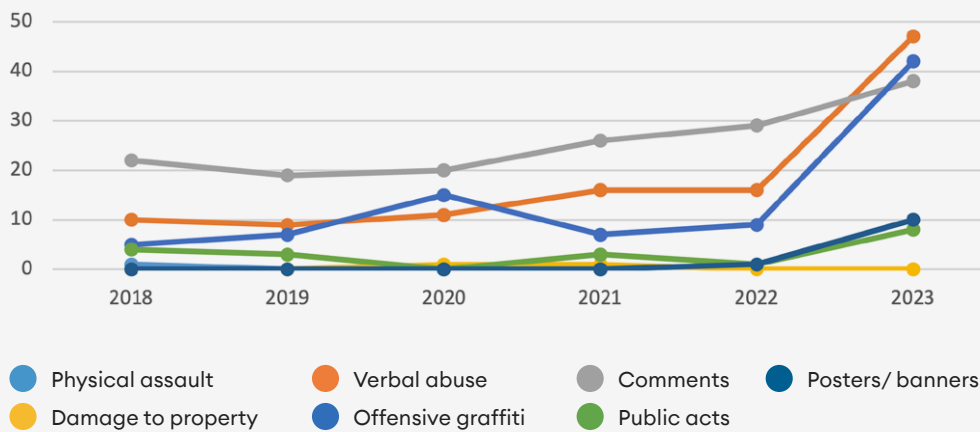
Trends by content (all incidents)



Trends by content (real world)



Trends by type (real world)



2.2 Online incidents

Recording online incidents

There are certain difficulties associated with monitoring the occurrence of antisemitism online. The large number of online posts makes it impossible to cover all social media platforms and online media products, even with significant resources. The cases recorded do not therefore serve to determine the absolute level of antisemitic comments on the internet. However, it is possible for the SIG to use its online monitoring to record certain trends and moods and illustrate them in the Report on

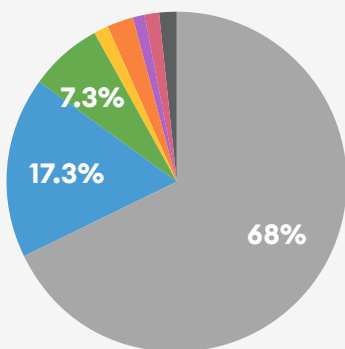
Antisemitism. The figures collected in this way also help to produce a qualitative analysis that is as informative as possible.

Distribution of online incidents

The table below shows where the online incidents were recorded. It should be noted that for the media outlets (20 Minuten, Blick, etc.), only incidents observed in the comment sections on the website of the relevant source are counted. Comments posted on articles published on the outlet’s Facebook page are categorized under “Facebook”.

Distribution of online incidents by platform

	Telegram	Twitter	Facebook	Inside Paradeplatz	WhatsApp	Watson	Die Weltwoche	Tages-Anzeiger	Instagram	20 minutes	NZZ	CH Media	Other	Total
January	49	13	1	1	1									65
February	32	23				2	4							61
March	43	12	6				3							64
April	60	15	15	7									2	99
May	23	11	2				1						3	40
June	14	7	3					2						26
July	42	2	4	4					1				1	54
August	19		16						11	1			1	48
September	40	1	2											43
October	160	19	3		2				4				1	189
November	119	45	13		1				5	1	2		5	191
December	61	21	6						1			3	3	95
Total 2023	642	169	71	12	4	2	8	2	22	2	2	3	16	975
Percentage share	68%	17.3%	7.3%	1.23%	0.4%	0.2%	0.8%	0.2%	2.25%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	1.64%	100%



- Telegram **68%**
- X (formerly Twitter) **17.3%**
- Facebook **7.3%**
- Inside Paradeplatz **1.23%**
- Instagram **2.25%**
- Weltwoche **0.8%**
- Others **1.64%**
- WhatsApp **0.4%**
- Watson **0.2%**
- Tages-Anzeiger **0.2%**
- 20 Minuten **0.2%**
- NZZ **0.2%**
- CH Media **0.3%**

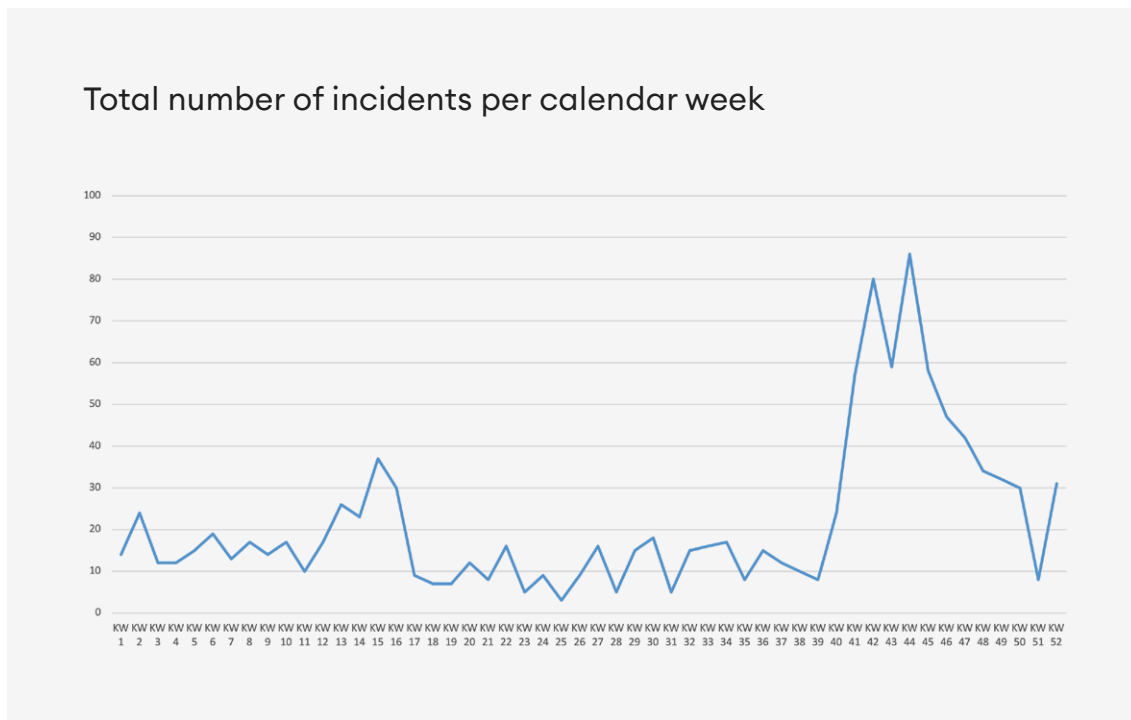
2.3 Triggers

Triggers are events or occurrences that, for a limited period of time (usually a few days), cause a massive spike in the number of anti-semitic incidents. They may relate to international events (e.g. associated with the Middle East), national events (local referendums, court proceedings, etc.) or media reports.

In previous years, most peaks in the diagram below could be attributed to specific triggers. This has changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the monitoring of Telegram groups. There were and are now two long-term triggers (“Covid” and “the war in Ukraine”), which directly or indirectly perpetuate anti-semitic incidents. The attacks of 7 October and Israel’s subsequent war against Hamas were a very powerful trigger that led to

a massive increase in anti-semitic incidents for a few weeks, as can be seen from the graph.

There are still smaller triggers, but they do not necessarily lead to clear swings in the graph. Examples in 2023 included an article about the SIG on “Inside Paradeplatz” and the video of strictly religious Jewish tourists with prams on a bike trail that led to numerous anti-semitic comments on several platforms.



3. The most serious incidents

Physical assaults

- In April, a Jewish pupil was called a “fucking Jew” at a secondary school in the canton of Basel Landschaft and was also beaten.
- A Jewish tourist was insulted by a local in a car park in Saas-Fee in Valais in August. The latter then got into his car and tried to run over the tourist.
- A pupil in a district school in the canton of Aargau was insulted (Nazi salute, “You should be gassed”), shoved, beaten and had his trousers pulled down.
- Two devout siblings were both punched without warning by a man at Zurich Airport station.
- After an argument over an incorrectly parked car in November in the city of Zurich, a man was choked, threatened and asked if he was Jewish by two other men.

Verbal abuse

- In January, “Heil Hitler” was shouted at a Jewish man in the city of Zurich.
- In June, a Jewish pupil in the canton of Bern was told by classmates: “Jew, Jew. We must defeat the Jews for the German Reich.”
- While distributing leaflets in the city of Zurich in October, a Jewish politician was insulted with statements such as “Zionist shit”, “Jew shit” and “mass murderer”.
- In November, a woman walked past the empty Shabbat tables in memory of the Hamas hostages in a square in the city of Zurich and shouted at people, “Fucking Jew, it’s just because of you fucking Jews that they closed the square.”

Comments

- A condominium owner in the canton of Graubünden received a letter in March stating that the condominium owners’ meeting had decided that he may no longer rent his apartment to Jewish people in the future.
- In April, a driving instructor told his pupil in the canton of Zurich that Jews were greedy for money, without knowing that she was Jewish.

Sent items

- The SIG received an email in October stating: “We will hunt you down and kill you until [sic] not a single one of you is left alive”.
- A Jewish community in the canton of Bern received an email in October stating: “Gas chamber again to finally cleanse the Earth of dirty stink [sic] Jews.”
- A Jewish community in the canton of Zurich received a letter in October stating: “I am delighted by the special treatment of Jews by Hamas. It’s a beautiful campaign. I hope there’s more. Heinrich Himmler would be proud. I regret that the SS could not finish the job. If they had, there would be no dirty Jewish state.” The letter was signed with “Heil Hitler!”

Offensive graffiti

- In October and November, “Death to the Jews” was sprayed several times on walls in the city of Zurich.
- In the canton of Basel Stadt in November, a wall was sprayed with “Expel the Jews from Europe or the white race will perish”.
- In November in Küsnacht in the canton of Zurich, numerous swastikas and slogans such as “Fuck Jews” were sprayed along a path.



- In December in the city of Zurich, the following was written in a public toilet under a Star of David: “Get in the oven! For a better and more peaceful world :-)”.

Posters/banners

- At pro-Palestinian demonstrations in various cities, the slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” was displayed on banners and signs. There were also Nazi and Holocaust comparisons, and signs such as “Well done Israel, Hitler would be proud” were observed.

4. Safety of the Jewish community in Switzerland

In its most extreme form, antisemitism manifests itself in physical assaults on Jewish people and institutions. The Jewish community and its institutions in Switzerland are subject to a heightened level of threat, with meeting places, synagogues and schools all potential targets for terrorist attacks. This danger emanates from far-right and Islamist groups in particular. This assessment of the situation is based on the experience of a number of terrorist attacks worldwide and in Europe. The Swiss Federal Intelligence Service (NDB) confirms this view in its annual review and classifies the Jewish and Muslim communities in particular as being at increased risk.

Europe has been confronted with the rising threat of extremist violence for over ten years. The large number of attacks proves that this is not a temporary phenomenon but a permanent and real threat to safety. Over a dozen European countries have been affected, demonstrating that this kind of terrorist

activity does not recognise national borders. Attacks have repeatedly and specifically targeted Jewish institutions. The attacks on the Jewish Museum in Brussels, a synagogue in Copenhagen, a Jewish school in Toulouse, a kosher supermarket in Paris and a synagogue in Halle are examples of antisemitic aggression targeted at the Jewish community. Around the world, further examples include the attacks on synagogues in Pittsburgh and San Diego in the United States.

The Jewish community in Switzerland has faced rising demands on its security for decades and has responded quickly to the increased threat evident in recent years. Safety and security arrangements covering building security, security staff and training have been updated and reinforced. The resulting costs are a major burden for the Jewish communities. Implementing proper security for Jewish institutions is non-negotiable and reducing security measures is not an option, despite the heavy financial burden. The Jewish communities reached the limit of their ability to pay for this long ago and are consequently being forced to make cuts to other budget areas, such as training, events and education. This affects the very purpose of a religious community: the practice of its religion.

After years of debates about accountability and responsibilities regarding safety and security, the unsatisfactory situation was acknowledged by the federal government in 2017, and in November 2019, the Federal Council passed the “Verordnung über Massnahmen zur Gewährleistung der Sicherheit von Minderheiten mit besonderen Schutzbedürfnissen” (regulation on measures to guarantee the security of minorities requiring special protection). The law is in accordance with the Federal Council’s July 2018 resolution to increase the safety of at-risk minorities and reduce the burden on communities to finance security measures. The measures set out in the resolution are



based on a security concept put forward by a working group with representatives from the government, the cantons and municipalities, and the minority groups affected – including the SIG. The resolution states that funding will be provided for safety-related projects implemented by the minorities concerned in the areas of structural and technical measures to make buildings safe, training, awareness-raising and education.

At the time, the federal government only provided support payments of up to CHF 500,000 per year for the above measures. To date, the Federal Office of Police has conducted three application cycles from 2020 to 2022. The projects submitted by Jewish communities and institutions were primarily aimed at structural measures to increase the security of synagogues, schools and community buildings. The volume of requests has shown the urgent need of the Jewish community for assistance in the area of security. Between 2020 and 2022, a total of 27 applications were approved, including 23 from the Jewish community. However, the need for financial resources to improve the security of Jewish institutions far exceeded the available resources. As a result, some applications had to be rejected. In this context, it has also become clear that funding to support ongoing safety and security costs is urgently needed.

Ultimately, in April 2022, the Federal Council decided to increase federal funding from CHF 500,000 to a total of CHF 2.5 million per year, starting in 2023. As part of this, new funding is available for the federal government to invest in comprehensive security concepts to safeguard facilities at risk. For the first time, the federal government has taken account of the high ongoing security costs for vulnerable facilities. The high demand for support was evident in the number of approvals granted in 2023. Of the 34 applications approved, 26 were from the Jewish community. The urgency

of the newly created support for security concepts is illustrated by the 19 projects for this category alone.

This number of authorisations was countered by applications which could not be approved, for the most part due to insufficient funds. In 2023, this was demonstrated by the many security measures still outstanding and required by Jewish institutions and the associated ongoing security costs which have burdened the Jewish community. The SIG also assumed that Jewish communities and Jewish institutions would have to provide several million francs in funding themselves due to their precarious position. The general situation had worsened considerably since the outbreak of Israel's war against Hamas, and security measures had to be stepped up. There is still no end in sight to this situation. On this basis, Parliament approved an increase of CHF 2.5 million in funding for security measures for vulnerable minorities in December 2023, with a remarkably high level of approval in both chambers. This should secure funding for all applications for 2024.

Since the start of the process, the federal government had asked the cantons to pay their share of the costs. In the meantime, almost all cantons and cities with substantial Jewish communities have decided to contribute to security costs. The canton and city of Zurich, as well as the cantons of Geneva, Bern and Basel Stadt, have implemented more extensive financial assistance and solutions. In Basel Stadt, solutions were developed even before the federal legislation came into force. However, efforts are currently underway to bring them into alignment. The canton of Vaud and the cities of Biel, Lausanne and Winterthur have also promised support.

Parliament's decision at the end of 2023 and the increase in funding come at the right time. This is the urgently anticipated response to the tense security situation. Financial relief will not



be felt immediately; there will be a delay as authorisation and implementation processes take place. Until then, Jewish communities and institutions will have to continuously adapt to the security requirements in order to protect members, institutions, schools, etc. It is gratifying and a welcome change that this responsible and swift action by Parliament will lead to a noticeable reduction in the security costs of Jewish communities and institutions. Nevertheless, all cantons with Jewish institutions are urged to continue to make regular and substantial contributions towards ongoing security costs. The aim must be to ensure that the Jewish community is permanently relieved of its financial burden in the area of security by means of effective measures.

5. Recommendations and action areas

The annual SIG and GRA Report on Antisemitism provides a well-researched insight into the issue of antisemitism in Switzerland. The presentation and analysis of incidents reported and observed sheds light on the different types of antisemitism and their prevalence and causes. The comparisons over several years allow potentials, trends and dynamics to be interpreted. For the SIG and the GRA themselves, but also for politicians, educational establishments, the media and, finally, for the general public, the report sets out a picture of the overall situation. It serves as a basis on which to develop suitable measures for prevention, education and criminal prosecution. However, Jewish associations and civil society organisations are increasingly reaching the limits of their resources. The SIG and GRA are therefore calling for greater government involvement in order to create a comprehensive 360-degree view of the issue of antisemitism in Switzerland.

More federal support for recording antisemitism

The federal government should increase its support for the various methods used in civil society to monitor and analyse antisemitism. At the same time, it should also strengthen and improve its own instruments for monitoring and analysis, such as the regular “Coexistence in Switzerland” survey and the online reporting platform for racist hate speech.

More legal options in the fight against antisemitism online

Judicial authorities should consider additional legal means to monitor and prosecute those who author and disseminate antisemitic hate speech and conspiracy theories online. In particular, social media platforms must be obliged to have a domicile address in Switzerland in order for judicial authorities to have a contact person. Platforms themselves also have an obligation to greatly increase their own efforts to curb such posts. This applies in particular to Telegram.

More federal support for prevention

Prevention projects from civil society must receive increased, regular and strategic support from the federal government. These projects can deny antisemitism its breeding ground at an early stage. Schools also have an important role to play here. Finally, companies and organisations can review and improve their guidelines and values relating to religion, minorities, antisemitism and racism.



Banning Nazi symbols in public

Politicians are urged to finally ban the use of Nazi symbols in public. Although the will is clearly there, the numerous pending and very similar initiatives in Parliament on this subject are leading to endless debate and thus to unnecessary delay. If there is no agreement on the symbols to be banned, the whole project is in danger of failure. As a first step, the SIG calls for a clear catalogue of Nazi symbols, such as the swastika, the Nazi salute, the Siegrune of the SS, the SS skull and the yellow Judenstern badge, which can be conveyed to the population in a comprehensible way. This does not rule out the possibility that further extremist symbols will be banned in subsequent steps, thereby also fulfilling the demand of the GRA, which is in favour of a more open definition of the ban.

A national strategy in the fight against antisemitism

In order to implement all these points in a meaningful and targeted manner, a national strategy against antisemitism is crucial. This is already being demanded by a majority in Parliament. National strategies and action plans against antisemitism already exist or are currently in development in many European countries. We call on the Federal Council to support the development of such a strategy. The SIG and GRA are ready to assist in this process.

6. Prevention of antisemitism

Since the beginning of the Likrat project twenty years ago, encounters with school classes have steadily increased. 2023 can be regarded as yet another successful year, with

173 school visits. The increase in antisemitic incidents since October shows how important Likrat is for raising awareness, especially in schools.

Likrat Public, the programme for adults, arranged forty meetings. The focus was on hospitals and other health facilities, as they face many questions and challenges surrounding Jewish patients. In addition, the police in Basel and Zurich were made aware of the needs of the Jewish minority.

Likrat Public's summer project started at the beginning of August with the end of Tisha B'Av. The mediation and dialogue project was carried out for the fifth time in Davos, the Saas Valley and the Engadin. In recent years, the project has done much to prevent misunderstandings between the local population and Jewish visitors, and to explain cultural peculiarities to both sides.

7. Positive developments in 2023

Parliament has approved a further increase of CHF 2.5 million in funding for security measures for vulnerable minorities. This will release urgently needed funds to better protect vulnerable Jewish community institutions in Switzerland and to make these measures financially viable. Previous funding has not been sufficient to cover the large number of requests for assistance.

See section 4 "Safety of the Jewish community in Switzerland"



In April, the Federal Council gave the go-ahead for the creation of a memorial to the victims of National Socialism. The memorial is to be built in Bern and open to the public. In addition, in cooperation with the canton of St. Gallen, the planning of a cross-border mediation and networking centre is being supported.

After the canton of Basel Stadt, the SIG was also able to conclude a service agreement with the canton of Bern, the city of Zurich and the canton of St. Gallen for its antisemitism reporting and counselling centre. It was agreed that the SIG will run the antisemitism reporting and counselling centres for these cantons or cities.

8. What happened at some universities after 7 October 2023: an attempted analysis

After 7 October 2023, following the horrific terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel, a wave of solidarity first passed through Switzerland. The crimes of Hamas were unanimously condemned and Israel's right to defend itself against the Islamist Hamas acknowledged. In particular, the fate of the hostages kidnapped by the terrorists, including babies and people in need of medical assistance, shocked the general public. However, solidarity quickly faded and was supplanted by another narrative: that of the struggle of an oppressed people against imperialist occupiers who ruthlessly protect their own interests. The hostages degenerated into settlers who supposedly deserved what came to them and now had to

bear the consequences of their actions. This shift came surprisingly quickly and clearly. Social media amplified the effect. From then on, 7 October 2023 was radically ignored and concealed as a *casus belli*. The new narrative drew on the history of the Middle East at the time of the Ottoman occupation and drew a direct line through the presence of the British and onward to the present day. According to this narrative, Palestine had to be liberated and built "from the river to the sea". It is obvious that the state of Israel would thus be deprived of its right to exist, yet this fact is hardly present in political discourse.

University institutions were also involved in the use and maintenance of this narrative, not only in the United States, where student debates and antisemitic agitation became part of political discussions and even led to the removal of the president of Harvard University, but also in Switzerland. In this country, the Universities of Basel and Bern, as well as universities of applied sciences, were caught up in the vortex of antisemitism. Newer, more and more differentiated disciplines of the humanities were involved, notably urban studies, which is dedicated in particular to the uncovering of social and economic ills and indulges in an almost totalitarian form of wokeism. It denounces all forms of exclusion and social and sexual stigmatisation. The world is divided into oppressive evil on the one side, and good on the other, crying for liberation. Israel and the "Jews" are on the side of evil. The French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut rightly pointed out in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 28 December 2023 that, for woke activists, Israel is the centre of evil. Wokeism as an ideology, he posited, is more persistent than communism and is ultimately linked to Islamism.

Wokeism lacks any methodological depth and largely refrains from debating its results. It elevates research results to the level of truth and derives social action from them. Such



approaches have no place in a university, because trying to explain something is not the same as legitimising it or condemning it. Students have always been political beings who are involved in socio-political matters and civil society. At universities, however, they were encouraged to remove their ideological spectacles and listen to the arguments of the other side. The Roman legal principle *audiatur et altera pars* is a general tenet of our Western community of values. It is also the basis for the democratic form of government. To exclude the other side intellectually and ideologically leads to blind ideology and is intellectual populism, as complex scientific questions are reduced and served with simple explanations. More than that, if the future elite is educated according to this pattern, it will have disastrous consequences for our coexistence. German literary critic Ijoma Mangold's contribution on "The end of woke" in Die Zeit is encouraging here.



The examples in Switzerland have shown that the heads of academic universities and universities of applied sciences are willing to react to antisemitic agitation and to call for scientific thinking within their communities. This admonishment must not, however, become a mere reaction to antisemitic agitation or, worse, a token response. Academic standards, the demand for a variety of methods and the constant assurance of academic quality are essential if universities are to continue to play the role that has been intended for them since their birth as a modern European institution, namely to be a reliable mirror of and corrective for society.

Dr Zsolt Balkanyi-Guery
President of the GRA



9. Appendices

9.1 Dates

Form	Phy.			Verb.			Com.			Pub.	Dam.	Graf.	PB.	Car.	Act.	Sen.	On.	Total
Content	A	A	S	O	A	S	O	A	A	A	A	S	O	Total	Total	Total		
General antisemitism	8	27	12	1	9	14	307	0	0	23	0	0	2	67	26	310	403	
Shoah denial/trivialisation	0	3	0	0	3	0	43	0	0	3	1	0	0	10	0	43	53	
Israel-related antisemitism	2	3	2	0	4	4	179	8	0	16	9	0	0	42	6	179	227	
Antisemitic conspiracy theories	0	0	0	0	0	4	443	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	443	447	
Total	10	33	15	1	16	22	972	8	0	42	10	0	2	119	36	975	1130	

Key: Phy. = Physical assault / Verb. = Verbal abuse / Com. = Comments / Pub. = Public acts / Dam. = Damage to property / Graf. = Offensive graffiti / PB. = Posters/banners / Car. = Caricatures / Act./A = Actions / Sen./S = Sent items / On./O = Online.



9.2 Methods

9.2.1 How does the SIG find out about incidents?

Reported incidents: The SIG operates a reporting site for antisemitic incidents. Incidents that have been observed or experienced personally can be reported via a contact form or by phone or e-mail. These may include physical assaults, verbal abuse, graffiti, letters and messages, or posts or comments seen on the internet or social media. By following up contacts and conducting research it is possible to verify whether the incident occurred as described and whether it was definitely a case of antisemitism. If necessary, the credibility of witnesses or other parties involved may be investigated. Only once the verification process is complete is the incident added to the list of antisemitic incidents for the year concerned.

Media monitoring: The SIG also carries out monitoring of the media and records antisemitic incidents which are reported upon there.

Online research: The SIG carries out research on the internet, the social media and in the comment sections of the online media and records antisemitic incidents. The very nature of the internet makes it impossible to monitor all social media platforms and websites in full and record all incidents. Nevertheless, over the course of the reporting year this approach does provide an assessment of the triggers that cause antisemitic incidents, the basic mood among the public, who the authors of antisemitic comments are and the narratives they typically use.



9.2.2 Processes used in online research

Monitoring on the internet and social media is conducted as follows:

Twitter and Facebook: Monitoring of around 60 profiles which have a past history of posting antisemitic content. There is always a certain amount of flux in this, as some profiles get deleted while new ones are discovered and then included in the monitoring process.

Online comments sections of the media: Monitoring of comments sections on articles about subjects likely to generate antisemitic comments. These would include Jewish life in Switzerland, conflict in the Middle East, articles about well-known Jewish personalities and reports about major antisemitic incidents at home and abroad.

Telegram: Since May 2020, the SIG has been monitoring at least a dozen Telegram groups made up of Covid sceptics and other groupings critical of the measures imposed to control the pandemic.

Websites: The SIG monitors certain websites that have previously been reported for publishing antisemitic content or where antisemitic content has repeatedly appeared over a long period of time.

Other platforms, e.g. Instagram and TikTok: There are repeated instances of antisemitic incidents on these platforms too. It is difficult to extend the monitoring process to include these platforms as they demand a different approach. They only publish videos, which makes it difficult to categorize them geographically and be sure that there is a Swiss connection. As a result, the incidents from these platforms that are listed in this document have all been reported by third parties.

The general principle that applies to online monitoring is the more you look, the more

you'll find. The figures from online monitoring published in this report do, however, make it possible to conduct a valid analysis and identify trends and moods. Monitoring similar groups and profiles using similar resources allows a reasonable comparison with previous years to be made.

9.2.3 Geographical scope

This report lists antisemitic incidents which took place in the German, Italian and Romansh language areas of Switzerland in 2021. Incidents in the French-speaking part of the country are recorded by the **Coordination Intercommunautaire contre l'Antisémitisme et la Diffamation** CICAD. The incidents recorded have to have taken place in Switzerland or affect Switzerland in some way. Online incidents are of relevance if the author or recipient of a post is resident in Switzerland or if the organization operating the website is Swiss.

9.2.4 Nature of reporting

A fundamental difficulty associated with any reporting of antisemitism or other form of transgression is that incidents can only be recorded if they are actually reported or otherwise become known. In Switzerland as elsewhere, a large number of unrecorded cases must be assumed, which are neither reported nor prosecuted. There are various reasons for this: the victim may feel that there is no point in publicizing the incident or reporting it to the police, or the perpetrator may be a colleague or fellow student and the victim does not want to make their situation even worse for themselves.

It is of course almost impossible to estimate how many incidents go unrecorded. However, a study published in 2020 by the Zurich University of Applied Sciences, entitled "Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen von Antisemitismus unter Jüdinnen und Juden in der Schweiz" ("Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism



among Jews in Switzerland”), gives some insights into the context of the unrecorded cases. For example, victims would often come to the conclusion that it was not worth reporting an incident to the police or a specialist organization such as the SIG, either because of the time and effort involved, or the possible consequences, or for other reasons. It is of concern that these are often cases of verbal abuse and insults in public spaces and also in the workplace. The SIG therefore encourages members of the Jewish community to report antisemitic incidents to the SIG so that we can compile as complete a picture as possible.

9.2.5 Definitions: antisemitism, anti-Zionism, criticism of the state of Israel

Antisemitism

Definition by the IHRA

The SIG uses the definition of antisemitism and illustrative examples provided by the **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance IHRA**. The definition is also recognized in most other European countries and used by most Jewish organizations in Europe. “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, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

Examples are:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion;
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective – such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world

Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions;

- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews;
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust);
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust;
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations;
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g. by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour;
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Recognition of the IHRA definition in Switzerland

The IHRA definition of antisemitism is now recognized and applied by 30 countries along with various cities and organizations. The IHRA, of which Switzerland is a member, approved this definition in 2016. The European Parliament called upon its member states to adopt it in 2017.

In response to a postulate by Council of States member Paul Rechsteiner, the Federal Council published its report on the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism in June 2021. In it, the Federal Council acknowledged the value and practical relevance of the IHRA’s working definition,



which is not legally binding. The Federal Council further emphasised that the IHRA's working definition must be interpreted within the context of specific cases. All parties involved in this issue in the public and private sectors are therefore encouraged to familiarize themselves fully with this working definition and the debate surrounding it.

Of the major political parties in Switzerland, the Social Democratic Party SP officially recognized the IHRA definition in May 2019, the Free Democratic Party FDP in September 2021 and the Green Liberal Party in November 2021.

Symbols

The SIG only classifies daubed or sprayed Nazi symbols such as swastikas or SS insignia as antisemitic if their use is directly or indirectly connected to Jewish people or institutions. For example, they would have to be applied directly to a synagogue or other building belonging to a Jewish institution, or in conjunction with Jewish symbols, or be interpreted as being anti-Jewish (indirectly) through the context.

Criticism of the state of Israel

Criticism of the state of Israel or its politics is not generally antisemitic as long as the criticism is made in the same way that one would criticise any other country. Criticism of Israel is antisemitic if:

- double standards are applied by requiring of Israel behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation;
- equivalence is given to "Israelis" and "Jews";
- symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism are used to portray or characterize Israel or Israelis, such as through the use of symbols and images traditionally associated with antisemitism (e.g. claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel);

- comparisons are drawn between contemporary Israeli policy and that of the Nazis.

Anti-Zionism

Anti-Zionism refers to the rejection of the Jewish national movement (Zionism). The motives and rationales of anti-Zionists are wide-ranging and not bound up with any particular political parties or ideologies. It is not generally antisemitic to reject the ideology of Zionism. In reality, however, anti-Zionist comments are often made to disguise antisemitism. For example, instead of the antisemitic narrative of a "Jewish-controlled press", someone might say the "Zionist-controlled press", or make a comment like "I don't hate the Jews, just the Zionists". If "Zionists" are described in terms of classic antisemitic stereotypes, it is easy to see through the obfuscation. However, it is often necessary to check carefully whether a case of antisemitism exists or not. Sometimes it helps to know whether a person has previously made explicit antisemitic comments in the past.

9.2.6 Incidents and their categories (with examples)

Reports submitted and the results of research are categorized as:

Incidents: Cases of obvious antisemitism

Borderline cases: With these cases it is not possible to say without any doubt whether they are antisemitic or not, or various interpretations may be possible. They are therefore not counted as incidents.

Cases in which **no antisemitism** is present and which are therefore not included in the statistics.

Incidents are divided into the following sub-categories according to their content:



General antisemitism: These incidents involve classic antisemitic stereotypes, e.g. Jews are mercenary, Jews control the banks and the media or Judaism is the devil's religion;

Shoah denial and trivialization: This category includes denying that the Shoah (Holocaust) happened or trivializing or downplaying it;

Israel-related antisemitism: This is antisemitism linked to the state of Israel (see the section on "Criticism of the state of Israel" on page 31);

Contemporary antisemitic conspiracy theories: This category covers conspiracy theories that go beyond the classic "Jews rule the world" idea and have proliferated in recent times, e.g.: "The Rothschild family and the entrepreneur George Soros are responsible for the waves of refugees because they want to manipulate European ethnicity. They want to create a stupid 'Negroid mixed race' which is easier to control by the elite Jewish bankers." Or: "Jews invented the coronavirus so they can use vaccines to sterilize and kill people."

There are also categories for the different type of incident:

Physical assault, verbal abuse, comments, public appearances, damage to property, offensive graffiti, posters/banners and caricatures.

Physical assault: physical attacks motivated by antisemitism on people who are Jewish or presumed to be Jewish.

Verbal abuse: antisemitic abuse directly targeted at people who are Jewish or presumed to be Jewish, e.g. "F*cking Jew", "Get in the gas chamber", "Shame Hitler missed you".

Comments: comments with antisemitic content not directly targeted at a specific person

Public acts: public demonstrations of antisemitic thinking, for example at demonstrations or by aiming Nazi salutes at Jewish people.

Damage to property: damage to synagogues, Jewish institutions, Jewish cemeteries or Jewish businesses where the motive can reasonably be assumed to be of an antisemitic nature.

Offensive graffiti: graffiti, painted images or stickers with obvious antisemitic content.

Posters/banners: posters or banners on public display with obvious antisemitic content.

Caricatures: caricatures based on antisemitic stereotypes, often mimicking the style of antisemitic cartoons from the first half of the twentieth century.

For some of the incident types (verbal abuse, comments and caricatures) a decision may be made as to whether they also belong in the sub-categories of action, sent item or online incident.

Actions: anything occurring as part of an interaction with people or buildings.

Sent items: anything sent to a person, i.e. letters, packages, e-mails, text messages, etc.

Online: anything occurring in the digital realm or on the internet, e.g. on a website, in the comments sections of online media, on social media such as Facebook and Twitter or Telegram.

An incident can only be categorized as one incident type. This ensures there are no duplicate entries. Where an incident could be placed in more than one category, the most serious is selected. For example, damage to property would take precedence over graffiti, and physical assault over verbal abuse.

Examples of incident types:

Physical assaults: Two devout siblings were both punched without warning by a man at Zurich Airport station.

Verbal abuse: "Heil Hitler" was shouted at a Jewish man in the city of Zurich.



Comments: In April, a driving instructor told his pupil in the canton of Zurich that Jews were greedy for money, without knowing that she was Jewish.

Public acts: At a demonstration, an antisemitic slogan was started by a speaker and the participants chanted it at the top of their voices.

Damage to property: (Older example, as no property damage was reported in 2023.) A sharp instrument was used to etch antisemitic slogans and a swastika into the door of the synagogue in Biel.

Offensive graffiti: In the city of Zurich, “Death to the Jews” was sprayed on a wall.



Posters/banners: This large banner displaying the words “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” was seen at various demonstrations.



Antisemitic cartoons: Cartoon in a Telegram group depicting “the Jews” turning black and white people against each other.

9.3 Summary of incidents and analysis of the Report on Antisemitism 2023

During the reporting year, the SIG recorded 155 antisemitic incidents in the German, Italian and Romansh language areas of Switzerland (not including online incidents). This represents a massive and unprecedented increase compared to the previous year (2022: 57). This is mainly due to the period following the Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023. The incidents included 10 physical assaults, 47 incidents of verbal abuse, 42 pieces of offensive graffiti, 38 comments, ten posters/banners and eight public acts. Online, mainly on social media and in media comment sections, 975 incidents were recorded, an increase of 14% compared to 2022 (853). The total number of incidents reported and observed during the investigation period is 1,130 (2022: 910).

It can be said that in 2023, antisemitism in Switzerland has manifested itself in the real world. Such an accumulation of assaults, offensive graffiti, verbal abuse and antisemitic incidents during demonstrations in such a short period of time is unprecedented in our period of investigation. The content of the graffiti and letters, with death threats and Shoah extermination fantasies, has also reached an as yet unknown intensity. This leads to the assumption that people with antisemitic ideas



gave free rein to their hatred after the attacks by using stronger forms of expression than statements alone.

The recorded incidents (real world and online) are divided into four categories: general anti-semitism (310 incidents), Shoah denial/trivialisation (43), antisemitism related to Israel (179) and current antisemitic conspiracy theories (443).

In previous years, antisemitic incidents often occurred due to “triggers”. Triggers are international or national events, including media reports, that cause a spike in the number of antisemitic incidents for a limited period (usually a few days). This has changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the monitoring of Telegram groups. There were and are now two long-term triggers (“Covid” and “the war in Ukraine”), which directly or indirectly perpetuate antisemitic incidents. The attacks of 7 October and Israel’s subsequent war against Hamas were also a very powerful trigger that led to a massive increase in antisemitic incidents for a few weeks. As a result, the proportion of antisemitism related to Israel rose sharply: from 6.4% in 2022 to 20% in 2023.

Telegram continues to account for the majority of observed and reported incidents, although the percentage decreased slightly from 75% (2022) to 68%. The proportion on X (formerly Twitter) remained the same at 17%. Facebook’s share rose slightly from 5.5% (2022) to 7.3%. Unfortunately, the proportion of cases in comment sections on online media almost doubled to 3.2% compared to the previous year. However, these incidents are spread throughout the year. There is no link to 7 October.

Telegram continues to be the platform in Switzerland on which open antisemitism is possible without posts being deleted and users blocked. This is where the anti-state, anti-society and conspiracy-theory subculture described in last year’s antisemitism report continues to operate, in which antisemitism

is practised almost unopposed. In terms of content and appearance, it adapts to current issues, be it Covid, the war in Ukraine or, most recently, Israel’s war against Hamas.

Most of the same Telegram groups were observed as in recent years. This also makes it possible to compare figures and themes. As with the war in Ukraine, when many of these groups turned from opponents of Covid policy into Putin propagandists, a new shift to pro-Palestine and anti-Israel took place after 7 October 2023. However, the basic idea of these people remains the same: they are against the mainstream, against the West and believe that all crises and wars are orchestrated by an elite in order to turn humankind into mindless slaves once and for all.

The number of antisemitic incidents in the Telegram groups remained steady in the first nine months, with some fluctuations. In October, a huge peak followed the Hamas terror attacks. Since then, the number has been falling again.

The most serious incidents in 2023 were:

- In April, a Jewish pupil was called a “fucking Jew” at a secondary school in the canton of Basel Landschaft and was also beaten.
- A Jewish tourist was verbally abused by a local in a car park in Saas-Fee in the canton of Valais in August. The latter then got into his car and tried to run over the tourist.
- A pupil in a district school in the canton of Aargau was insulted (Nazi salute, “You should be gassed”), shoved, beaten and had his trousers pulled down.
- Two devout siblings were both punched without warning by a man at Zurich Airport station.



- After an argument over an incorrectly parked car in November in the city of Zurich, a man was choked, threatened and asked if he was Jewish by two other men.
- In November, a woman walked past the empty Shabbat tables in memory of the Hamas hostages in a square in the city of Zurich and shouted at people, “Fucking Jew, it’s just because of you fucking Jews that they closed the square.”
- A condominium owner in the canton of Graubünden received a letter in March stating that the condominium owners’ meeting had decided that he may no longer rent his apartment to Jewish people in the future.
- In October and November, “Death to the Jews” was sprayed several times on walls in the city of Zurich.
- At pro-Palestinian demonstrations in various cities, the slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” was displayed on banners and signs. There were also Nazi and Holocaust comparisons, and signs such as “Well done Israel, Hitler would be proud” were observed.





Swiss Federation
of Jewish
Communities SIG

Gotthardstrasse 65
PO Box
8027 Zurich

+41 43 305 07 77
info@swissjews.ch

swissjews.ch



GRA Foundation
Against Racism and
Antisemitism

PO Box
8027 Zurich

+41 58 666 89 66
infogra@gra.ch

gra.ch

Publishing details

Publisher: Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities SIG and GRA Foundation Against Racism and Antisemitism, Zurich 2024

Design: SolitaireDesign

The report can be downloaded as a PDF free of charge from www.antisemitismus.ch.

