

THE RISE OF ANTISEMITISM AT EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES AS A RESULT OF THE OCTOBER 7 MASSACRE

REPORT
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Introduction

On the morning of October 7, 2023, the terrorist organisation Hamas simultaneously assaulted civilian communities and military posts in Israel. In an unprecedented surprise attack on southern Israel, Hamas terrorists committed unfathomable atrocities, including sexual violence and torture. The attacks claimed the lives of more than 1194 individuals¹. They left over 4834 people wounded and resulted in more than 243 being taken hostage.² The October 7th massacre not only escalated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, heightening regional instability, but it also had global consequences by triggering a concerning increase in antisemitism within Jewish communities worldwide.

Since the onset of the attacks, Jewish communities worldwide have witnessed a significant and alarming resurgence of antisemitic incidents.³ Directly linked to heightened tensions in the Middle East, antisemitism in Europe has radically changed Jewish life. Private properties, Jewish community centres, synagogues, and even Jewish cemeteries have become targets of vandalism and threats. The sense of fear has triggered a profound shift in behaviours, as Jewish individuals grapple with the urgent need to secure their safety: to keep a low profile and avoid dangers, Jewish people have started changing their daily routines, hiding Jewish symbols (e.g. Kippah or Star of David), and avoiding references to Israel and the Jewish community in public.

Concurrently with the Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel, Jewish students began encountering hostility on campuses, marked by a rising number of protests supporting Hamas terrorist activities and personal attacks on community members. The escalating tensions on campus have created a palpable sense of discomfort within the European Jewish student community. In the most severe instances, these tensions have prompted students to abandon their study programmes, led Jewish student unions to cancel events, and resulted in public harassment of Jewish students by both fellow students and members of the university staff, including professors. The incidents that occurred on campus are, arguably, a consequence of a rooted antisemitism that denies Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State and holds the Jewish collectivity accountable for any event occurring in the Middle East.

¹ "What Happened on the 7th of October." Israel National Digital Agency, <https://govextra.gov.il/mda/october-7/october-7/what-happened-on-the-7th-of-october/>.

² "What Happened on the 7th of October." Israel National Digital Agency, <https://govextra.gov.il/mda/october-7/october-7/what-happened-on-the-7th-of-october/>.

³ "How the Surge in Antisemitism Is Affecting Countries around the World." Reuters, 31 Oct. 2023, www.reuters.com/world/how-surge-antisemitism-is-affecting-countries-around-world-2023-10-31/.

In order to monitor the situation, since October 2023, EUJS has been collecting data on antisemitic attacks that have occurred inside universities across Europe. Following the release of the initial report in November 2023, EUJS has decided to publish an updated version in January 2024, aiming to present a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of this concerning phenomenon.

Throughout the last few decades, escalating tensions in the Middle East have often led to a rising number of antisemitic attacks occurring in Europe and around the world.⁴ The underlying misconception driving these attacks is the false belief that Jewish people are directly responsible for actions taken by the Israeli government and are more loyal to the State of Israel than to their respective national countries. This accusation is not only untrue but also deeply antisemitic (see the "Methodology" section) and carries severe consequences for the well-being of entire Jewish communities.

Within this research, a number of recurrent themes will be touched upon. To facilitate the understanding of the antisemitic incidents reported, EUJS has compiled a list of the definitions that have been employed in our analysis of the cases.

- **Zionism:** Zionism is the movement for the self-determination and statehood of the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland, the land of Israel.⁵ The term is often used by non-Jewish individuals to refer to Jews. Using the term "Zionist" interchangeably with "Jew," as seen in statements like "Zionists out of the University!", is considered antisemitic. Also, denying the Jewish people the right to self-determination is antisemitic.
- **Intifada:** The Intifadas were two violent periods in the late 1980s and early 2000s, during which Palestinian terrorists claimed the lives of over 1000 Israelis through suicide attacks, bus bombings, and other deadly incidents.⁶ Calling for an Intifada is considered antisemitic, as it involves a chant specifically aimed at advocating for the killing, harm, and targeting of the lives of Jews.

⁴ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism: Second Survey on Discrimination and Hate Crime against Jews in the EU. LU: Publications Office, 2018. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2811/696582>.

⁵ Zionism. Anti Defamation League (ADL), 1 Sept. 2016, <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/zionism>

⁶ "What Does "Globalize the Intifada" Mean and How Can It Lead to Targeting Jews with Violence? | AJC." Wwww.ajc.org, 4 Dec. 2023, www.ajc.org/news/what-does-globalize-the-intifada-mean-and-how-can-it-lead-to-targeting-jews-with-violence. Accessed 30 Jan. 2024.

- **“From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free”:** This slogan calls for a Palestinian State extending from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea; this is territory that includes the State of Israel, which would mean the dismantling of the Jewish state. It is an antisemitic charge denying the Jewish right to self-determination and alludes to the idea of ethnic cleansing.
- **October 7th as a form of Resistance:** Referring to the October 7th terrorist attacks as "resistance" is deeply problematic, as it not only undermines but also attempts to justify the massacre of around 1200 people in Israel.⁷

⁷ “What Happened on the 7th of October.” Israel National Digital Agency, <https://govextra.gov.il/mda/october-7/october-7/what-happened-on-the-7th-of-october/>.

Methodology

a) Rationale

Since October 7th, Jewish communities in Europe and around the world have experienced a vertiginous increase in antisemitic attacks. Data collected from Jewish communities around Europe since October 2023 reveals a concerning reality that should not leave us indifferent. In the first 34 days since the start of the war, there were 29 antisemitic incidents per day in Germany. By comparison, in 2022 the average was just under seven incidents per day.⁸ Between October 7th and December 2023, at least 2093 antisemitic incidents were recorded across the United Kingdom.⁹ In France, there has been a 284.4% increase in antisemitic attacks in 2023 compared to 2022.¹⁰ Similar data can be found for other countries in Europe. Synagogues,¹¹ Jewish cemeteries,¹² and Holocaust memorials¹³ have been vandalised in multiple cities. In addition to vandalism, and verbal/physical incidents, a significant amount of false information and manipulated content has been circulating online.

⁸ “Antisemitic Reactions to October 7 - Antisemitic Incidents in Germany between October 7 and November 9, 2023, in the Context of the Massacres and the War in Israel and Gaza.” Rias: Report-Antisemitism.de, Bundesverband RIAS e.V., 27 Nov. 2023, www.report-antisemitism.de/documents/RIAS_Monitoring_Bericht_30-11-2023_English.pdf. Accessed 30 Jan. 2024.

⁹ “Antisemitic Incidents – 13 December Update – Blog.” Community Security Trust (CST), 13 Dec. 2023, <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2023/12/13/antisemitic-incidents-13-december-update>.

¹⁰ “Rapport Sur Les Chiffres de l’Antisémitisme En 2023 Présenté Par Le SPCJ : Flambée Des Actes Antisémites En France à Partir Du 7 Octobre.” Crif - Conseil Représentatif Des Institutions Juives de France, 24 Jan. 2024, www.crif.org/fr/content/crif-rapport-sur-les-chiffres-de-lantisemitisme-en-2023-flambee-des-actes-antise-mites-en-france-a-partir-du-7-octobre#:~:text=24%20Janvier%202024-. Accessed 30 Jan. 2024.

¹¹ E.g. “Porto Synagogue Vandalised in Wake of Hamas Terror”. The Jewish Chronicle, 11 Oct. 2023, www.thejc.com/news/world/porto-synagogue-vandalised-in-wake-of-hamas-terror-qdz74ivr. Accessed 30 Jan. 2024.

¹² E.g. “Vandals Desecrate Jewish Cemetery with Swastikas”. The Brussels Times, 19 Dec. 2023, www.brusselstimes.com/846286/vandals-desecrate-jewish-cemetery-with-swastikas. Accessed 30 Jan. 2024.

¹³ E.g. “Sidewalk Plaques Commemorating Romans Deported by Nazis Are Vandalized in Italian Capital.” The Associated Press, 1 Nov. 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/italy-rome-antisemitism-vandalism-deportations-e29f5e6c72c473160f319c6a857d1c88>. Accessed 30 Jan. 2024.

Universities have not been immune to this threatening trend. Since October 7th, EUJS has been contacted by several member unions seeking support. Jewish students across Europe have shared their apprehension about attending universities, hesitating to wear symbols that might associate them with Judaism, and refraining from speaking openly in Hebrew. This heightened sense of insecurity reflects a broader global issue, where instances of antisemitism are on the rise, permeating various aspects of daily life, including educational environments. In light of these challenges, EUJS has felt the need to analyse antisemitic incidents that occurred on the university campus after October 7th. This analytical approach is crucial for obtaining a comprehensive perspective on the phenomenon and comprehending its nuanced manifestations in diverse European countries.

b) Data collection

The study considers a sample of antisemitic incidents that occurred inside buildings and properties owned by private and public Universities located in continental Europe (EU and Extra-EU). As for online incidents, the report evaluates exclusively circumstances where students were involved, such as instances where the source of antisemitic content was published by a student organisation or when an antisemitic message was shared within a university group chat. The incidents reported occurred between October 7th, 2023 and January 15th, 2024.

This report serves as a glimpse into a much larger and more complex issue. The incidents included in the report do not reflect the magnitude of the total cases that occurred around Europe. This sample highlights only a portion of the broader challenge, indicating that there may be a significant amount of underlying antisemitic incidents that remain unreported, or unaccounted for.

The data presented in this report are collected from different sources:

- A Google form shared with the EUJS network (through EUJS social media, webpage, Whatsapp groups, etc.).
- EUJS Member Unions and other Jewish organisations (e.g. European Jewish Congress).¹⁴
- Public sources (e.g. incidents shared on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram)

¹⁴ Although EUJS has received data from several Jewish student Unions, only UGEI (Unione Giovani Ebrei d'Italia), and FEJJE (Federación de Jóvenes Judíos en España) have granted full access to their independently collected data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

The report considers antisemitic exclusively the incidents considered as such by the International working definition of antisemitism (from now on, IHRA definition) and its examples. According to the IHRA definition: *“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.”* Accompanying the IHRA Definition are eleven examples that “may serve as illustrations” of how antisemitism manifests contemporaneously, ranging from age-old anti-Jewish tropes to Holocaust denial, to certain expressions that demonise and delegitimise the right of Israel to exist.¹⁵ The data that are not considered antisemitic according to the IHRA definition have been excluded from the study.

Acts of waving a Palestinian flag, chanting, or posting on social media with the phrase "Free Palestine!" are considered antisemitic exclusively when directed towards Jewish sites and spaces. Therefore, while we classify graffiti saying "Free Palestine" on the walls of a building owned by the Jewish community as antisemitic, we do not categorise it as such if found in other spaces. However, we acknowledge that it constitutes vandalism and may cause discomfort to Jewish and Israeli students.

While compiling this report, EUJS felt the responsibility and obligation to protect individuals' identities. For this reason, in some cases, to ensure the safety of reporters, we have not listed the specific University where the incident occurred.

c) Limitations

The study has limitations that must be acknowledged when interpreting its findings. Firstly, there is incomplete geographic coverage, as not all countries were able to provide data, potentially resulting in gaps in the representation of antisemitic incidents. Secondly, not all Jewish students and young adults had access to the report or chose to respond, which could introduce bias and limit the study's ability to capture the full extent of such incidents. Finally, the underreporting of antisemitic incidents due to fear, stigma, or concerns about personal safety might have significantly influenced the amount of incidents available.

¹⁵ More information about the International Working Definition on Antisemitism can be accessed at: <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>

Analysis

So as to best understand the data collected, and in order to understand the manifestations of antisemitism that have occurred on University campuses, it is important to organise these into categories. The categories we have defined are as follows:

- A. Verbal Harassment, Slurs & Physical Violence: it includes instances of derogatory comments, offensive jokes, and verbal abuse targeting individuals or groups based on their Jewish identity. These types of attacks specifically targeted an individual or a group of Jewish students.
- B. Vandalism & Desecration: It involves defacement or damage to university properties, including graffiti, destruction of Jewish symbols, or desecration of religious spaces located within spaces owned by private or public universities with antisemitic slogans.
- C. Cyberbullying & Online Harassment: this category involves antisemitic incidents occurring exclusively on digital platforms, social media, or through other online channels. Cyberbullying can include hate speech, threats, or other harmful behaviour directed at Jewish students or organisations.
- D. Incitement to Violence, Discrimination & Exclusion: Incitement and hate speech focuses on instances where individuals or groups promote hatred against Jews, disseminating extremist ideologies, or engaging in activities that incite violence. Differently from the first category, these incidents may include events where the target is not necessarily targeted at a physical person, but promotes the attack, discrimination, or exclusion of one or more people.

This classification was chosen to avoid overlapping of incidents under multiple categories; this does not mean, however, that no overlap can or has occurred. For the purpose of this report, we have gathered some examples from the over 100 cases reported to EUJS. For the full list of all reported cases, you are invited to write to office@eujs.org.

EUJS received 113 reports from 66 universities located in 14 countries. As previously mentioned, this is not to say that these are the only cases to have occurred, but rather reflect cases which students felt comfortable to submit.

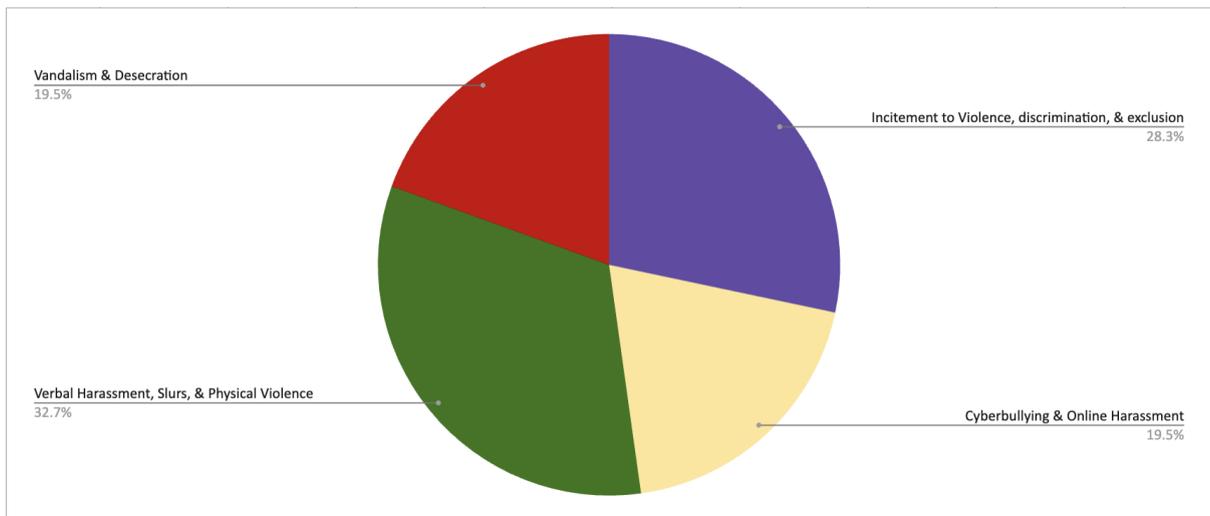


Table 1: Typologies of antisemitic incidents reported to EUJS

As Table 1 shows, the majority of the cases reported (32.7%) can be seen under the classification of *Verbal harassment, slurs, and physical violence*. This is extremely alarming as these are instances of direct, in-person, and targeted forms of antisemitism on University campuses, making it an extremely hostile and volatile place for Jewish students. The data gathered shows how in more than ¼ cases reported (28.3%) incidents involved *Incitement to violence, discrimination and exclusion*. In other words, these numbers show that in 32 cases universities failed to guarantee the safety of their own spaces. While freedom of expression is a pillar of democracy and must be safeguarded, the spreading of messages that incite violence, discrimination, and exclusion shall not be tolerated as they may undermine the sense of safety of a number of students and University staff. Lastly, data on *Vandalism & Desecration* and *Cyberbullying & Online harassment* represent respectively 19.5% of the incidents reported. In general, it is possible to notice how a vast majority of incidents reported occurred in physical spaces of the university, where students and staff members may have higher chances to feel uncomfortable or in danger.

In terms of geography, as shown by Table 2, the most of the cases were reported to EUJS from Italy (19.47% of the total cases reported), with the Netherlands noting only 1% less cases. The sample of data available is significantly influenced by the number of unions and individuals who supported EUJS in the data gathering. In the case of Italy and Spain, EUJS had direct access to data individually collected through hotlines and surveys. For this reason, it would be incorrect to claim that more incidents occurred in Italy than in France, as such a statement would not account for the data to which EUJS did not have access. However, the occurrence of reported incidents in 14 different states demonstrates that the phenomenon is widespread, extending beyond specific areas of Europe.

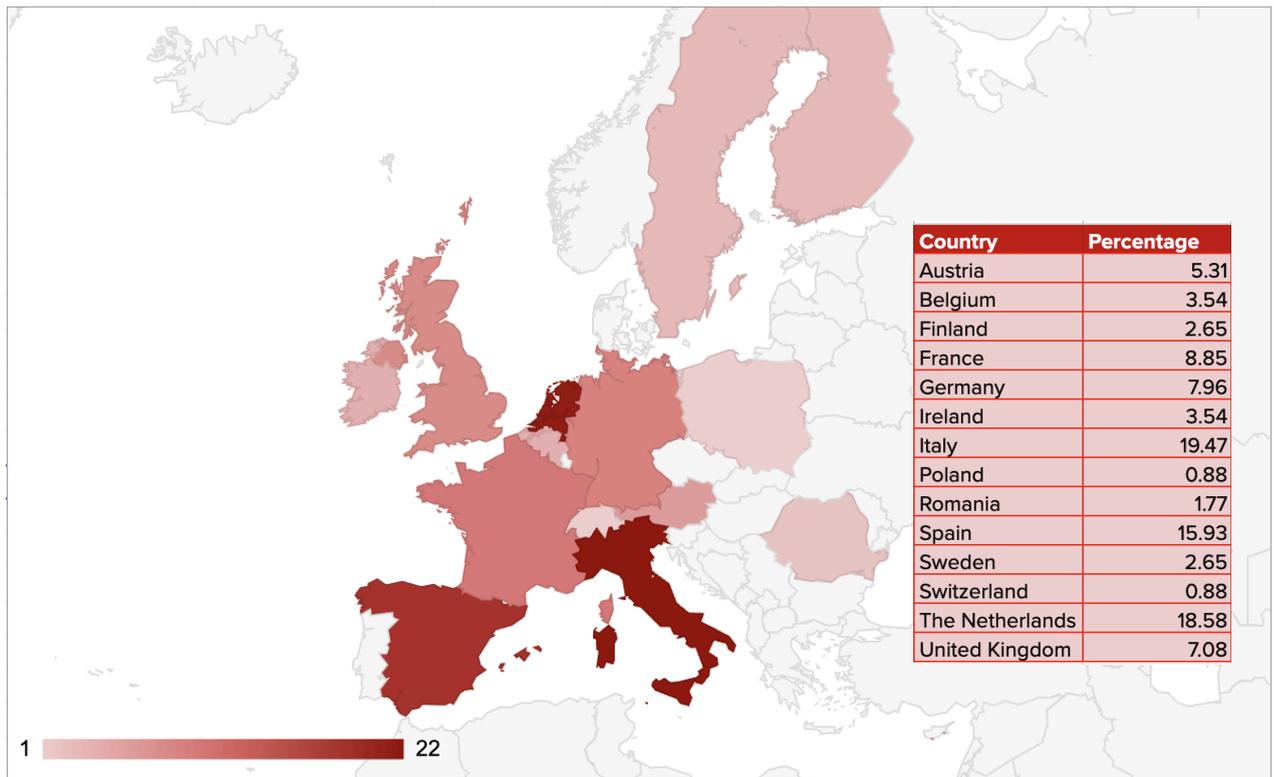


Table 2: Geographical representation of the countries where the reported incidents occurred.

a) Verbal Harassment, Slurs, and Physical Violence

Verbal harassment and slurs include instances of derogatory comments, offensive jokes, and verbal abuse targeting individuals or groups based on their Jewish identity. Physical harassment includes acts of violence committed against an individual simply because they are Jewish. For the purposes of this report, this section will not tackle online harassment as there is a designated category for these instances. We received 37 reported cases, as of January 15th 2024.

To offer a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, we chose to describe a small sample of incidents reported to EUJS from October 2023 to January 2024.

During a graduation ceremony at the University of Amsterdam, a Palestinian student concluded his speech with the slogan "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free". The family of a Jewish student stood up against the call for the destruction of Israel. As an answer, the audience started booing and some individuals shouted "F*****g Jews". The family felt unsafe and left the ceremony. The violent individuals in the crowd were not kicked out from the ceremony and the Jewish family was invited to celebrate the graduation of their son in a separate room. The university did not condemn the episode. This incident is very concerning as the University, failing to guarantee the full safety of the student and his family, decided to exclude them from the official celebrations.

During a gathering at a University in Italy, a Jewish student wearing a necklace with a Star of David was approached by an individual who shouted at him "*Free Palestine*", and spilled a drink on him. The targeting of the student, who neither identified as Israeli nor spoke in Hebrew, underscores that the individual became a victim solely due to their Jewish identity, targeted by a stranger who could identify him as such because of the Star of David.

At SciencesPo (Paris), the French Union (UEJF) organised a memorial for a former student that was killed in the October 7th Hamas Terrorist Attacks. The ceremony was interrupted by activists that started to physically harass the organisers of the event. Unfortunately, this incident is not isolated, as there have been other reports of Jewish students facing challenges in exercising their right to freedom of expression. This is deeply concerning, as universities should be spaces where students are encouraged to engage in meaningful discussions, fostering respect for differing perspectives.

b) Vandalism & Desecration

Vandalism & Desecration involves defacement or damage to university properties, including graffiti, destruction of Jewish symbols, or desecration of religious spaces located within spaces owned by private or public universities with antisemitic slogans. This category includes permanent or temporary installations.

The presence of antisemitic drawings, tags, graffiti, and posters have created an atmosphere of fear among Jewish students, who are concerned about becoming the next targets of reprisals. The acts of vandalism are particularly concerning as they glorify Hamas and the October 7th Massacre, advocate for Intifada, and specifically target students who identify themselves as Zionists. This category only includes acts of Vandalism and Desecration that are recognised as antisemitic by the IHRA definition on antisemitism. General slogans in favour of the Palestinian people, not recognised as antisemitic, were excluded from the dataset.

Among the cases reported to EUJS, we decided to focus on some examples. For full access to the dataset, please write to office@eujs.org.



Inside of a bathroom in the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna (Bologna, Italy), the phrase “Intifada until the victory” was written across the wall. The phrase “*Intifada until victory*” calls for a surge in violence and armed conflict until a so-called “victory” is achieved, that being the destruction of the State of Israel. As the Intifada had repercussions also in Europe, incitement to it is considered an existential threat by most

members of the Jewish community across Europe, and the world.

However, it is not only bathrooms that are being vandalised with graffiti inside of university buildings. In the University Policlinico di Milano (Milan, Italy) the words “W Hamas” (with Hamas) were painted on a wall. As Hamas is a terrorist organisation, with the goal of the destruction of the State of Israel and the Jewish people, standing “with Hamas” is synonymous with supporting the mission of eradicating the Jewish people.



In Erasmus University (Rotterdam, Netherlands) someone had written “From the river to the sea Palestine will be free” all over the benches in front of the dining hall. Similar acts of vandalism were found in other places of the same university. The student who reported the incident to EUJS affirmed to be scared to stay in the public spaces of the university.



At the University of Genova, a building was graffitied with “Beat the Zionist”. As the majority of Jewish people identify as Zionists, it is evident that this message can be perceived as a threat to those who support Israel's right to exist. Furthermore, the call to beat a Zionist constitutes an incitement to violence, exacerbating the threat.



At the University of Florence (Florence, Italy) an image, depicting a Star of David equaling a Swastika, was reported. Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis is antisemitic according to the IHRA working definition on combating antisemitism. This is a false accusation, known also as Holocaust Inversion, portraying Jews as Nazis, which is a major distortion of a historical tragedy. This is an antisemitic concept that equates Jews with the values and actions of Nazi Germany.



In the University of Wien (Wien, Austria) the entrance plaque of the Jewish Studies Department Library was defaced with “Kill ISRAHELL, the USA & UKRAINE Z!”. As stated before, according to the IHRA working definition on antisemitism, holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel is antisemitic. Additionally, this is a direct call to violence against Jews, Americans, and Ukrainians. Unfortunately, one month after the incident was reported, the plaque was vandalised again.



c) Cyberbullying & Online Harassment

Cyberbullying and online harassment involves antisemitic incidents that occur on digital platforms, social media, or through other online channels. Cyberbullying can include hate speech, threats, or other harmful behaviour directed at Jewish students or organisations. Given that hate speech often begins online but extends beyond digital platforms, it is imperative to carefully assess incidents occurring in online spaces. Additionally, in most cases, the reported content continued to persist online even after being brought to attention.

Social media is overflowing with information. In the current age, social media has become an abundant source of information, providing people with the ability to access a vast array of content and data. It serves as a highly efficient platform for reaching not just hundreds, but potentially thousands or even millions of individuals within a remarkably short time frame. In chats, videos, and more, many students have expressed their fear of attending university. In some cases, students have affirmed that they refrained from attending classes.

In several universities across Europe, the fear among Israeli and Jewish students returning to campus has intensified due to their classmates sharing content on social media in support of Hamas, Hezbollah, and posting antisemitic vignettes. For instance, at IE University in Madrid, Spain, a student shared an image drawing an offensive comparison between Jews and Nazis, further deepening the distressing atmosphere. Among the incidents reported to EUJS, we would also like to highlight that a number of Jewish students have received death threats from fellow students.

Unfortunately, as highlighted by the data gathered by EUJS, there are instances where there are even professors and university staff directly involved in antisemitic incidents. These situations are especially alarming for Jewish students, given that individuals in such roles within the university are expected to provide protection and support to all members of the student community. Although not specifically mentioned in the report, some of the professors and staff members accused of antisemitism have been removed from their positions at universities.



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'Humanitarian consequences' is what cool kids are calling genocides now a days. Like, concentration camps were a humanitarian consequence of Jewish existence; colonialism was a humanitarian consequence of the savagery of natives, etc

On 13th of October 2023, a University professor and the Coordinator of the Master's Programme "International Relations" of University of The Hague (The Hague, Netherlands) posted a tweet on X including Holocaust relativisation, delegitimation, and inversion. Similar cases were reported from Universities in France, United Kingdom, and Italy.

Additionally, many Jewish students face hate from their peers on WhatsApp. In different countries, students in WhatsApp groups created for study projects and university groups have received a lot of offensive messages. In one of these groups, a few Jewish students received an offensive image involving a member of the group doing the "Heil Hitler" gesture. The threats generated a deeply distressing experience for Jewish students, leading, in extreme cases, to the decision to withdraw from specific classes and, in two instances, to discontinue their pursuit of the entire university degree. In the majority of cases, the chat platforms where antisemitic messages were shared, had hundreds of participants. In several instances, universities have been called upon to intervene in order to protect the students who have been targeted.



d) Incitement to Violence, Discrimination, and Exclusion

Incitement and hate speech focuses on instances where individuals or groups promote hatred against Jews, disseminating extremist ideologies, or engaging in activities that incite violence. This category may include events, speeches, or online content that encourage discrimination or hostility against Jews and call for the destruction of the State of Israel. Discrimination and exclusion encompasses discriminatory policies, exclusionary practices, or systemic bias against individuals or groups based on their Jewish background. This can occur in academic settings, clubs, or social groups.



On the day of the Hamas terror attacks and massacre, the 7th of October 2023, a protest took place at University of The Hague (The Hague, Netherlands). Protestors handed out materials and pamphlets that glorified Hamas attacks as "exemplary resistance" and called for a "globalisation of intifada". Referring to a terrorist attack as an example and calling for an intifada constitutes both glorification of the attack and an incitement to violence.

As we stated before, as many Jewish people identify themselves as Zionists, the use of this term in a derogatory manner is deeply problematic. In Spain, a sign saying "No more genocide against the Palestinian people! No more Zionist invasion of Israel! If you sympathise with the terrorist invaders of Israel, give them YOUR home and YOUR land. Not the land of others", was found at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Madrid, Spain) by a Jewish student. Reading the sign, the student felt she was not welcomed in the University spaces and feared for her safety.



In the library of the Lund University (Lund, Sweden) a group called "Lund students for Palestine" organised a manifestation and open-mic event by the name "Students for Palestine" on 27th of October 2023. Jewish students were recommended to stay away from the event. This has been seen also on campuses in Austria, Germany, and Spain. During certain events that were reported to EUJS by Jewish students, the encouragement for non-participation extended beyond just advising Jewish students to avoid attending the sessions; rather, those who were interested in listening, became targets of physical attacks and harassment.

At the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Madrid, Spain) in Spain there was a poster shared within the student group chats calling to join a protest against the genocide in Gaza, which will be held on campus. What is most alarming is that it explicitly states on the poster “*fuera sionistas de la universidad*”, translating to a call to kick out Zionists from the university. The slogan posed a significant threat to Jewish and Israeli students, as it not only made them feel unwelcome in the university community solely due to their support for Israel's right to exist but also explicitly urged them to leave university spaces. These spaces should remain accessible to everyone, irrespective of their political affiliations



Conclusions & Recommendations

For the compilation of this report, we received more than 110 reports of antisemitic incidents across Europe. However, this is merely a glimpse into the dramatic surge of antisemitism that has plagued European Jewish students, as a vast majority of the incidents were not reported. Whether this lack of reporting is out of fear of repercussion or uncertainty about what resources are available to them, Jewish students must, and deserve, to attend Universities free from hate. Universities have become so hostile and volatile that there are even Jewish students that do not attend classes or have dropped out of their courses.

The situation is dire. Jewish and Israeli students are being targeted by fellow students, professors and sometimes academic authorities, being told that these crimes against humanity are justified, and that there is no place for them inside universities. We are witnessing a significant rise in antisemitic cases that, in many circumstances, are not carefully taken into consideration by universities. The situation has become so severe that there are even professors who strongly advise their Jewish students not to come to class because they cannot ensure their protection. In 2024, this cannot be the status quo.

Our main takeaways are as follows:

- 1. High Incidence Rates:** The significant number of reported incidents highlights the prevalence of antisemitism on university campuses, indicating the urgent need for attention and action.
- 2. Diversity of Incidents:** Antisemitic incidents manifest in various forms, ranging from verbal harassment to physical violence and cyberbullying. The multifaceted nature of these incidents requires a comprehensive approach in addressing the issue by Universities.
- 3. Impact on Academic Environment:** Antisemitic incidents can negatively affect the academic and social well-being of Jewish students, potentially creating an unwelcoming atmosphere on campuses.
- 4. Role of Online Platforms:** Cyberbullying and online harassment play a substantial role in the perpetuation of antisemitism. Addressing these issues requires collaboration with digital platforms and online communities.
- 5. Need for Educational Initiatives:** There is a pressing need for educational programmes that raise awareness about antisemitism, promote inclusivity, and foster a culture of tolerance and understanding on university campuses. This is why it is fundamental that Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Offices on campus are trained to deal with and understand antisemitism and its manifestations.

Our main recommendations are as follows:

1. Implement Comprehensive Reporting Systems at Universities:

- a. Universities, local and national institutions shall establish clear and accessible mechanisms for reporting antisemitic incidents to encourage victims to come forward without fear of reprisal.
- b. Reporting systems must be well-publicised and supported by Jewish communities and police forces.

2. Enhance Campus Security Measures:

- a. Universities shall strengthen security measures to deter acts of vandalism and physical violence in respect with the freedom of expression.
- b. Universities shall collaborate with local law enforcement agencies to address security concerns and investigate incidents promptly.

3. Develop Inclusive Educational Programmes:

- a. Universities shall integrate educational initiatives into university curricula to foster understanding, empathy, and respect among students.
- b. Law enforcement agencies shall conduct awareness campaigns that focus on combating stereotypes, promoting diversity, and celebrating cultural differences.

4. Collaborate with Online Platforms:

- a. European institutions shall engage with social media platforms to address online antisemitic content promptly.

There are a number of areas where the future work of universities, institutions, and governments, should be focused:

- 1. Policy Review and Enhancement:** Institutions and governments should regularly review and update anti-discrimination policies to ensure they are robust and responsive to emerging challenges.
- 2. Data Collection and Analysis:** national governments and European institutions should continuously collect and analyse data on antisemitic incidents to identify trends and adapt preventive measures accordingly.
- 3. Faculty Training Programs:** national governments and European institutions should provide training programs for faculty members to recognize and address antisemitic behaviour in educational settings.
- 4. Support for Victims:** Universities and local institutions shall strengthen support mechanisms for victims, including counselling services and legal assistance, to help them cope with the emotional and psychological impact of antisemitic incidents. An example of this can be found on the EUJS website [here](#).
- 5. International Collaboration:** universities, governments, and international organisations should collaborate to share best practices and coordinate efforts

to combat antisemitism globally. We would be happy to facilitate the collaboration between our Member Unions and institutions so as to help best address the prevalence of antisemitism on campus. Please [reach out to us](#) so we can best support Jewish students in your context.

The European Union of Jewish Students will continue to gather information and data on antisemitism from University campuses across Europe. We will continue to fight against all forms of antisemitism, be it on campus or online, and to protect our Jewish students. We will continue, throughout, to advocate for a world that will allow for Jews to showcase and celebrate their Judaism in a positive way. But for this, collaboration on a university, institutional, governmental, and societal level is needed.

Annex 1

Testimonies from Jewish students

One of the primary tools employed by EUJS to document antisemitic incidents is a Google form, through which students were prompted to report the potential antisemitic attacks. The form requested specific information such as the location, date, details of the incident, and the inclusion of any relevant photos.¹⁶ While the form did not explicitly ask students to share their perceptions or feelings about the situation, many felt compelled to express their emotions in the comments section. EUJS has decided to incorporate some of the comments into this report. To safeguard the anonymity of those who reported these incidents, EUJS has chosen to publish the testimonies specifying only the country of origin of the student.

- *“What scares me about this is that antisemitism is so normalised, even friends that aren’t antisemites are following”*. - **Spain**
- *“Even if I don’t wear symbols that would make me be recognisably Jewish, I am afraid to go to university. I am afraid that, by seeing me, someone might recognize me and say to random people I am Jewish. I am afraid to become a target. I am afraid”*. - **Italy**
- *“The Jewish students suffered a boycott on campus because they demanded the release of the hostages. Organisations stopped working with us since the 07/10 attacks”*. - **Belgium**
- *“At that point I did not say anything anymore, because I felt like I already got too much attention on myself, and aside from myself, I am not aware of other Jewish students being in class. I know these are not the most outward experiences, but in the last 5 years that I have lived in the Netherlands, I have never heard anything of sorts, even when discussions got political or topical”*. - **The Netherlands**
- *“It makes us Jews feel unsafe on campus, as if we were to blame for what is going on in Israel, and we feel very attacked because we are a much smaller community. Our campus should have a neutral atmosphere for all religions”*. - **The Netherlands**
- *“I obviously want to answer something but I’m afraid of telling my religion so again I have to keep silent. I’m tired of listening to students with no historic context about this issue and give their opinion freely without anything happening to them and in my case not being able to say anything about it just for fear”*. - **Spain**

¹⁶ The Google form is accessible from this link: <https://forms.gle/p6vngFiH2g8An5fK7>

- *“I’ve always seen swastikas in school on lockers, benches and desks, however since October 7th there’s been a significant increase of them in school. Furthermore, a few people in my grade are “heiling” in the corridors of the school which makes me very uncomfortable. People have also been using the term “jew” and something negative, for example “you look like a jew” or “i’m going to bully a jew now.” - Sweden*
- *“I don’t feel safe anymore, at all. I am afraid what they could do to me in the future if this hate is escalating and the war is escalating. I don’t feel safe anymore to tell anyone I am Jewish and not even to make my voice heard. I am fearing for my safety and my mental health. We need help. We need the politicians to take drastic measures. There is a huge amount of misinformation and extremism going around social media, and it’s so dangerous. Being Jewish doesn’t feel safe anymore, nowhere in Europe. Not in Germany, not even in Romania, not for me and not for my Friendswood and family”. - Germany*

EUROPEAN UNION OF JEWISH STUDENTS

The European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS) is both a lasting vision spanning over four decades of history – and the temporary embodiment of this vision, through the leaders and teams that, at one moment or another, steer the organisation, determining its direction as contexts and realities change.

Founded in 1978 in Grenoble, France, EUJS is the pluralistic, inclusive, and non-partisan umbrella organisation for 36 Member Unions. EUJS supports Jewish student unions throughout Europe and represents its members in international institutions and organisations.

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