

# Experiences and views on anti-Semitism in Finland – report on discrimination against Jews and hate crime

Mercédesz Czibalmos  
Dóra Pataricza

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## Summary

### **Experiences and views on anti-Semitism in Finland – report on discrimination against Jews and hate crime**

Antisemitism has existed in most societies for centuries. In recent years, Jewish minorities around the world have reported increased anti-Semitic experiences, especially since the extremist organisation Hamas attacked Israel on 7 October 2023.

This report focuses on the views and experiences of anti-Semitism and discrimination of persons identifying themselves as Jewish. It is based on quantitative and qualitative data. The survey was targeted at persons aged 16 or over who consider themselves Jews on the basis of religion, culture, upbringing, ethnicity, family relationship or some other reason and who lived in Finland at the time of the survey.

The data collection for the report was carried out in two stages. First, a survey was conducted (4.10-4.11 .2023) in which the respondents expressed their opinions on, for example, antisemitism, antisemitism incidents encountered on or outside the Internet, their concerns about becoming a victim of an antisemitism attack and their experiences of discrimination in Finland. A total of 334 persons responded to the survey, which, depending on the calculation method, corresponds to around 17-22 per cent of Jews living in Finland. Two focus group interviews were held in the second phase of the study, attended by representatives from six different Jewish organisations. They were asked about the effects of anti-Semitism on the activities of organisations and the lives of their members. Both focus group interviews were conducted on 15 November 2023.

The majority of the respondents reported that anti-Semitism has increased in Finland over the past five years. The respondents estimated that the biggest problem is antisemitism in the internet and social media, followed by the media and political life.

Based on the results of the survey and the focus group interviews, recommendations were prepared for combating anti-Semitism, promoting the safety of the Jewish minority and protecting the Jewish culture also from the perspective of multiple minorities. Recommendations were also issued for education, the prevention of violence, discrimination and hate crimes against Jews, the safeguarding of Jewish life and culture, and research into Judaism.

## Sammandrag

### **Erfarenheter av och synpunkter pandemic semitism I Finland – utredning om diskriminering av och hatbrott ot Judar**

Antisemitism har förekommit I olika former I de flesta, under the auspices of the Council. Under de senaste åren har judiska minoriteter runt om I världen rapporterat om ökad antisemitism, särskilt Efter ATT extremistorganisationen Hamas anföll Israel den 7 oktober 2023.

Denna utredning focuserar punkter och erfarenheter av antisemitism och diskriminering av personer som identifierar sig som Judar. Den grundar sig på kvalitativt och kvantitativt material. Undersökningen riktades till personer som fyllt 16 och som själva eller någon i deras familj varit utsatta för antisemitism på grund av religion, kultur, historia, etnicitet, släktskap eller av någon annan orsak och som bor i Finland vid tidpunkten för undersökningen.

Datainsamlingen för utredningen genomfördes i två skeden. Först genomfördes en enkätundersökning (4.10-4.11.2023), där respondenterna bland annat berättade om sina åsikter om antisemitism, de senaste årens händelser de möter antingen online eller offline, sin oro över ATT falla offer för ett antisemitiskt angrepp samt sina erfarenheter av diskriminering i Finland. 334 personer besvarade enkäten, vilket beroende på beräknat svarar cirka 17-22 procent av de Judar som bor i Finland. I undersökningens andra skede ordnades två intervjuer med fokusgrupper. I intervjuerna deltog personer från sex olika judiska organisationer. De tillfrågades om antisemitismens inverkan på verksamheten och medlemmarnas liv. Båda fokusgruppsintervjuerna genomfördes den 15 november 2023.

En viktig del av respondenternas uppgav ATT antisemitism i Finland under de senaste åren. Respondenterna upplevde ATT det största problemet är antisemitism på sociala medier, och det näst största problemet är i medierna och i politiken.

Utifrån resultaten och fokusgruppsintervjuerna utarbetades rekommendationer för ATT bekämpa antisemitism, främja den judiska minoritetens säkerhet och skydda den judiska kulturen från flerfaldiga minoriteters perspektiv. Rekommendationerna gavs också för utbildning, förebyggande av våld mot Judar, diskriminering och hatbrott, trygghet för det judiska livet och den judiska kulturen samt judendomsforskning.

## Abstract

### **Experiences of and views on anti-semitism in Finland – a Report on discrimination and hate crimes against Jews**

Antisemitism has existed in most societies in VARYING derivatives and forms over the fast centuries. Lately, Various Jewish Communities have reported an increase in antisemitic incidents – Particularly the attack of Hamas is Israel (October 7, 2023).

This study focuses is the views and experiences of antisemitism and discrimination of Those, who identity themselves as Jews in Finland. The report draws is both quantitative and qualitative data. The Research studied the Experiences of Those who 16 years of age, and who consider themselves Jewish – based on religion, culture, upbringing, ethnicity, kinship, or other religions – and who lived in Finland at the time of study.

The data collection for the study was carried out in two main cases. In the first phase, a survey was distributed, in which the experiences and recommendations of the respondents wonder placed, e.g. about antisemitism, antisemitic incidents they have encountered in person or on the Internet, and about worries about being a victim of antisemitic attacks or discrimination in Finland. 334 people responded to the survey, supporting up to an approximation 17-22 per cent response rate, depending is the established number of people over the age of 16 who consider themselves Jewish in Finland. In the second phase of the research, two focus groups interviews we organized, in which speakers representing six different Jewish organizations participated. They here placed about the effects of antisemitism on the activities of their organisations and on the lives of their Members. Both interviews take place is 15th November 2023.

Ost of the respondents are of the opinion that antisemitism has inflammation in Finland in the last five years. According to the responses, they consider antisemitism on the Internet and social media the main problem in Finland, followed by antisemitism in the media, and in political life.

Based on the results of the survey and focus group interviews Recommendation we made to combat antisemitism, to promote the safety of the Jewish minority and to protect Jewish culture, including from the perspective of multiple minorities. The recommendations cover topics of education, prevention of violence, discrimination and hate crimes against Jews, the protection of Jewish life and culture, and research-related to Judaism.

Opening words

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# 1 Introduction

Antisemitism has existed in most societies for centuries. According to previous studies, anti-Semitic attitudes have not increased in the Nordic countries, but despite this, Jewish minorities have reported an increase in anti-Semitic experiences.<sup>1</sup>

According to the national Action Plan for the Prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism 2019-2023 published by the Ministry of the Interior, the threats against Jewish communities have increased in Finland.<sup>2</sup> According to the programme, Finland's objective is to prevent violent radicalisation and extremism through research-based activities. Little is known about anti-Semitic attitudes in Finland and, in particular, the anti-Semitism experienced by the local Jewish population. Antisemitism is also referred to in the Government Action Plan on equal Finland, published during Sanna Marin's term of office, to combat racism and promote good relations between population groups.<sup>3</sup> This approach can be considered insufficient: while there are common features in both anti-Semitism and racism, such as sexist, nationalist or homophobic elements, anti-Semitism is an ideology of its own which cannot be seen as just one form of racism. Racism is not usually manifested as conspiracy, while it is typical of anti-Semitism. Sweden, Denmark and Norway have drawn up action plans to combat racism and hate crime, complemented by separate action plans specifically to combat anti-Semitism.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this report is not to define anti-Semitism but to consider the perceptions and experiences of anti-Semitism and anti-Semitism among persons identifying themselves as Jewish. The report presents the experiences of Jews living in Finland of discrimination, anti-Semitism and hate crimes based on a decentralised survey carried out on 4.10-4.11 .2023 and the group interviews supplementing it.

Finland does not have previously extensive research data on experienced antisemitism, which is why the report aims to fill this gap. The study was designed and carried out using the frameworks of intersectionality and participatory methods. Intersectionality was utilised, for example, by taking into account not only Judaism but also other social identities, which may determine the respondents' personality and experience. The participatory method, on the other hand, meant close cooperation with the Jewish Community, as a result of which researchers were able to gather empirical information on antisemitism even before, during and after focus group interviews. Jewish communities also helped to find participants in the survey and disseminated information about the survey in their networks. In the planning and data collection of the study, the principle of language awareness was observed. In other words, researchers strive to remove obstacles to understanding and participation by using both English and Finnish throughout the research process. It was possible to answer the survey question series in Finnish, Swedish and English.

By producing research-based information on the situation of Jews living in Finland, the report supports the implementation of the European Union (EU) strategy on combating anti-Semitism and promoting

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<sup>1</sup>Moe, 2023; Hoffmann & Moe, 2017; Dencik & Marosi, 2016.

<sup>2</sup>National Action Plan for the Prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism 2019-2023.

<https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/162073> (27.12.2023)

<sup>3</sup>Equal Finland: Government action plan to combat racism and promote good relations between population groups.

<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-259-808-0>

<sup>4</sup>Action Plan against Antisemitism in Sweden: Åtgärdsprogram ot antisemitism.

<https://www.regeringen.se/informationsmaterial/2022/07/atgardsprogram-mot-antisemitism/> (2.12.2023); Action Plan

against Antisemitism in Norway: Handlingsplan lot Antisemitism. 2021-2023 – EN

videreføring. <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/handlingsplan-ot-antisemitism/id2830165/> (2.12.2023); Danish

anti-Semitism Action Plan: Handlingsplan mod antisemitism. <https://www.justitsministeriet.dk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Antisemitisme-handlingsplan.pdf> (2.12.2023)



Jewish life<sup>5</sup>. The survey is the most extensive quantitative survey conducted in Finland on Jews and discrimination against Jews, physical violence and anti-Semitism. This report focuses on the most important results of the study.

The EU and its Member States must do everything legally possible to combat anti-Semitism. So far, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights has conducted three surveys on anti-Semitism. Extensive studies carried out in 2012<sup>6</sup> and 2018<sup>7</sup> show that anti-Semitism is widespread and persistent, and that European Jews cannot live openly without fear for their safety.<sup>8</sup> The results of the study carried out at the beginning of 2023 were not yet available at the time of writing this report. In order to place Finland's results in a wider European context, the report briefly presents the results of the anti-Semitism survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2018.<sup>9</sup> The questions used by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights have changed considerably since 2018, so not all questions are comparable. When comparing the results of the 2018 report of Finland and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the average of 12 countries is used as a benchmark.<sup>10</sup>

This study was carried out in the Akadem and the Polin Institute (Inez och Julius Polin – Institut för teologisk Forskning), commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and the Human Rights Centre. The sample of the survey was collected by using a battery of questions from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights to ensure as accurate and comprehensive information as possible. The material was also collected with qualitative methods from key stakeholders. This work would not have been successful without cooperation between the Jewish parishes of Finland, different Jewish organisations and their representatives, and the input, expertise and assistance provided to the project at different stages. This study gives voice to those who shared their experiences.

## 1.1 Research

The European Commission's EU strategy to combat anti-Semitism and promote Jewish life has three priorities: 1) preventing and combating all forms of anti-Semitism, 2) protecting and fostering the Jewish way of life in the EU, and 3) education, research and commemoration of those who died in the Holocaust. The strategy States: "It is important to know the centuries of the history of Judaism and Antisemitism in Europe and to know how the Holocaust affected the Jewish population and the continent of Europe in order to understand today's antisemitism and to ensure that similar atrocities never occur again."<sup>11</sup>

Several recent studies have examined the lives of Finnish Jews in Finnish society. These studies mainly focus on the religious practices, traditions and identity of the members of the Jewish parishes of Helsinki and Turku.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>European Commission Strategy for the Prevention of Antisemitism and the promotion of Jewish life  
[https://commission.europa.eu/document/6160ed15-80da-458e-b76b-04eacae46d6c\\_en?prefLang=fi](https://commission.europa.eu/document/6160ed15-80da-458e-b76b-04eacae46d6c_en?prefLang=fi) (30.1.2024)

<sup>6</sup>EU FRA 2012. FRA Survey of Jewish people's experiences and practices of antisemitism.  
<https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2012/fra-survey-jewish-peoples-experiences-and-perceptions-antisemitism>

<sup>7</sup>EU FRA 2018. Experiences and practices of anti-semitism – Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU. EU FRA. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/experiences-and-perceptions-antisemitism-second-survey-discrimination-and-hate>

<sup>8</sup>EU FRA 2018.

<sup>9</sup>EU FRA 2018.

<sup>10</sup>Average of responses received in the 12 EU Member States, weighted by the share of the Jewish population in each country.

<sup>11</sup>EU strategy for combatting antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021-2030).

[https://commission.europa.eu/document/6160ed15-80da-458e-b76b-04eacae46d6c\\_fi](https://commission.europa.eu/document/6160ed15-80da-458e-b76b-04eacae46d6c_fi) (08.12.2023)

<sup>12</sup>For example: Czibalmos, 2021; Czibalmos & Illman, 2020; Muir & Tuori, 2019; Pataricza, 2019; Vuola, 2019, etc.

Finnish research on antisemitism and Jewish life is limited to antisemitism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church and its manifestation in certain historical times. Studies carried out over the past two decades show that anti-Semitism has been or is also a problem in Finland<sup>13</sup>, but it is a question of individual studies, often related to, for example, antisemitism in the 20th century.

Modern antisemitism in Finland is discussed in a research project launched in 2023, “Antisemitism undermining democracy”<sup>14</sup>, which examines, among other things, the views of Jews living in Finland as an antisemitism phenomenon and the manifestations of antisemitism in Finnish society. However, extensive research based on quantitative data on antisemitism in Finland has not been carried out before. This report and the publication based on it are the first to deal with anti-Semitism, discrimination and anti-Semitism hate crimes in modern Finland and are based not only on qualitative data but also on extensive quantitative survey data.

### 1.1.2 Data collection and methods

The data collection for the survey was carried out in two stages. First, the researchers modified the questionnaire used by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2023 so that it corresponded to Finnish conditions, such as localities and the school system, and the equality bodies (Equality body) that promote legal protection and equal treatment in Finland. After this, the survey was disseminated through stakeholders and their communication channels. A total of 334 persons responded to the survey, which, according to the calculation method, is around 17-22 per cent of Jews living in Finland (see Chapter 6).

#### 1.1.2.1 Survey survey

The questionnaire (see Annex 1 – questionnaire) was based on the 2023 EU Agency for Fundamental Rights questionnaire on discrimination against Jews and hate crimes. The survey was conducted in 13 EU Member States in spring 2023.<sup>15</sup> In order to compare Finland's results with those of other EU countries, the researchers kept the questions in the Fundamental Rights Agency's questionnaire, however modifying sections concerning Finnish localities, equality bodies and the school system. At the same time, questions concerning possible emigration from Finland were removed. The paragraphs on antisemitism and its manifestations were not amended. It was possible to respond to the survey between 4.10 and 4.11.2023. The data collection of the survey was influenced by the attack by the extremist organisation Hamas on Israel near the Gaza border on 7 October 2023. The attack led to a war between the State of Israel and Hamas, the effects of which on research results are discussed in Section 2.1. Of the 334 responses to the survey, 75 were issued before and 259 after the attack on 7.10.2023.

The data were analysed with<sup>16</sup> the R statistics software (R version 4.2.1). Analysis variables were formed with the help of the R:n Dplyr package. The reporting used the adjusted R function to calculate frequencies and percentages as well as 95 per cent confidence intervals and *p*-values. Confidence intervals were calculated with the BinomCI function with the Clopper-Pearson method with the R:n DescTools package. *P*-values based on the CPI squared test were calculated with the CHISQ. test function in the R package stats. *P* values were calculated only for two-category analysis variables. The

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<sup>13</sup>Ahonen, Muir & Silvennoinen 2020; Czimbalmos & Pataricza, 2024; Illman & Vuola, 2024; Swanström 2024.

<sup>14</sup>Antisemitism undermining democracy: <https://polininstitutet.fi/en/antisemitism-undermining-democracy-en/> (27.12.2023)

<sup>15</sup>Austria, Belgium, Tšekki, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain and Sweden.

<sup>16</sup>The statistical analysis was carried out by Statistics Finland researcher Eero Lilja, who was a visiting researcher at the Polin Institute during the study.

analysis variables were examined with the following background variables: age, date of response, use of Jewish clothing in public and country of birth. Two-category variables were also examined by gender relative to background variables.

#### *1.1.2.2 Open question of the inquiry*

At the end of the questionnaire there was an open question to which responding was voluntary. The responses received covered a wide range of topics, some of which were not related to other questions. These responses provided general feedback on the survey or shared personal experiences or opinions. In this report, open answers are discussed as illustrative material that can help to understand or interpret some of the survey results because they reflect the respondents' different opinions and alternative perspectives. The direct quotations published in the report have been selected on the basis of their significance in analysing the results. The identifiable political parties and individuals mentioned in the open answers have been replaced with general terms in the quotations. Spelling and grammar errors have also been corrected and parts irrelevant to the content have been removed. Non-Finnish answers have been translated into Finnish. The text in brackets has been added to make it easier to understand in open answers where understanding the answer requires knowledge of the context.

#### *1.1.2.3 Focus group interviews*

In the second phase of the study, two focus group interviews were conducted with representatives of different Jewish organisations and organisations.<sup>17</sup> The participants were asked about the most significant challenges they face in Finnish society. The first focus group interview was organised for organisations for young people and young adults, the second for a larger group. The semi-structured interview frame (see Appendix 2 – interview frame) was partly based on the questionnaire questions. Non-Finnish answers were translated into Finnish. For security reasons, the organisations participating in the focus group interviews have not been named. In order to protect the privacy of participants, their gender or age are not mentioned in the quotations.

The focus group interviews provided researchers with information that they would not have received only with a questionnaire. In their responses, the interviewees shared their expertise with the researchers and insider information on the situation of Jews living in Finland. This interactive process partly bridged the gap between knowledge and doing (e.g. "bridge the know-do gap"<sup>18</sup>). The proposals and experiences presented in the focus group interviews will provide concrete tools for influencing, for example, Jewish communities and human rights actors in the future.

#### *1.1.2.4 Research restrictions*

Like other studies, this study also has its limitations. The questions in the 2023 questionnaire of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights aim to maintain comparability with the 2012 and 2018 surveys. However, the questions do not sufficiently reflect the most recent forms of anti-Semitism associated with the State of Israel and are therefore somewhat superficial. In the study carried out in Finland, the researchers decided to amend the survey used by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2023 only a little in order to compare its results with the responses collected in other EU Member States. This was considered important because it was the first extensive research on antisemitism in Finland. The number of responses to some questions was also low, which limited the possibility of accurate analyses. These questions were related, for example, to the experiences of people living in the

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<sup>17</sup>To protect the identity of the representatives, a list of the organisations interviewed will not be published.

<sup>18</sup>Pull, Giles & Graham 2017.

counties or sexual and gender minorities. In addition, the survey was carried out in a particularly short time, that is, in less than four months. However, the report reliably opens up anti-Semitism and discrimination experienced by Jews in Finland in 2023. At the same time, it is an important opening for research on the topic.

## 1.2 Contents of the report

The purpose of this report is not to define anti-Semitism but to find out what kind of thoughts, ideas and experiences people living in Finland and perceiving themselves as Jewish have of it. However, for the sake of comprehensibility, the first chapter of the report presents the key concepts related to anti-Semitism and discrimination.

The views of Jews living in Finland on anti-Semitism were examined by asking the respondents to assess, for example, whether they feel that anti-Semitism has increased in Finland and what kind of actions they define as anti-Semitism. These results are presented in the second chapter of the report.

The third chapter examines the extent to which Jews living in Finland feel that Jewish life is safe in Finland. The chapter mainly discusses antisemitic insults and hate crimes experienced and witnessed by the respondents and whether they are concerned about becoming a victim of an antisemitic hate crime.

Individuals may be subjected to both direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of, for example, race, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, age or gender identity. Individuals' experiences of discrimination based on social identity may be strengthened if they experience discrimination for several reasons.<sup>19</sup> Although the main objective of this report is to study Jewish experiences of anti-Semitic discrimination, harassment and even physical violence, the respondents were also asked to describe other reasons why they felt they had experienced discrimination in seven different everyday situations.<sup>20</sup> These results are presented in the fourth chapter of the report.

The fifth chapter examines how well the respondents are aware of their rights and of different anti-discrimination organisations and judicial bodies. Awareness of these actors is a prerequisite for the notification of possible discrimination cases. The chapter also discusses the respondents' views on legislation protecting them from discrimination and, in general, on the measures taken by the State of Finland to safeguard Jewish culture.

The sixth chapter presents the sociodemographic data collected from the respondents in the survey. This information reflects how the personal characteristics of the respondents contribute to colouring their experiences of anti-Semitism, discrimination or hate crimes.

The final chapter of the report contains recommendations for improving the situation of the Jewish minority both in general and from the perspective of multiple minorities.

### 1.2.1 Key concepts

The primary objective of the study is to consider the experiences of persons identifying themselves as Jews of discrimination, violence and anti-Semitism against Jews in Finland. However, before analysing

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<sup>19</sup>Czimbalmos & Rask, 2022; Denise, 2014; Pager & Shepherd, 2008.

<sup>20</sup>These were: When looking for work; worked; used health care services; attempted to rent or purchase a dwelling or house; contacted a person from the school/higher education institution/university; have been in contact with authorities or public services; attempted to enter a nightclub, bar, restaurant or hotel, utilized public transportation, been in a store, or tried to enter a store.

the results of the study, it is necessary to explain what the concepts and definitions of discrimination and anti-Semitism mean.

### 1.2.1.1 Definition of discrimination

Discrimination means that a person is treated less favourably than another person in the same situation on the basis of one or more of his or her personal characteristics. In Finland, discrimination occurs in the labour market, services, housing and leisure time in both public and semi-public spaces.<sup>21</sup> Discrimination has a negative impact on society as a whole, but especially on the lives of people and population groups facing discrimination. Discrimination can be conscious or unconscious. It may appear face to face, on the Internet or in structures, either directly or enveloped in neutral or even polite behaviour.<sup>22</sup> According to previous studies, discrimination can affect the mental and physical health of people targeted by it.<sup>23</sup>

The forms of discrimination vary, and discrimination can be based on belonging to one or more population groups.<sup>24</sup> According to the contacts received by the non-discrimination Ombudsman in 2022, the most common grounds for discrimination were disability, nationality and state of health. Discrimination related to religion or belief was the seventh most common reason for contacting.<sup>25</sup> In 2022, the second most common motive for a hate crime (10% of cases) was the victim's religious background or conviction.<sup>26</sup>

In Finland, discrimination is prohibited under the Constitution, the non-discrimination Act<sup>27</sup>, the Equality Act, the<sup>28</sup> Criminal Code<sup>29</sup> and several individual special acts. Under section 6 of the Constitution, people are equal before the law. The Constitution also prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, age, origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, state of health, disability or other personal characteristics.<sup>30</sup> In addition, the Act defines the authorities responsible for supervising the implementation of the non-discrimination Act. These include the non-discrimination Ombudsman<sup>31</sup>, the national non-discrimination and Equality Tribunal<sup>32</sup> and occupational safety and health authorities.<sup>33</sup> The right to live without discrimination on the grounds of, inter alia, race, ethnic or social

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<sup>21</sup>Discrimination in Finland 2017-19. Information report. Publications of the Ministry of Justice 2020:20. [https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162517/OM\\_2020\\_20.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162517/OM_2020_20.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) (14.03.2024).

<sup>22</sup>Czibalmos & Rask, 2022: 47-48; Lennartz, Proost, & Brebels, 2019.

<sup>23</sup>For example: Czibalmos & Rask, 2022; epel, Kaplan & Moran, 2010; Pascoe & Richman 2009; Denise, 2014; Thoits, 2010; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, K., & Perhoniemi 2006; Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. Stigma and discrimination: <https://thl.fi/aiheet/mielenterveys/mielenterveyden-edistaminen/stigma-ja-syrjinta> (11.12.2023)

<sup>24</sup>Discrimination. Non-discrimination Ombudsman. <https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/syrjinta> (10.12.2023);

<sup>25</sup>Annual report of the non-discrimination Ombudsman 2022.

[https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/documents/25249352/157476116/Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutetun+vuosikertomus+2022+\(pdf\).pdf/bd9295aa-e49b-9977-fe85-C909C52a8d70/Annual+report+of+the+non-discrimination+Ombudsman+2022+\(pdf\).pdf?version=1.1&t=1681975578017](https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/documents/25249352/157476116/Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutetun+vuosikertomus+2022+(pdf).pdf/bd9295aa-e49b-9977-fe85-C909C52a8d70/Annual+report+of+the+non-discrimination+Ombudsman+2022+(pdf).pdf?version=1.1&t=1681975578017) (14.03.2024).

<sup>26</sup>Iron (2023). Hate crime reported to the police in Finland in 2022. Police University College reviews 35. Police University College, Tampere. <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe20231016140336>.

<sup>27</sup>Non-discrimination Act. <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2014/20141325> (10.11.2023)

<sup>28</sup>Act on Equality between women and men, <https://finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1986/19860609> (10.11.2023)

<sup>29</sup>Ethnic agitation. Criminal Code. <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1889/18890039001> (10.11.2023)

<sup>30</sup>Finnish Constitution 11.06.1991/731. <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1999/19990731> (14.03.2024)

<sup>31</sup>Non-discrimination Ombudsman. <https://syrjinta.fi/etusivu> (27.12.2023)

<sup>32</sup>Non-discrimination and Equality Tribunal. <https://www.yvtltk.fi/fi/> (27.12.2023)

<sup>33</sup>Occupational safety and health administration. <https://tyosuojelu.fi/tietoa-meista/toiminta> (27.12.2023)

origin, religion, belief, political or other opinions is recognised in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.<sup>34</sup>

The non-discrimination Act prohibits all forms of discrimination, such as indirect and direct discrimination and harassment. Discrimination is immediate if a person is treated less favourably on the basis of one of his or her personal characteristics than in a situation similar to that of another person. There is indirect discrimination if an apparently neutral rule, criterion or practice puts a person in a less favourable position than others on the basis of his or her personal characteristics.<sup>35</sup> Harassment, on the other hand, is behaviour that violates a person's human dignity intentionally or factually. Disruptive behaviour creates a degrading, humiliating, threatening, hostile or aggressive atmosphere related to the prohibited grounds for discrimination. Harassment may affect not only the individual but also a group of people.<sup>36</sup>

### *1.2.1.2 Definitions of anti-Semitism*

Anti-Semitism, or anti-Semitism, is a structure of deeply rooted and partly unconscious conceptions of Jews. It can manifest itself in the individual's attitudes and culture, for example in the form of visual language, myths, ideology, folklore and emotions aroused by stereotypes. It may also take the form of actions such as discrimination, anti-Semitism or state violence. The purpose of anti-Semitic activity is to alienate, destroy or expel the object of the activity because it is Jewish.<sup>37</sup> Like discrimination, anti-Semitism has subtle forms that are easy and difficult to recognise. According to internationally renowned Antisemitism researcher David Hirsh, antisemitism today is not "dressed in Nazi uniforms and does not openly express its hatred for Jews."<sup>38</sup>

Two well-known definitions of antisemitism are the widespread definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)<sup>39</sup> from 2016 and the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (Alliance) from 2021.<sup>40</sup> Both are considered to be rather incomplete, too general and strongly politicised from the point of view of scientific analysis because they treat the criticism of the State of Israel differently.

The non - legally binding definition of "IHRA" is also a guideline recommended by the European Commission in its conclusions on combating racism and anti-Semitism in 2022<sup>41</sup> and in its 2018 Declaration on combating Anti-Semitism.<sup>42</sup> So far, 25 EU Member States have adopted a superb definition of anti-Semitism.<sup>43</sup> In the current political debate, it is one of the most mentioned and accepted definitions and therefore plays a key role in identifying and combating anti-Semitism. It has

<sup>34</sup>Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. <https://fra.europa.eu/fi/eu-charter/article/21-syrjintakielto> (27.12.2023)

<sup>35</sup>Non-discrimination Act. <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2014/20141325>

<sup>36</sup>Harassment. Non-discrimination Ombudsman. <https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/web/yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu/hairinta> (14.03.2024).

<sup>37</sup>Fein, 1987.

<sup>38</sup>Hirsh, 2018: 5.

<sup>39</sup>Model definition of anti-Semitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Union.

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism/adoption-endorsement> (08.02.2024)

<sup>40</sup>The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism. <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/> (13.11.2023)

<sup>41</sup>Council adoptions Conclusions on combating Racism and antisemitism.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/04/council-adopts-conclusions-on-combating-racism-and-antisemitism/> (13.11.2023)

<sup>42</sup>Fight against anti-Semitism: Council Declaration. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/12/06/fight-against-antisemitism-council-declaration/> (13.11.2023)

<sup>43</sup>Information on endorsement and adoption of the UNFAIR working definition of antisemitism:

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism/adoption-endorsement> (13.11.2023)

been criticised mainly for two reasons: it is not useful as a legal instrument and some believe it restricts freedom of expression.<sup>44</sup> Despite this, it is also the most widely accepted definition of anti-Semitism adopted by Jewish institutions.

The Jerusalem Declaration came about as a result of criticism of the definition of “glory.” The Jerusalem Declaration has also been widely criticised for accepting rather than challenging “new antisemitism.”<sup>45</sup> This form of antisemitism refers to activities in which Zionists or any defenders of Israel's existence are accused of conduct generally associated with ancient stereotypes of Jews, such as greed, bloodthirst and power. This rhetoric blackmails Jews who identify themselves with Zionism or know Israel — regardless of their individual views of Israel's politics. The Jerusalem Declaration is also criticised for its too narrow definition of anti-Semitism. According to the criticism, the definition does not cover the current influential ideological forms of antisemitism. The Declaration also defines anti-Semitism as one form of racism and thus disparages and destroys the Jewish identity.<sup>46</sup>

International and comparative research on antisemitism is limited by a lack of theoretical clarity and analytical definitions of antisemitism. It is therefore important to ask the views of Jewish communities on the phenomenon.

“Antisemitism is perhaps the oldest virus in the world to fight in Finland and elsewhere. Maintaining democracy is a guarantee that all citizens have the same rights. History has shown that Jewish hatred begins with Jews [that hatred begins with Jews] and then dictatorships also diminish the rights of other minorities.”

**Person who responded to the survey (man, 75)**

“I really think people don't understand what is all anti-Semitism. They are not sufficiently aware of the definition of “lard”. They are not sufficiently aware of the different types of antisemitism and their classification. I believe that people should have more training to understand. [...] the cry “from river to sea” [English. from the river to the sea] basically tries, in its original sense, to encourage ethnic cleansing of Jews. But today it is not considered as such because it is thought that if a white person says so, it means something else. [...] I think there is a very blurred line between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, a grey area that depends on who reads it or who sees it.”

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

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<sup>44</sup>Deckers & school, 2022.

<sup>45</sup>For example: Tabarovsky, 2022; Hirsh, 2018; Rosenfeld, 2015.

<sup>46</sup>For example: rich, 2021; Izenberg, 2021.

## 2 manifestations of antisemitism

Key

findings

- The majority of the respondents (83%) felt that anti-Semitism has increased in Finland over the past five years.
- The majority (92%) of the respondents said that they consider non-Jewish people to be anti-Semitic if they do not consider Jews living in Finland to be Finnish. Altogether 78 per cent of the respondents said that they considered a person to be an anti-Semitic if he boycotted Israel or Israelis.
- The majority (85%) of the respondents were concerned about antisemitism on the Internet in Finland.
- 84 per cent of the respondents considered that anti-Semitism had increased on the Internet, 72 per cent in the media and 70 per cent in political life in Finland over the past five years.

### 2.1 Effects of the Hamas-Israel war

The war that began between the extremist organisation Hamas and Israel on 7 October 2023 undoubtedly affected the lives of Jews in the diaspora, as several articles and reports show.<sup>47</sup> It is clear from the open answers to the survey and the general feedback received by the research group that the war had some effect on the respondents' perceptions of anti-Semitism. Based on this information, far-reaching conclusions cannot be drawn, as it is difficult or even impossible to schedule the moment when the effects of the war began to be reflected in the responses. Many of the respondents to the survey before the Hamas terrorist attack contacted the researchers after the start of the war and said that their responses might have contained slightly different views, especially on new forms of anti-Semitism, if they had responded to the survey after 7.10.2023. New forms of anti-Semitism include strict anti-Sionist attitudes or hostility towards and demonisation of the State of Israel.

The statistical discrepancy is not necessarily significant when comparing the responses to the questionnaire before and after 7.10.2023. However, open answers provide more information on the effects of the war. Based on them, the respondents' views on both antisemitism in general and antisemitism in Finland in particular changed to some extent. According to the respondents, the criticism of the State of Israel and its repercussions on the Jewish Community were so excessive that it could be called anti-Semitism.

“I am tired of politicians not being held accountable for their actions, not to the far right or to the far left. The war changed a lot of things. I am very left-wing and have a very critical attitude towards Israel, but I feel that my people are attacking me and other Jews than the public prosecutor. They look at

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<sup>47</sup>For example: United Kingdom: CST [Community Security Trust] London, UK: Blog: Antisemitic incidents – 22 November Update. <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2023/11/22/antisemitic-incidents-22-november-update> (28.12.2023); Percival, R. (2023) “reports of antisemitism surge 500% to reach HIGHEST levels ever recovered by CST.” <https://www.thejcc.com/news/reports-of-antisemitism-surge-500-to-reach-highest-levels-ever-recorded-by-cst-p72tajuy> (28.12.2023); Sweden: Judiska centralrads. Svenska judars upplevelse av antisemitism Efter 7 oktober. <https://www.judiskacentralradet.se/single-post/svenska-judars-upplevelse-av-antisemitism-efter-7-oktober> (28.12.2023); Denmark: Forsvaret genoptager støtten til politiets bevogtning AF lokaliteter I København: <https://www.fmn.dk/da/nyheder/2023/forsvaret-genoptager-stotten-til-politiets-bevogtning-af-lokaliteter-i-kobenhavn/> (28.12.2023); Germany: Beratungsanfragen zur antisemitismischer Diskriminierung. Sonderauswertung der Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes – November 2023. [https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/Sonstiges/20231109\\_Bericht\\_UBAD\\_Antisemitismus\\_Beratung.html?nn=305458](https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/Sonstiges/20231109_Bericht_UBAD_Antisemitismus_Beratung.html?nn=305458) (29.12.2023) (28.12.2023)



things completely without context, with huge double standards.” **Person who responded to the survey (man, 29)**

“I think that before the [present] war in Israel many were confronted with extreme right-wing anti-Semitism, but after the outbreak of the war or whenever there is a conflict in the Middle East, the situation is different and we are confronted with more left-wing and Islamist anti-Semitism. In practice, there is no boundary between antisemitism and antisemitism!!!!”

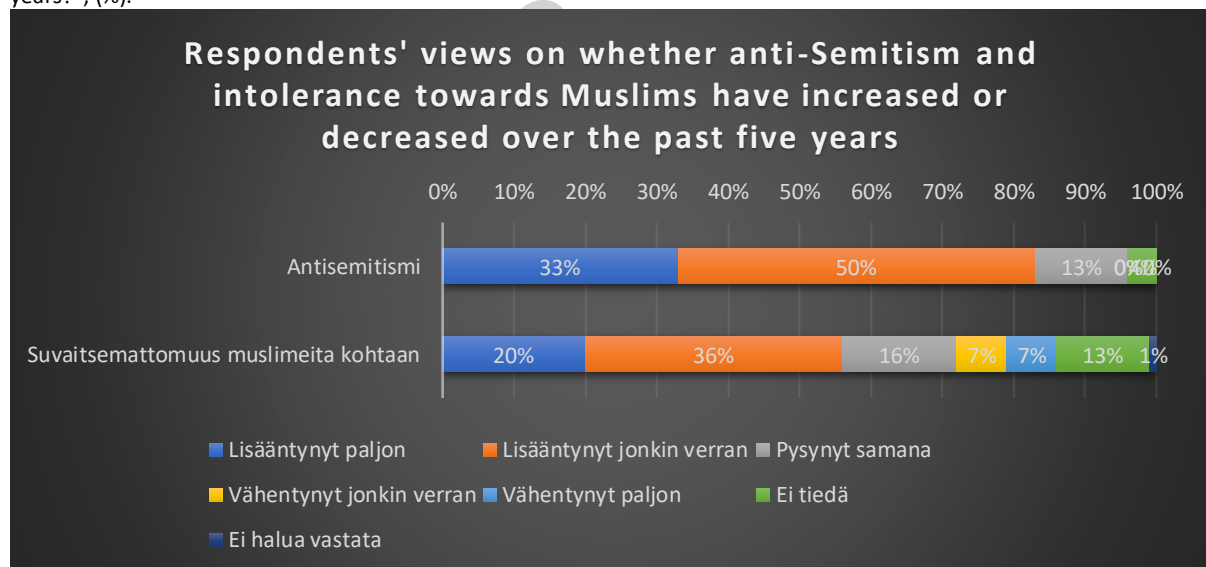
**Person who responded to the survey (woman, 41)**

## 2.2 How big a problem is antisemitism in Finland?

The survey participants were asked whether they felt that antisemitism and islamophobia had increased or decreased in Finland over the past five years (or during the time they have lived in Finland). The majority of the respondents (83%) said that anti-Semitism had increased “much” (33%) or “somewhat” (50%). In addition, 56% of the respondents reported that intolerance towards Muslims has increased “much” (20%) or “somewhat” (36%) during this period (see Figure 1). The result corresponds to the average of the 2018 report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. According to the report, the vast majority of respondents (89%) believe that anti-Semitism has increased in the respondent’s country of residence over the past five years.<sup>48</sup>

Interviewees born outside Finland reported increased antisemitism more often than interviewees born in Finland: 96 per cent of women born outside Finland said that anti-Semitism had increased, while 88 per cent of women born in Finland thought so.<sup>49</sup>

Figure 1. “Has anti-Semitism and intolerance towards Muslims increased, remained the same or decreased over the past five years?”, (%).



Of the persons who responded to the survey before the war that began on 7.10.2023, 81 per cent reported that anti-Semitism had increased in Finland. This view was shared by 87 per cent of the respondents after the start of the war. In the focus group interviews, the participants noted that anti-Semitism has always been a problem in Finland: it is rather difficult to fight anti-Semitic ideologies,

<sup>48</sup>EU FRA 2018: 17-18.

<sup>49</sup>For this calculation, respondents who reported that their gender was other than male or female were removed from the sample.

because while organisations that disseminate anti-Semitic or fascist ideologies can – and should – be banned, their members' ideologies remain.

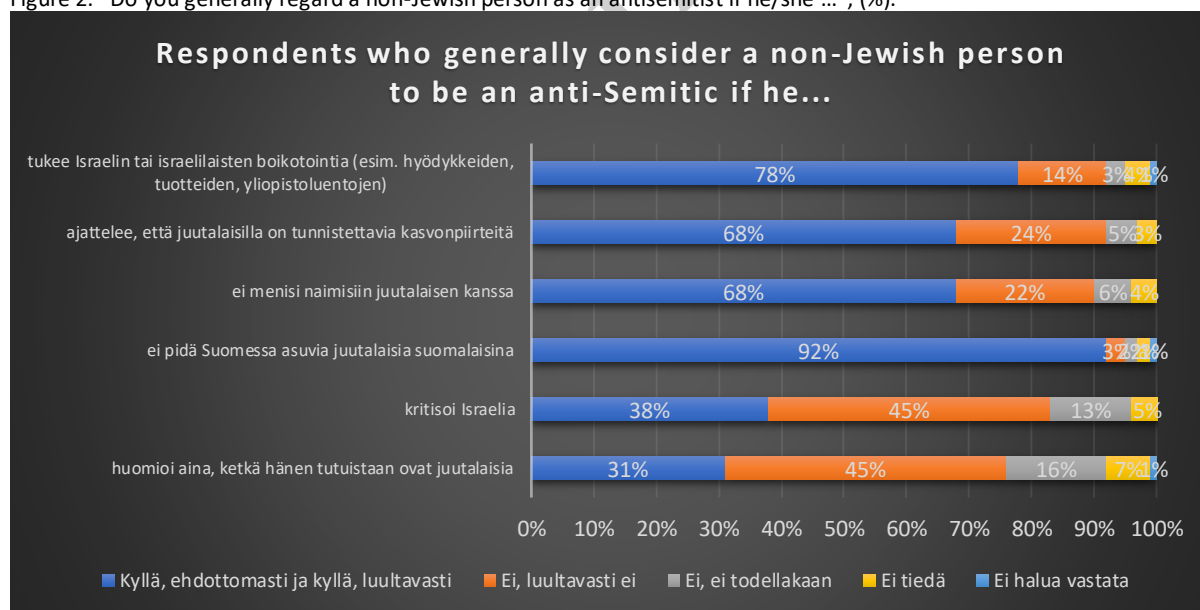
“But the truth now is that it's always been, but it's kind of been there, like, underground. Those particular groups have always existed and, like some, this Nordic resistance movement and what is it? And then they stop. They establish another association under another name, the same people.”

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

### 2.3 Perceptions of anti-Semitism

The study examined to what extent the respondents considered selected statements and opinions to be antisemitic if they were presented by a non-Jewish person (see Figure 2). The majority (92%) of the respondents said that they consider non-Jewish people to be anti-Semitic if they do not consider a Jew living in Finland to be Finnish. In the 2018 report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the average for 12 EU Member States was 94%.<sup>50</sup> In the Finnish survey, 78 per cent of the respondents said that they considered a person anti-Semitic if he boycotted Israel or Israelis.<sup>51</sup> In only two claims less than half of the respondents considered the activity to be antisemitic: 31 per cent of the respondents considered an Antisemitic non-Jewish person who always takes into account who their friends are Jews (see Figure 2). The average for this issue in the 2018 report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights was 55 per cent. In addition, 38% of the respondents considered the non-Jewish person criticising Israel to be an anti-Semitic (see Figure 2). In this question, the average for 12 EU countries was also 38 per cent.<sup>52</sup>

Figure 2. “Do you generally regard a non-Jewish person as an antisemitist if he/she ...”, (%).



This survey did not define exactly the criticism against Israel when the respondents were asked about their views on the anti-Semitism of the Israeli criticism. When looking at other aspects of the survey related to Israel, such as boycott, the responses show that some of the criticism directed at Israel is perceived as anti-Semitic. Based on the focus group interviews and open answers, attitudes to criticism seem to vary depending on its strength and presentation mode. The participants and the respondents clearly outlined that there are differences in the criticism levelled at the State of Israel.

<sup>50</sup>EU FRA 2018: 29.

<sup>51</sup>The answers contain both “yes, absolutely” and “yes, probably” answers.

<sup>52</sup>EU FRA 2018: 29.

Their responses also highlighted other problems in the criticism of Israel, such as the comparison of Israel's and Nazi Germany's policies and the intertwining of ancient antisemitic conspiracy theories with the criticism of the State of Israel.

“In addition, I feel that when people yell at intifada, it is directly to the Jews and I think it is antisemitic. It is the same when people compare Nazi Germany with the present state of Israel. And I feel that in many cases people do not understand what they are yelling at. Especially before the war, I felt that there were many instances in which the Israeli government called different situations anti-Semitic, although I thought they were in fact just criticising the government.”

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

“Antisemitism is indirect in Finland. Few admit that they do not like Jews, but often views of the world power of the Jews, negative views of their customs and the Jewish state are not treated in the same way as other sovereign States.”

**Person who responded to the survey (woman, 42)**

“There have been Jews in Finland for over 100 years. We are part of Finnish society. We carry out Finnish conscription, we are involved in politics, and of course there are a lot of immigrants among [us], but we are not foreigners here. We are members of this society and should receive the same kind of support as other minorities.” **Person who participated in the focus group interview**

## 2.4 Manifestations of anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitic acts can have a profound impact not only on individuals and their families but also on the entire Jewish Community. Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they considered certain antisemitic phenomena and acts a problem (see Figure 3). According to the respondents to the 2018 survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, anti-Semitism was the most problematic in the Internet and social media (89%), followed by public spaces (73%), the media (71%) and political life (70%).<sup>53</sup>

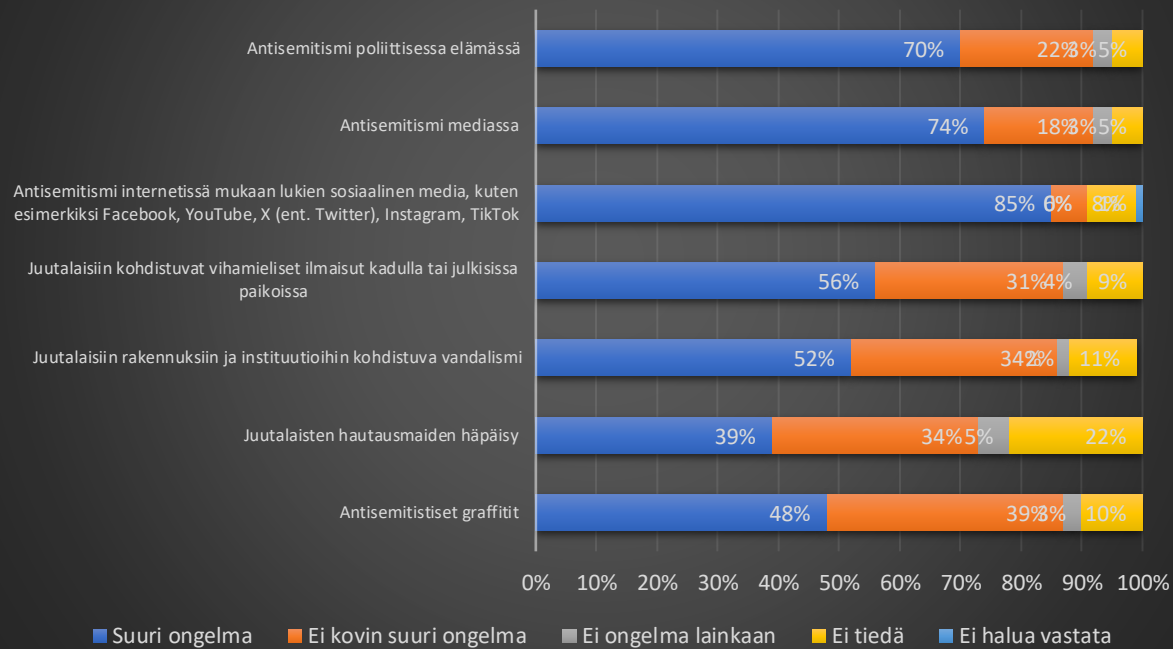
In Finland, the majority of the respondents considered all manifestations of anti-Semitism mentioned in the survey a problem. According to the responses, the majority of the respondents regarded antisemitism as a really big or fairly big problem on the Internet (85%), in the media (74%) and in political life (70%) (see Figure 3). Anti-Semitism on the Internet was considered a very big problem by 57 per cent of the respondents, anti-Semitism in the media by 37 per cent and anti-Semitism in political life by 27 per cent. This may be explained by the fact that Antisemitism on the internet, in the media and in political life has the opportunity to reach a large number of people quickly and thus cause irreversible damage.

Figure 3. “To what extent do you think the following alternatives are a problem in Finland?”, (%).

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<sup>53</sup>EU FRA 2018: 21-22.

## Respondents' views on the extent to which the following issues are a problem in Finland

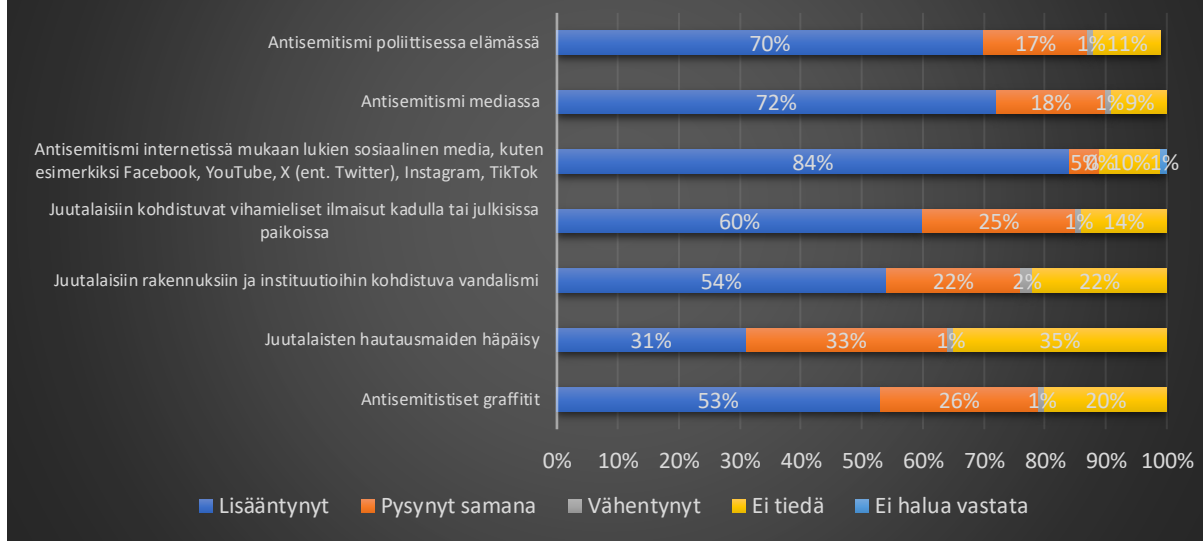


The respondents were asked to what extent different forms of anti-Semitism have increased in Finland over the past five years (see Figure 4). The respondents felt that these manifestations had increased by 53-84 per cent in six out of seven alternatives. Only in the desecration of Jewish cemeteries, the share was lower, 32 per cent. 84% of the respondents considered that anti-Semitism had increased much or somewhat on the Internet, 72% in the media and 70% in<sup>54</sup> political life (see Figure 4). These were also phenomena that the respondents found problematic.

Figure 4. "Have the following things increased, remained the same or decreased in Finland over the past five years?", (%).

<sup>54</sup>The responses contain both "increased much" and "increased somewhat" responses.

## Changes in the manifestation of anti-Semitism in Finland over the past five years



Respondents from different age groups expressed their concern about anti-Semitism on the Internet and in the Finnish media. Many people gave examples of anti-Semitism in recent events and publications. They referred, for example, to articles and anti-Semitism on the Internet and in the Finnish media after Hamas attacked Israel on 7.10.2023. In addition, participants in the focus group interviews shared their concerns over the experiences of members of Jewish organisations and people who participated in Jewish events. They reported that many of these people had encountered more anti-Semitism in public situations than before the war. Based on the open answers to the survey and focus group discussions, it can be said that the respondents experienced more anti-Semitism in public situations than before the start of the war.

“Internet especially. Social media is also full of anti-Semitism in Finnish-speaking discussions. I've withdrawn from many so I can see less. Sadly, there is quite antisemitism in the conversations of anti-racism opponents, such as comments that there could be no peace in the Middle East until the last Jew had been drowned in the Mediterranean. [...] [social media anti-Semitism] gives the impression that people actually have anti-Semitic views even though they do not bring them up in such direct personal contact. [...] among the Christian believers, there is quite a lot of talk about the importance of “seeing the truth”.”

**Person who responded to the survey (man, 50)**

“A person who regularly attended our events was in the middle of a demonstration, probably the first one, and felt so comfortable that he started talking to the demonstrators. As soon as he started talking, the demonstrators realized that he was from Israel. They started screaming...”

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

“Today, it [antisemitism] is an open and partly mainstream and no longer innocent and unconscious. There are neo-Nazis, far-right and far-left groups in Finland that deliberately incite anti-Semitism and hatred against all other ethnic groups, such as the denial or belittling of Holocaust and the mess between Jewish and Israeli politics are very angry, not to mention the fact that conspiracy theories are again abundant as they were in the 1930s. It is an international trend, but it is also an international group that wants all minorities and “others” to disappear, and the governments and human rights bodies of all these countries, as well as citizens, should fight this trend together and not let these groups into politics.”

### **Person who responded to the survey (woman, 70)**

“the Finnish media repeatedly publishes articles that meet the definitions of anti-Semitism. Using the same researchers who have publicly reported on a media platform that Jews use a “Nazi card” to defend Israel, belittle the Holocaust and demonise Israel...”

### **Person who responded to the survey (woman, 38)**

“I feel that the mainstream media in Finland tend to make a negative headline on news about Israel. The suffering of the Israeli people is underestimated or silenced, and the focus is on telling the Palestinians' position without any in-depth analysis of the causes of the situation. According to the media, Israel has only responsibilities, but the Palestinians only have rights. Of course, the media are entitled to criticise Israel, but the presentation of the matter is basically such that if people do not have in-depth knowledge of the history and conflict in the Middle East, the opinion would immediately become anti-Israeli...”

### **Person who responded to the survey (man, 43)**

## 2.5 Manifestations of anti-Semitism encountered during the previous year

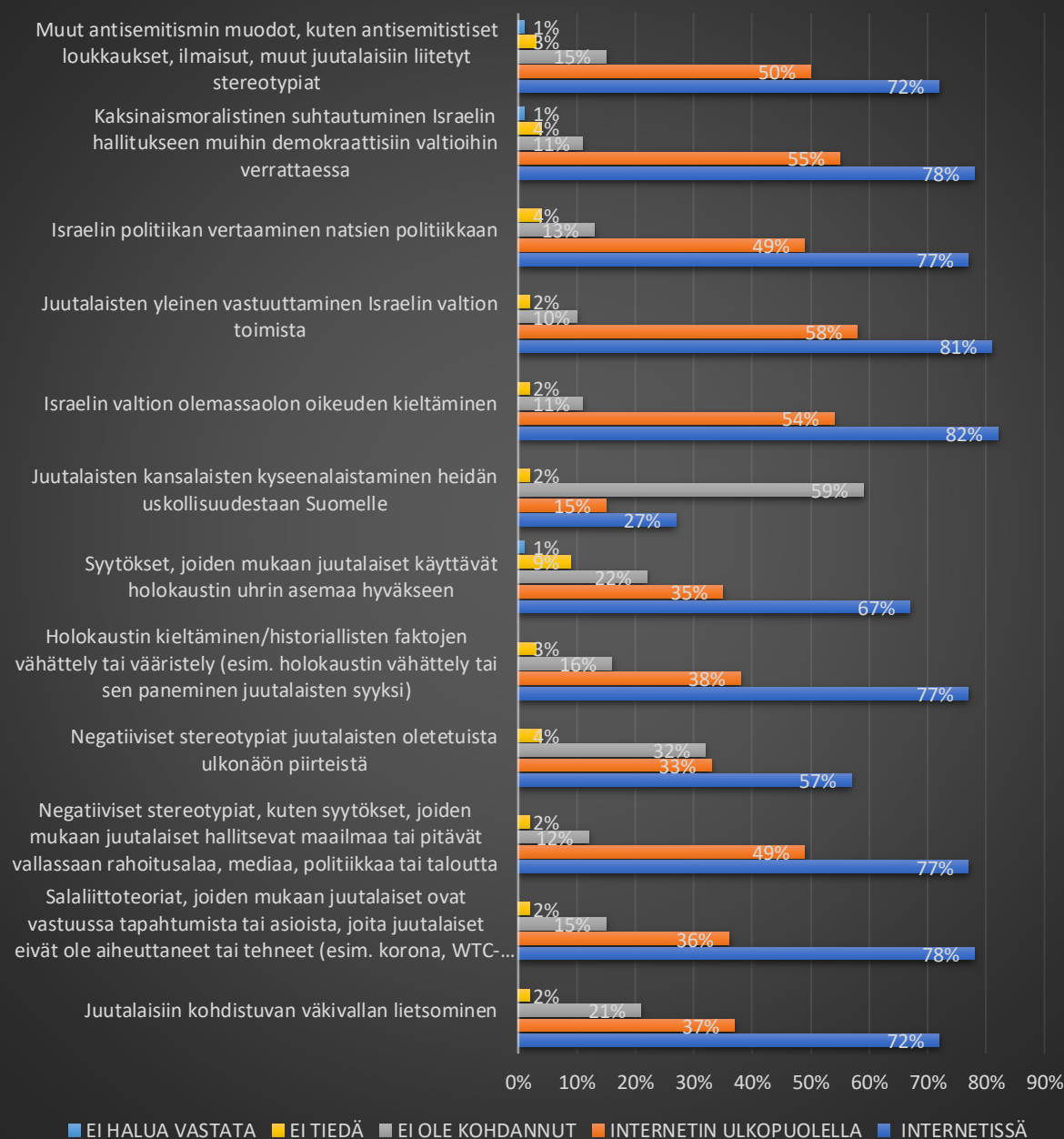
The respondents were asked to consider what kinds of manifestations of anti-Semitism they have encountered on the Internet and social media in the past 12 months (see Appendix – Survey). The question left open the language in which the anti-Semitic content had been published and whether it appeared on a Finnish or foreign website. The question covered articles and social media publications that were not of Finnish origin but had been distributed in Finland or by Finns. 82% of the respondents reported that they had encountered a denial of the right of the State of Israel to exist on the Internet or social media, 81% had experienced that Jews were generally held accountable for the actions of the State of Israel, and 77% had encountered a comparison of Israel's policies with those of Nazi Germany (see Figure 5).

58% of the respondents said that they had encountered thoughts outside the Internet in which Jews were generally held accountable for the actions of the State of Israel. Similarly, 55% of the respondents had observed dual standards in people's attitudes towards Israel compared to other countries, and 49% had encountered negative stereotypes, such as accusations that Jews dominate the world or control the financial, media, political or economic sectors. 49% of the respondents had encountered material comparing Israel's policies with Nazi policies (see Figure 5).

The ideological definition States that criticism of Israel, like criticism of any other state, cannot be regarded as anti-Semitism. On the other hand, according to the definition, the definition of antisemitism is met by the application of dual standards by requiring Israel to conduct that is not expected or required of other nations.

Figure 5. “Have you encountered the following forms of anti-Semitism in Finland online or offline in the past 12 months?”, (%).

## Forms of anti-Semitism encountered on or outside the Internet during the previous year

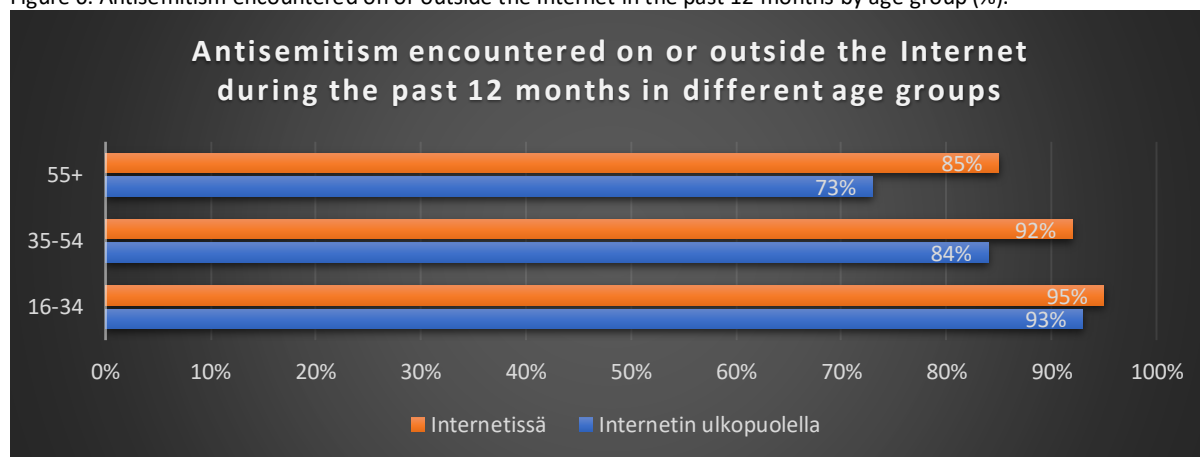


The responses given before and after the war do not differ significantly in terms of the proportion of respondents who had encountered different forms of anti-Semitism outside the Internet. Before the start of the war, 82 per cent of the respondents said they had encountered anti-Semitism on the Internet, while 89 per cent of the respondents responded to the survey after the start of the war. This can be interpreted as meaning that, although antisemitism has increased on the Internet since 7.10.2023, it was a problem even before the war. This suggests that antisemitism is a long-term permanent phenomenon on the Internet.

Based on the responses, encountering antisemitism appears to be most common in younger age groups: 93 per cent of those aged 16 to 34 have experienced anti-Semitism, while the corresponding share for those aged 35 to 54 is 84 per cent and for those aged 55 or over 73 per cent. There are

differences between the youngest and oldest age groups in the antisemitism observed on the Internet: of the representatives of the youngest group, 95 per cent reported encountering antisemitism on the Internet, while the corresponding percentage for those aged over 55 was 85 per cent (see Figure 6). This may be explained by the fact that younger people use the Internet and social media more than older people.

Figure 6. Antisemitism encountered on or outside the Internet in the past 12 months by age group (%).



### 2.5.1 Prevalence of forms of antisemitism encountered outside the Internet in the previous 12 months

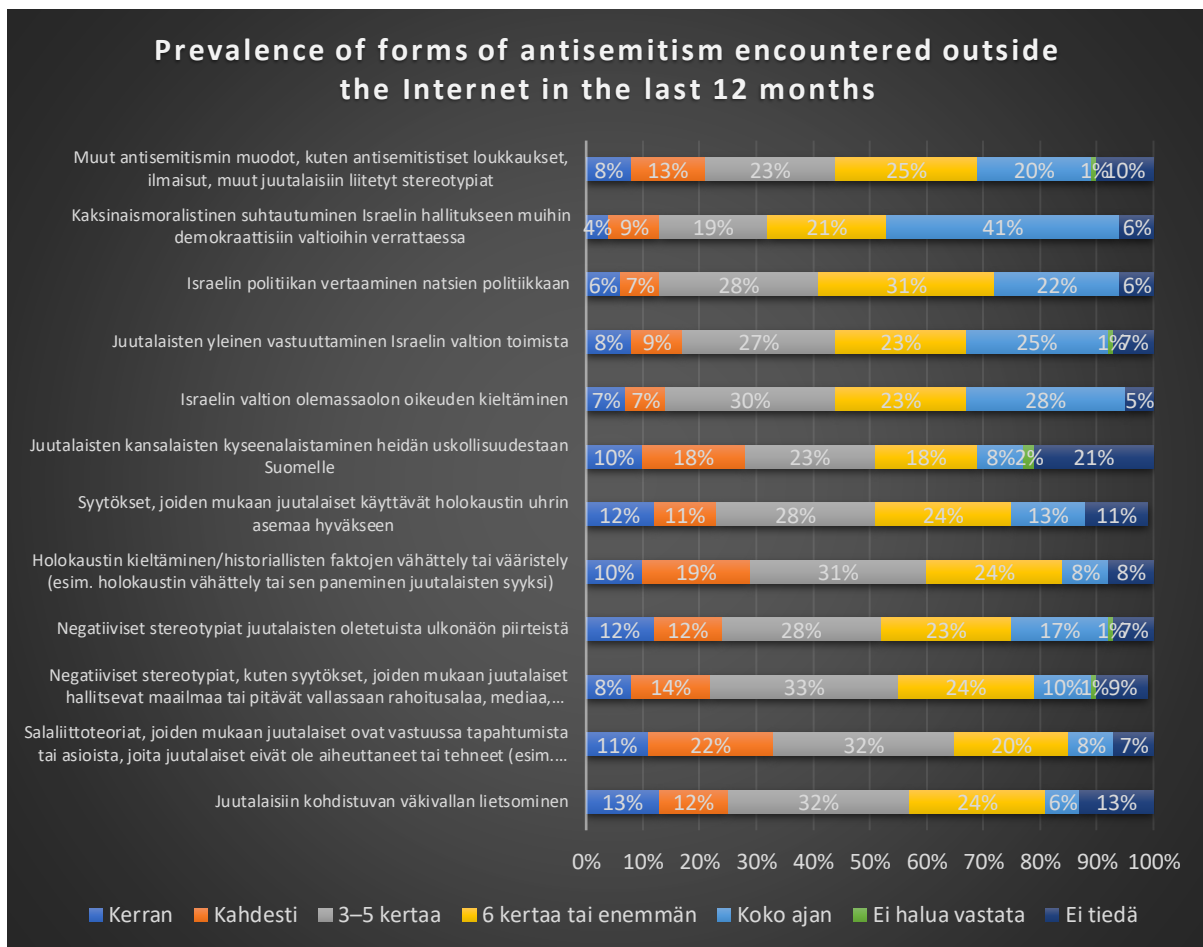
Those who encountered antisemitism outside the Internet were asked to specify where they had encountered antisemitism in the past 12 months. 57% of the respondents reported encountering anti-Semitism in political events such as demonstrations and 50% in public places such as the street or public transport. Altogether 50 per cent reported having encountered anti-Semitism in other media than the Internet, such as television, radio and the press.

Respondents were also asked to tell how often they have encountered certain forms of anti-Semitism in the past 12 months. The results show that the most common are new forms of anti-Semitism, especially those associated with the State of Israel (see Figure 7). 41% of the respondents reported having had a double-morality attitude towards the Israeli government compared to other democratic States “all the time” and 21% more than six times in the previous 12 months. The denial of the right of the State of Israel to exist was also a widely recognised form of anti-Semitism: 28 per cent of the respondents reported having met it continuously and 23 per cent six or more times during the previous 12 months.

In addition, 20% of the respondents said that they had continuously encountered other so-called traditional forms of anti-Semitism, such as verbal anti-Semitic insults and expressions, and stereotypes associated with Jews. Six times or more often, 25 per cent of the respondents said they had encountered these phenomena. This means that even though new forms of anti-Semitism associated with the State of Israel have become more common in Finnish society, more traditional forms of anti-Semitism, such as stereotypes of Jews, are also occurring in Finland. Indeed, the various manifestations of anti-Semitism must be taken into account in the fight against them.

Figure 7. “How many times in the past 12 months have you heard or seen the following forms of anti-Semitism in Finland outside the Internet?”, (%).



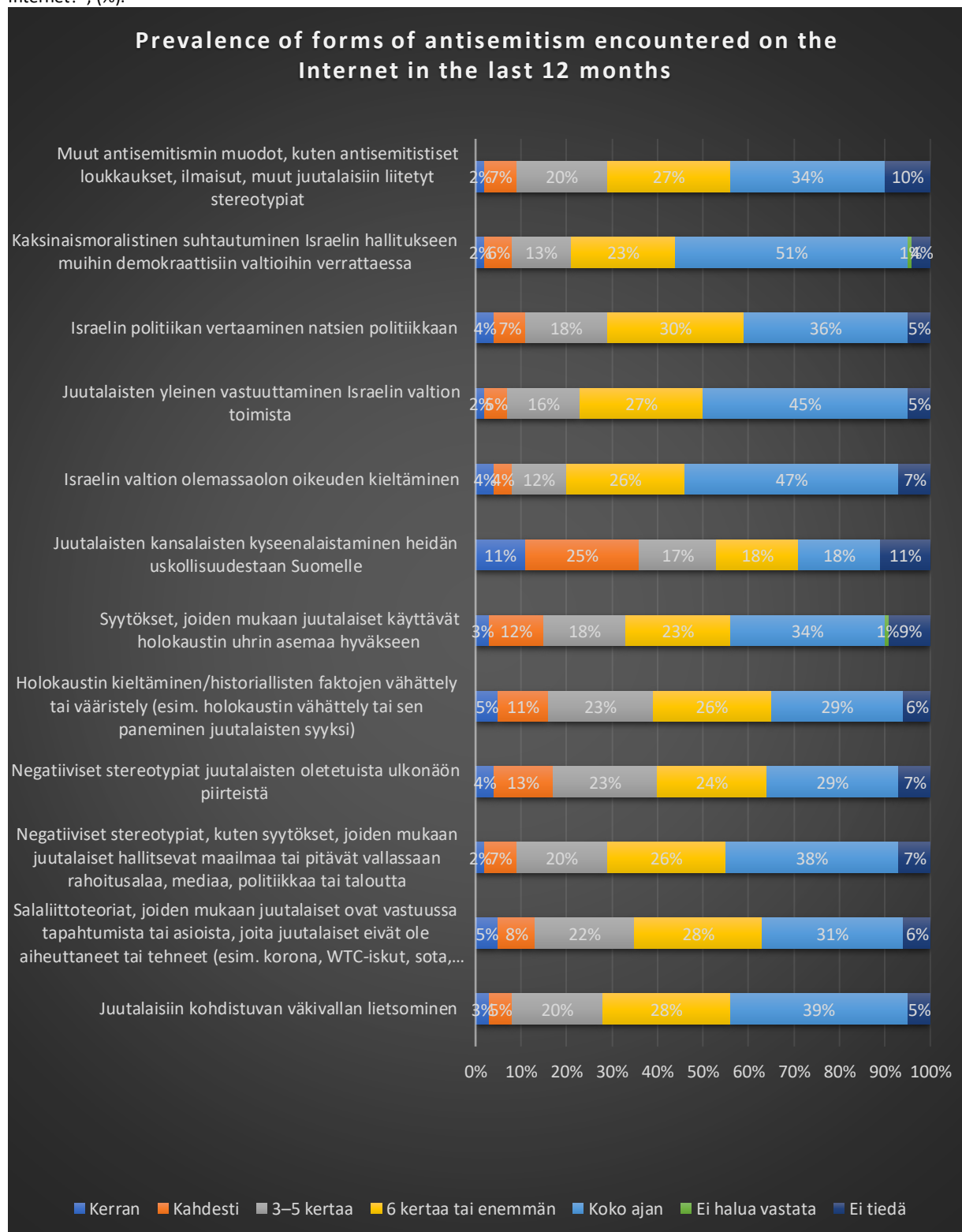


## 2.5.2 Prevalence of forms of anti-Semitism encountered on the Internet in the previous 12 months

Hate speech and hate crimes on the Internet are a growing problem in today's digitalised society. The results of the survey clearly show that this also applies to anti-Semitism, which is encountered in different forms on the Internet more often than personally. Respondents who reported having encountered anti-Semitism on the Internet were asked to describe their experiences in more detail.

51% of the respondents said that they had faced a double-morality attitude towards the Israeli government compared to other democratic States “all the time” and 23% six or more times in the past 12 months. 47% of the respondents said that they had “continuously” encountered a denial of the right of the State of Israel to exist and 26% six or more times in the previous 12 months (see Figure 8). According to the results, respondents are more likely to encounter new forms of antisemitism than traditional forms. This applies equally to anti-Semitism encountered on and off the internet. It is more likely to encounter traditional forms of anti-Semitism on the Internet than outside it: 34% of the respondents said that they had encountered other forms of anti-Semitism on the Internet, such as anti-Semitic insults and expressions, and other stereotypes associated with Jews “all the time” (see Figure 8), while the corresponding share in anti-Semitism encountered outside the Internet was 20% (see Figure 7).

Figure 8. "How many times in the past 12 months have you received/seen the following forms of anti-Semitism on the Internet?", (%).



### 2.5.3 Manifestations and impacts of anti-Semitism on the Internet

The respondents were asked to describe their latest anti-Semitic case on the Internet. 19% of the respondents had faced violence-induced Jews, 15% were collectively responsible for the actions of the Israeli State and 14% were denied the right of the Israeli State to exist.

Most respondents encountered antisemitism on Instagram (26%), Facebook (21%) and online media news (19%). 77 per cent of those who had encountered anti-Semitism on the Internet said that the anti-Semitism content was in text format as part of a published Article or comment. 41% of the respondents had also encountered anti-Semitic visual content, such as images, videos, memes, gifs, Instagram stories and Strim stories. The most common publishers of anti-Semitic content were users, profiles or accounts that the respondents did not know personally (35%) or public figures and opinion leaders (34%). 42% of the respondents who had encountered anti-Semitism on the Internet in the previous 12 months said they had interpreted that the publisher of anti-Semitism content had far-left views. 39 per cent of the respondents interpreted that the publisher had extremist Islamist views and 23 per cent right-wing views.

#### 2.5.4 Reporting antisemitism encountered on the Internet

68% of the respondents had not reported antisemitism encountered on the Internet, and 58% felt that reporting would be of no use. 15% of the respondents felt that the cases they had encountered were not serious enough, and 14% said they believed that their report would not be taken seriously. 14 per cent of the respondents did not know how and where they should have reported the antisemitism they had encountered.

22% of the respondents who had encountered anti-Semitic content on the Internet reported this to the service provider. More than half (52%) of them said they were very dissatisfied with the way the service provider handled their notifications. Only five cases were also reported to the police: two of the persons who reported to the police said they were very dissatisfied and two were very satisfied with the processing of their reports.

#### 2.5.5 Effects of anti-Semitism on the Internet

Online hate can have a negative impact on mental health and wellbeing as well as on people's willingness to contact people online.<sup>55</sup> 67 per cent of the respondents reported that they were angered by anti-Semitic content encountered on the Internet. 37% of the respondents said that incidents had a negative impact on their mental health, 34% said they were worried about their physical safety, and 33% said that incidents had a negative impact on their physical well-being, for example as sleep problems, stress and headache. Open answers and focus group interviews show that anti-Semitism encountered on the Internet is diverse and affects the everyday lives of the respondents.

"The war has made me much more careful about some things, and it has also affected my mental health. I have heard the same from many others."

**Person who responded to the survey (man, 24)**

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<sup>55</sup>Jauhola, Siltala & Nieminen, 2020; Wypych & Bilewicz, 2022; Rask et al., 2018.

## 3 Security

### Key findings

- 38% of the respondents said that they never use, carry or display objects from which they could be identified as Jews.
- 46 per cent of the respondents said they avoided attending Jewish events or attractions: 36 per cent of them avoided these places from time to time, seven per cent often and three per cent at all times.
- The majority of the respondents (88%) reported that the conflict between Israel and Arab countries affects their sense of security. A total of 35% said that the conflict has a significant impact on their sense of security.
- 70% of the respondents said that people in Finland accuse them of the actions of the Israeli government because they are Jews: 11 per cent said this happened all the time, 16 per cent often and 45 per cent occasionally.
- More than half of the respondents (54%) said they were genuinely or fairly concerned about being subjected to verbal insults or harassment, while nearly half (42%) said they were genuinely or fairly concerned about being subjected to a physical attack.

The respondents were asked whether they ever wear, carry or display in public objects from which they could be identified as Jews, such as Kippa or Magen David, or David's star. Although some of these objects may be used for personal, non-religious reasons (Magen David), some of them (Kippa) also function as religious symbols or objects used for religious obligations and personal beliefs or beliefs.

23 per cent of the respondents said they always use or keep the objects mentioned above visible, while 36 per cent said they do so sometimes. 50% of those using or carrying such objects said they avoid displaying them from time to time, 17% said that they operate so often and 12% constantly. 38% of the respondents said that they never use, carry or display objects from which they could be identified as Jews. When asked the reasons for this, 47 per cent of the respondents said they had safety concerns, 33 per cent said that these objects were of little or no importance to them and 17 per cent mentioned other concerns as the reason.

In the 12 EU Member States that participated in the 2018 study conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, half of the respondents (49%) reported using or displaying objects from which they could be identified as Jews at least sometimes. More than two thirds (71%) of the respondents who at least sometimes use or display these objects said they avoid doing so at least sometimes.<sup>56</sup>

Security concerns may also affect the everyday lives of Jews in other ways. For example, they may avoid practicing religion in certain places or avoid certain social situations. The respondents were asked whether they avoid Jewish events or attractions or whole areas and places in their immediate surroundings because they do not feel safe in them. 49% of the respondents reported that they never avoided Jewish events or attractions due to security concerns, while 46% said they avoided them. 36 per cent of the respondents avoided these places from time to time, seven per cent often and three per cent at all times. 50 per cent of the respondents said that they never avoid certain residential areas due to safety concerns, 34 per cent said they avoid certain areas from time to time, six per cent often and five per cent at all times. These responses show that the respondents still consider Finland rather safe.

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<sup>56</sup>EU FRA 2018: 37.

Although the open answers or focus group interviews did not consider the question of avoiding certain places, the focus group discussions expressed concerns especially about the use of gypsum. This may be explained by the fact that people who know little about Judaism or Jewish practices also recognize a gypsum as one of the most well - known Jewish objects. At the same time, the effects of the war were discussed.

“... [after the start of the war] Well, now this is the level, am I gonna put my stuff in the head? Shall I put the david star's blouse inside?”

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

“I avoid showing my Judaism in public; it may be one learned from childhood because of the shadow of the Holocaust, but I am not overcautious. On the other hand, at times I have thought that not everything is okay when I have to think about it and be careful at all.”

**Person who responded to the survey (man, 50)**

### 3.1 Impact of the Israeli-Arab conflict and the actions of the State of Israel on the perception of the security of Jews

The present manifestations of antisemitism often focus on Israel as a “collective Jew.”<sup>57</sup> Many Jews living in Diaspora face situations where they are associated with or held accountable for the actions of the State of Israel, though they may have very little, if any, to do with the State of Israel.

#### 3.1.1 Effects of the Israeli-Arab conflict

Previous studies by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights on discrimination and hate crimes experienced by Jews show that developments in<sup>58</sup> the Middle East can increase anti-Semitism. In this study and earlier studies conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, respondents were asked to what extent the conflict between Arab countries and Israel affects their sense of security in Finland. Most of the respondents to the Finnish survey (88%) reported that the conflict affected their sense of security, but the extent of the impact varied. 35% of the respondents said that the conflict had a significant impact on them (see Figure 9). In the 2018 survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 41% of the respondents said that the conflict had a significant impact on their sense of security, 28% rather much and 21% somewhat.<sup>59</sup>

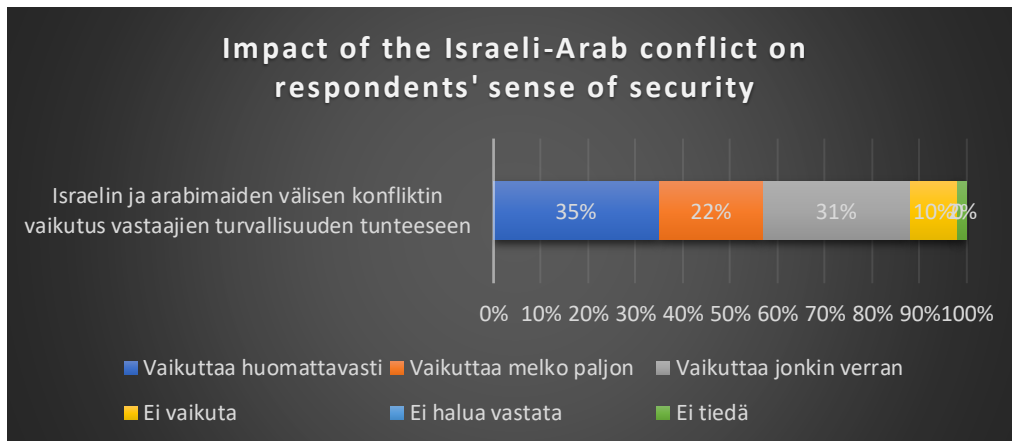
Figure 9. “Does the Israeli-Arab conflict have any impact on how safe you feel as a Jew in Finland?”, (%)

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<sup>57</sup>Marcus, 2015.

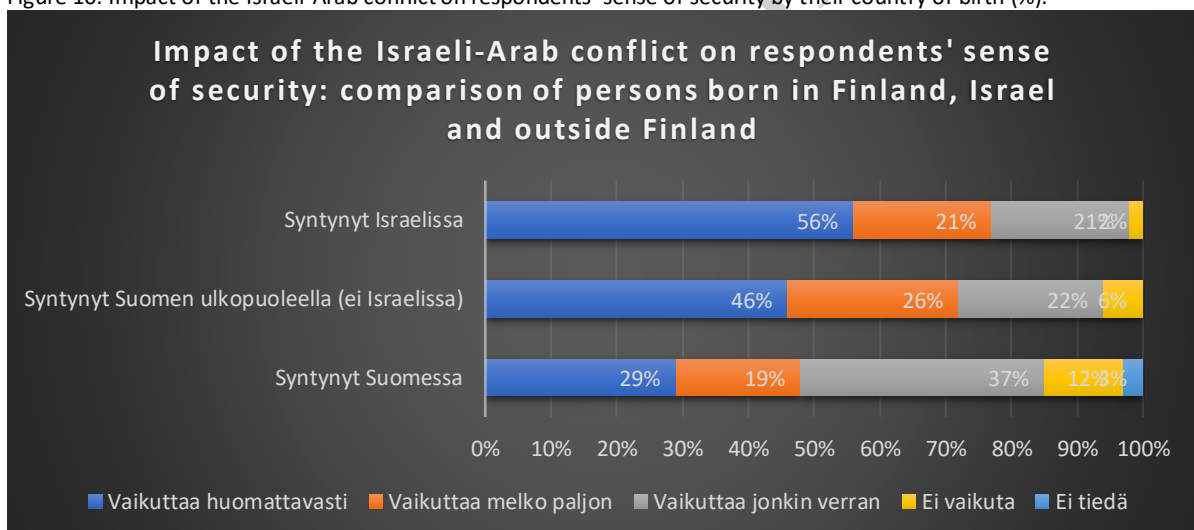
<sup>58</sup>EU FRA 2018: 43.

<sup>59</sup>EU FRA 2018: 43.



An examination of the responses shows that there are differences between the respondents born in Finland, outside Finland and Israel. The conflict had a lesser impact on the sense of security among respondents born in Finland than among those born in Israel or elsewhere outside Finland. 56 per cent of those born in Israel reported a significant effect, 46 per cent of those born outside Finland and 29 per cent of those born in Finland (see Figure 10). There was no significant difference between the genders in the sense of security: the conflict has a significant impact on 32% of men and 39% of women.

Figure 10. Impact of the Israeli-Arab conflict on respondents' sense of security by their country of birth (%).<sup>60</sup>



Open answers and focus group interviews also show that the conflict and especially the war that started on 7.10.2023 have a strong impact on Israeli Jews and those with Israeli Jews in their families. The open answers show that the war has suffered greatly from young Israelite students and families using Hebrew.

“To be sure, I often change the language [from Hebrew] that I speak to my own child in a public place.”  
**Person who responded to the survey (man, 36)**

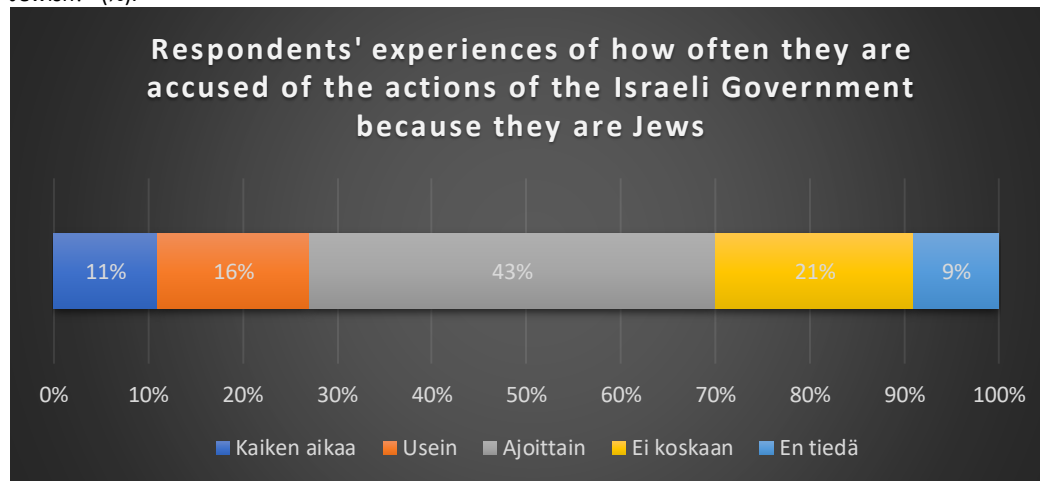
### 3.1.2 Acts and collective responsibility by Israel

Several respondents reported that in the past 12 months they have encountered behaviour in which Jews are held collectively accountable for the actions of the Israeli Government. Respondents were

<sup>60</sup>Those respondents who did not report their country of birth are excluded from the figure.

asked how often they felt that people in Finland blame them for the actions of the Israeli Government. Only 21 per cent of the respondents had never encountered such behaviour. 43% of the respondents said that they had at times had this impression, and 16% said this often happened. 11% of the respondents said that they felt this way all the time (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. “Do you ever feel that people in Finland accuse you of the actions of the Israeli government because you are Jewish?” (%).



The focus group discussions strongly highlighted the collective guilt experienced by the respondents for the actions of the State of Israel. Participants reported that, as Jews, they are increasingly associated with Israel, regardless of their real political or ideological links with the country.

“Anti-Semitism arises here just when “anti-Israelism” rises ... that it is not the same thing ... that it is terribly difficult to explain to people that we keep the whole of Israel and the whole Middle East in a way separate from Judaism in Finland and how we feel that threat, like, internally.”

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

“[...] Every time something happens in Israel, the number of antisemitic hate crimes and incidents increases clearly ...”

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

“I have had to justify Israel's actions and make it clear that “guys, I have no connections to the whole country.””

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

### 3.2 Violence and harassment against Jews

Hate crimes are often not reported in Finland and other countries.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, official statistics on violent incidents – including anti-Semitic incidents – are typically based only on crimes reported to the police and, in some cases, to special representatives, NGOs or organisations of the Jewish Community. According to the hate crime report of the Police University College of 2022, ten reports of offences relating to suspected offences against Jews and Jews were filed in Finland. Six of these were verbal insults, threats and harassment, two one-way assaults, one property offence and one discrimination.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup>Encouraging hate crime reporting. The role of law enforcement and other authorities. 2021. EU FRA. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/hate-crime-reporting> (10.12.2023); Sahramäki, Niemi & Kääriäinen, 2014.

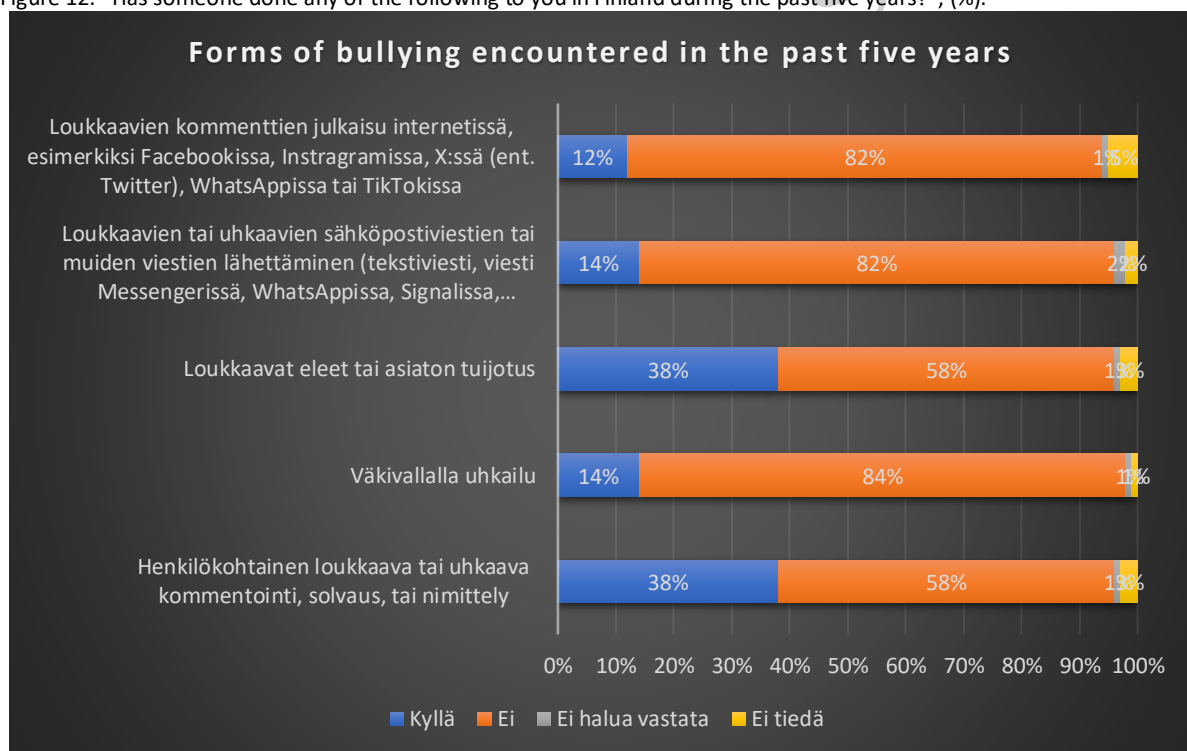
<sup>62</sup>Iron, 2023: 63-65, 99.

However, it can be assumed that there are several cases as a result of underreporting and also because the anti-Semitic motive of the offence is not identified. This is also confirmed by previous studies. Studies conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights refer to under-reporting of violence and harassment against ethnic, religious, gender and sexual minorities. When victims do not report incidents to the police or other organisations, they do not have access to protection, support or justice. The prevalence of unreported hate crimes detected in these studies remains high.<sup>63</sup> Due to assumed underreporting, the respondents were asked several questions about the harassment, physical violence and vandalism they experienced in order to form a more truthful situational picture.

### 3.2.1 Forms of harassment encountered

The respondents were asked whether they had experienced different forms of harassment in the past five years. Offensive or threatening comments addressed directly to the respondents (38%) and offensive gestures or inappropriate staring (38%) were the most common forms of harassment in the past five years (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. “Has someone done any of the following to you in Finland during the past five years?”, (%)



According to the results, those identifying themselves as men are more likely to encounter harassment than women: over the past five years, 31 per cent of female respondents reported having received offensive or threatening comments, while the corresponding share for men was 45 per cent. 36 per cent of female respondents and 40 per cent of male respondents reported having encountered insulting gestures or staring. Men reported that they had faced more threat of violence than women: 19 per cent of men said they had been in a situation where they had been threatened with violence, while the corresponding figure for female respondents was nine per cent.<sup>64</sup> Persons born in Finland

<sup>63</sup>Encouraging hate crime reporting. The role of law enforcement and other authorities. 2021. EU FRA. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/hate-crime-reporting> (10.12.2023)

<sup>64</sup>The percentages were higher for those who did not wish to identify themselves as men or women – with the exception of offensive comments and publications on the Internet: 33 per cent had received offensive and threatening comments, 33



experienced harassment in different forms less than persons born outside Finland. Of the respondents born outside Finland, 52 per cent said they had received insulting gestures or inappropriate staring over the past five years, while 31 per cent of those born in Finland had experienced similar behaviour.

The focus group interviews and open answers highlighted the low level of knowledge of Judaism and anti-Semitism among non-Jewish people. This was mentioned as one explanation for the anti-Semitic harassment experienced by Jews and other forms of anti-Semitism in Finnish society.

“I believe that local authorities, the police or any other important cooperation body that sees symbols of antisemitism on the streets should throw them away or destroy them! Since it is not a real freedom of expression or any free way of expressing an opinion, it is a way of making Jews fear and feel undesirable in a society that permits the public display of such ideas and symbols! I have never seen or heard that permitting antisemitism would have led to anything civilised!”

**Person who responded to the survey (man, 27)**

“My non-Jewish friends sometimes do not understand that they make anti-Semitic comments, even though they mean well. I think the problem is that many non-Jews do not know what anti-Semitism means. Awareness of the topic should be improved in Finnish society (also in Finnish migration and minority communities).”

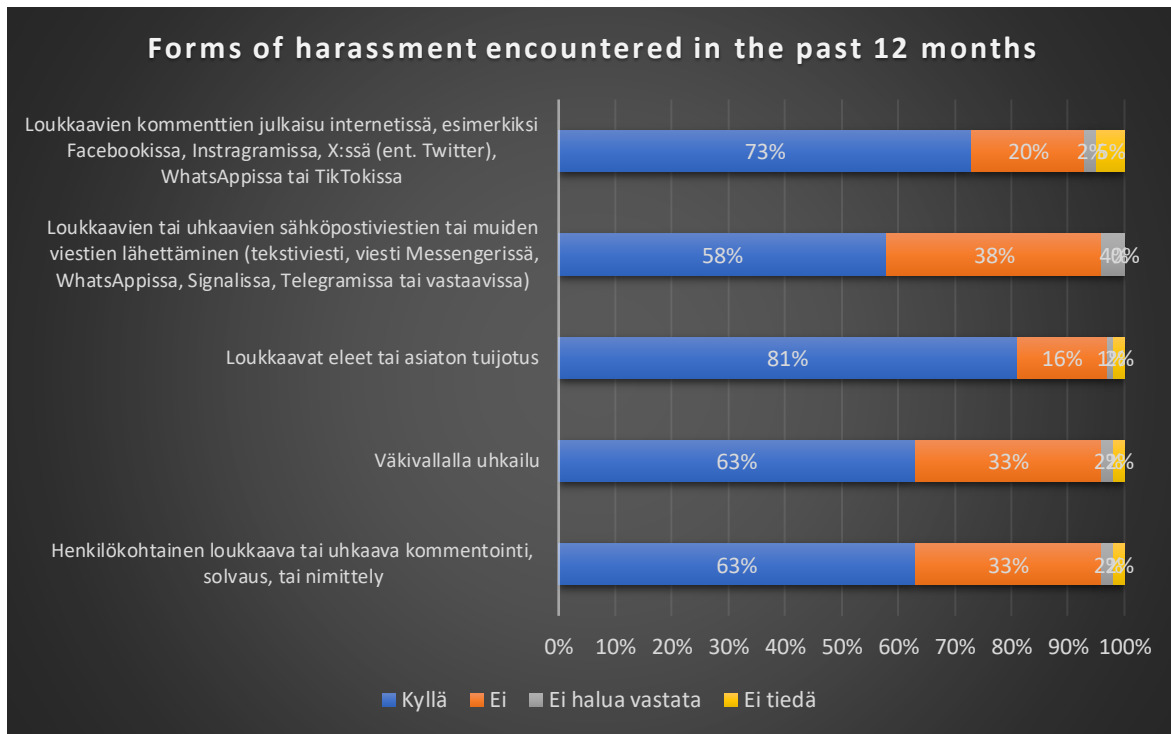
**Person who responded to the survey (woman, 35)**

Respondents who had experienced harassment in the past five years (altogether 53 per cent of the respondents) were asked to specify their experiences during the previous 12 months. They mentioned insulting gestures or inappropriate staring (81%) as the most common forms of harassment and insulting comments published on the Internet (73%) of the respondents (see Figure 13). The majority of the respondents who had experienced harassment were men when the harassment concerned both the past five years and the previous 12 months. Of the men who responded to the survey, 65 per cent said they had received offensive or threatening messages, while the corresponding figure for women was 50 per cent. 76 per cent of male respondents reported that they had personally been threatened with violence, while the corresponding figure for women was 47 per cent.

Figure 13. “Has someone done any of the following to you in Finland in the past 12 months?”, (%).

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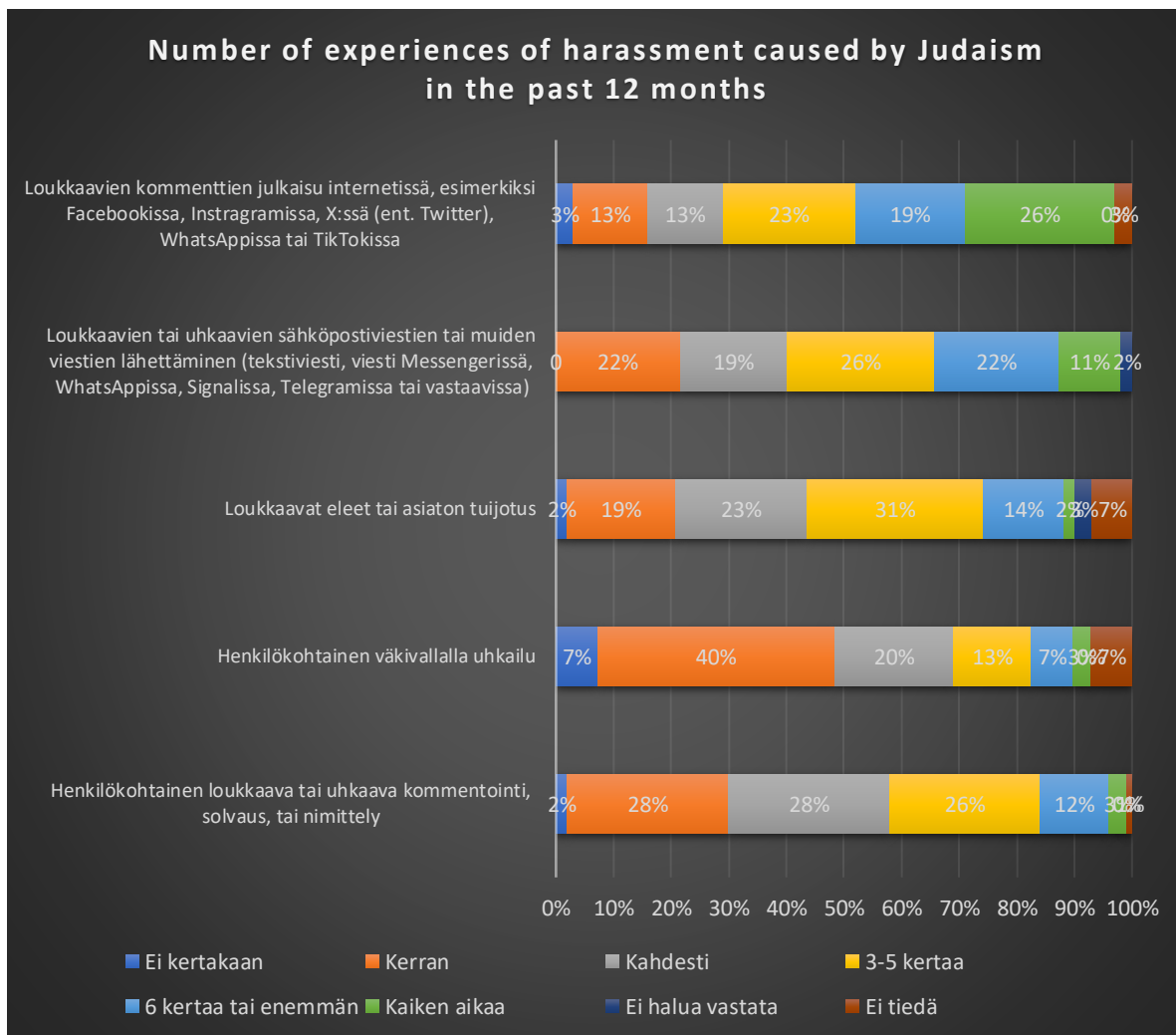
per cent personal threat of violence, 67 per cent offensive gestures or inappropriate staring, 33 per cent offensive or threatening emails or text messages. However, this segment represents only 1% of the respondents, so no comprehensive conclusions can be drawn from their experiences.



### 3.2.2 Prevalence of harassment

Those who had experienced harassment because of their Jewish nature were asked about its prevalence. The majority of those who had experienced some kind of antisemitic harassment said they had encountered it more than once (see Figure 14). According to the results, anti-Semitic harassment usually takes place on the Internet. When asked if someone had published insulting comments about them, 13 per cent of the respondents reported one publication, 13 per cent reported two insulting publications, 23 per cent 3 to 5 publications, 19 per cent of 6 or more publications. 26 per cent of the respondents reported that such content is being published all the time.

Figure 14. "And how many times has this [one of the following] happened in the past 12 months because you are Jewish?", (%).



A study conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2018 shows that the majority of respondents who had experienced antisemitic harassment on the Internet in the past 12 months experienced it repeatedly. A total of 32 per cent of them said they had encountered insulting messages or publications on the Internet six times or more often, 21 per cent 3-5 times, 18 per cent twice and 28 per cent only once.<sup>65</sup> Finland's results at hand are very similar to the average for the countries that responded to the survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2018.

Those who had experienced antisemitic harassment were asked to provide more detailed information on the latest harassment case. 41% of them said it was an offensive or threatening comment made to them personally, while 33% said it was an offensive gesture or staring at them. The perpetrator was unknown in 67% of the cases. 35 per cent of the respondents assumed that the perpetrator had extremist Islamist views and 21 per cent left-wing views. 28% of the respondents were unable to tell or assume anything about the perpetrator's views.

In 49 per cent of harassment cases, there was only one perpetrator and in 49 per cent of cases there was also more than one perpetrator. The respondents assumed that the perpetrators were men in 66 per cent of the cases. In 41% of cases, anti-Semitic harassment took place on the street, in a square, in a park, in a parking lot or in some other public place. 50% of the respondents who had been subjected to anti-Semitic harassment in the previous 12 months reported that the harassment had

<sup>65</sup>EU FRA 2018: 48.

taken place at a time when there was a conflict or otherwise tense atmosphere in Israel.<sup>66</sup> The perpetrator identified the respondent as Jewish in 62% of harassment cases. In 58 per cent of harassment cases, the perpetrator used antisemitic language.

### 3.2.3 Reporting harassment

74% of the respondents who had experienced anti-Semitic harassment during the previous year had not reported any of their latest experiences of harassment. Some of them felt that reporting the incident would be of no help (56%). Some felt that the harassment case was not serious enough (38%) or that no one believed it had happened (17%). Some did not know where to report (15%) and some did not trust the police enough to report (10%). Only seven per cent of those who had encountered harassment reported their case to the police. One third of the persons who reported to the police were dissatisfied with the way the police handled the matter. The majority of the respondents who reported to the social media service provider (six out of seven persons) were dissatisfied with the processing of their notification. The imbalance between the prevalence of harassment incidents and failure to report them suggests that the respondents may not have the means to prevent online harassment from recurring (see Figure 14). In their open answers, the respondents described the reasons why they had not reported antisemitic offences to the authorities.

“As a person belonging to several minorities, I often feel that I cannot trust the police or the authorities – and it is otherwise difficult to find information in English. I know many who have filed a complaint with the police, or even a report of an offence, after the incident, but nothing has been done about it.”

**Person who responded to the survey (woman, 26)**

“The more society discriminates against any minority, the more insecure I feel as a Jew in Finland. In my opinion, the overwhelming threat to Jewish life in my country is the generally hardened attitudes towards different groups of people, especially religious or cultural minorities.”

**Person who responded to the survey (woman, 43)**

### 3.2.4 Vandalism against personal property

In addition to anti-Semitic harassment, the respondents were asked to share their experiences of vandalism against their property during the past five years and the past 12 months. The respondents were first asked if they had similar experiences. The respondents were asked in the affirmative whether the reason was their Judaism. Five per cent of the respondents reported that their property, such as home, car or other property, had been intentionally damaged or malicious in the past five years. Nearly half of these persons (44%) felt that vandalism was explained by their Judaism. Two per cent of the respondents had experienced vandalism against their property in the past 12 months. They all felt that the reason for vandalism was their Judaism.

### 3.2.5 Physical violence

The respondents were asked about the violence they had experienced during the past five years and the past 12 months. Nine per cent (29 persons) of the respondents had experienced violence personally, such as hitting, pushing, kicking or gripping in the past five years. 62 per cent of those who had experienced violence said that they had been subjected to it because of their Jewish nature. In the past 12 months, 60 per cent of them (4 per cent of the respondents) had been subjected to violent

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<sup>66</sup>Was not specified in the inquiry. Conflicts may include the Israeli-Lebanese conflict (2006), operation as a pillar of defence (2012), operation as a protective edge (2014).

attacks because of their Jewish nature. The same questions were asked in the 2018 study of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. According to the survey, three per cent of the respondents had experienced physical violence due to their Jewish nature during the five years preceding the survey. In the 12 months preceding the survey, the corresponding figure was two per cent.<sup>67</sup>

Those who had experienced physical violence in Finland in the past 12 months were asked to provide more detailed information on the latest violent incident, the perpetrator of it and the assumed motives behind it. Of the respondents who had experienced violence in the previous 12 months, 70 per cent did not know the perpetrator, 15 per cent knew the perpetrator from their workplace and 15 per cent knew the perpetrator from school or university. 58 per cent of the respondents assumed that the perpetrator had extremist Islamist views and 37 per cent left-wing views. 21 per cent of the respondents assumed that the perpetrator had “other extreme views”. Five per cent of the respondents did not believe that the perpetrator had any extreme views. 60 per cent of physical attacks took place on the street, in a square, in a parking lot or in some other public place. In 70 per cent of the cases there were more than one perpetrator, and in 80 per cent of the cases the respondents assumed that the perpetrators were men. Only 25 per cent of the respondents who had been subjected to physical violence (cf. 50 per cent of the victims of harassment) reported that the violence had taken place at a time when there was a conflict or otherwise tense atmosphere in Israel. As in harassment cases, the majority of perpetrators of violence identified the respondents as Jews (60%) and used antisemitic language (60%) in the attack.

In a study conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2018, respondents were asked about the characteristics of antisemitic harassment and violence and why they considered the event to be antisemitic. According to the study, the majority of respondents mentioned two main features in both cases: anti-Semitic language use (66% of cases of anti-Semitic harassment and 79% of cases of anti-Semitic violence) and identification of respondents as Jews (63% and 73%). In both cases, around every third person who had experienced anti-Semitic harassment or violence reported that it had occurred at a time when there was a conflict or otherwise tense atmosphere in Israel (33% of harassment cases and 37% of violence cases).<sup>68</sup>

### 3.2.6 Reporting physical violence

20% of the respondents who had been subjected to physical violence reported their case to the police, while 50% did not report or lodge any complaint. Half (50%) of the respondents who did not report were of the opinion that reporting would not have been useful at all. In addition, one third (30%) of the respondents who did not report said that no one would believe them. As many of the respondents feared the perpetrators of the offence or retaliation. Three out of four of the persons who reported physical acts of violence to the police (75%) were dissatisfied with the way the police handled the matter.

A study conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2018 asked about reporting on the most serious cases of harassment and violence. The respondents said that they had contacted the police and Jewish associations responsible for security and anti-Semitism in only 20 per cent of harassment cases. Of the respondents who had not reported serious harassment to the police, 48 per cent believed that reporting would not have been useful, 43 per cent did not consider the case serious enough and 22 per cent considered reporting to the police too difficult or difficult. 64% of the respondents who had not reported antisemitic violence to the police believed that reporting would be of no use and 36% considered it too cumbersome or cumbersome. 25% of the respondents who

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<sup>67</sup>EU FRA 2018: 51.

<sup>68</sup>EU FRA 2018: 52.

did not report reported that they did not trust the police. 22 per cent of the respondents feared retaliation by the perpetrator.<sup>69</sup>

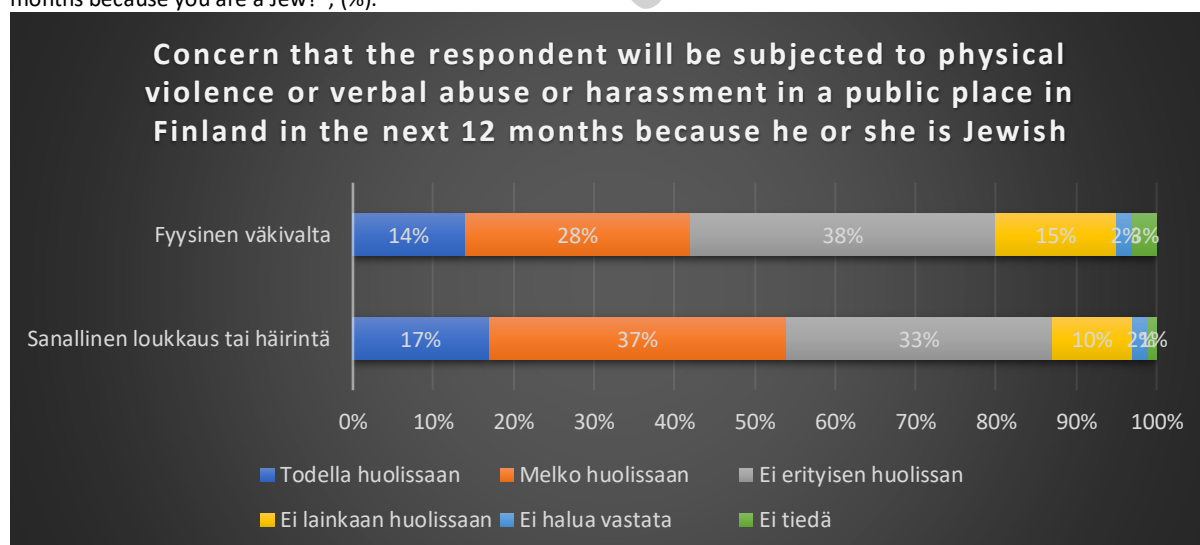
### 3.3 Concern about becoming a victim of a hate crime

Personal experiences of violence and harassment have a direct impact on people's sense of security. The results of the survey show that many respondents are concerned about their own safety, that of their family members or other close relatives. Good one fifth (22%) of the respondents said they had seen other Jews insulted or harassed in the past 12 months. Two per cent of the respondents said they had seen other Jews face physical violence. Four per cent of the respondents said they had witnessed both.

Respondents were asked if they were worried that they would be subjected to antisemitic harassment or antisemitic physical violence in the 12 months following the survey. More than half of the respondents reported that they were really worried (17%) or fairly worried (37%) about being subjected to verbal insults or harassment. 17 per cent of the respondents were really worried and 37 per cent were fairly worried. Nearly half (42%) said they were worried about becoming a victim of physical violence (12% really worried and 28% fairly worried) (see Figure 15).

The results of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights for 2018 are similar in this respect. Nearly half (47%) of the respondents expressed their concern over the possibility of being subjected to antisemitic insults or harassment in the 12 months following the survey. More than one third (40%) of the respondents said they were concerned about the threat of physical violence.

Figure 15. "How worried are you that you will be targeted on the street or at any public place in Finland in the next 12 months because you are a Jew?", (%).

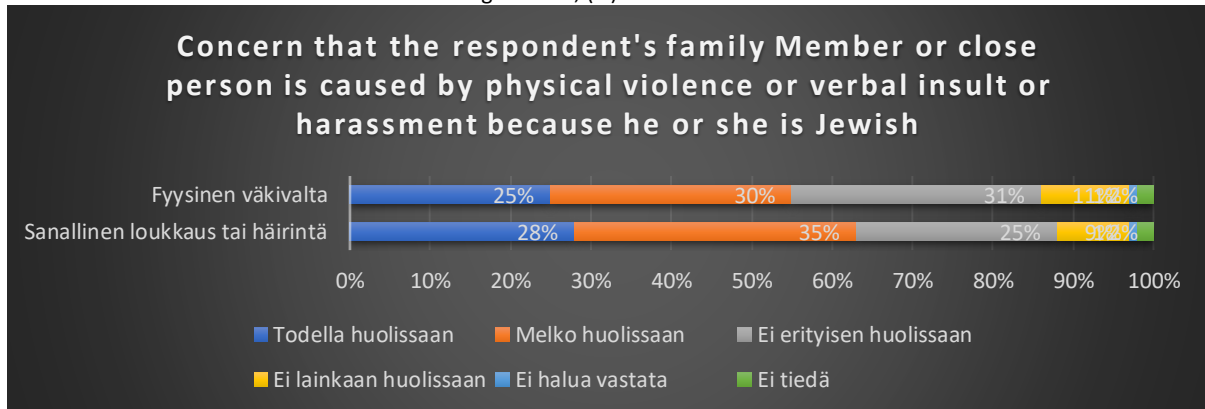


When the respondents were asked about verbal or physical violence against their family members or other close relatives, such as relatives or friends, 63 per cent said they were concerned about being subjected to verbal insults or harassment. 28 per cent of them said they were very concerned and 35 per cent fairly worried. 55% of the respondents were concerned about the threat of physical violence. Of them, 25 per cent were very worried and 30 per cent were fairly worried (see Figure 16). Only nine per cent of the respondents said that they were not at all concerned about oral insults or harassment against their loved ones. 11% of the respondents were not at all concerned about physical violence being directed at their loved ones.

<sup>69</sup>EU FRA 2018: 53.

The results correspond to the results of the 2018 survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. More than half of the respondents (56%) were concerned about being subjected to verbal insults or harassment by family members or other close persons over the next 12 months due to their Jewish nature. Half (50%) of the respondents to the survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights were concerned about their loved ones being subjected to physical violence.

Figure 16. "How worried are you that your family Member or close relative will be subjected to any of the following in Finland over the next 12 months because of being a Jew?", (%).



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## 4 experiences of discrimination

### Key findings

- Nearly half of the respondents (48%) reported having experienced discrimination in the past 12 months when looking for work, around one third (30%) when buying or renting a dwelling or place of work (29%).
- The most common grounds for discrimination were the respondents' ethnic or immigrant background.
- Only eight per cent of the respondents who had experienced discrimination said they had reported their case.

### 4.1. Experiences of discrimination in everyday life

The respondents were asked whether they felt discriminated against in Finland on the basis of one or more different grounds, such as Judaism, ethnic or immigrant background or gender, in different situations during the past 12 months. The situations presented in the survey were related to job seeking, working life, use of health care services, and buying or renting a dwelling. Nearly half of the respondents (48%) reported having experienced discrimination when looking for work and around one third (30%) when buying or renting a dwelling or while working (29%) (see Figure 17). The survey did not ask about experiences of discrimination one year earlier, but some respondents said in open answers that they had encountered discrimination in Finland also earlier.

“The survey only asks about the last 12 months/5 years, but different events here, say now since I came to Finland, are such a constantly growing burden. They have definitely made my career more difficult, especially in the early stages (before I got a permanent position) when I was in a more vulnerable position.”

**Person who responded to the survey (man, 66)**

Figure 17. Respondents who have experienced discrimination in different situations in the past 12 months (%).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Respondents who reported having been in these situations in the past 12 months were asked only about experiences of discrimination in different situations.



## Respondents who reported having been discriminated against in different situations in the past 12 months



29% of the respondents who had encountered discrimination in job seeking reported their ethnic or immigrant background as the grounds for discrimination, while ten% cited their Jewish background as the reason for discrimination. The corresponding figures for those having experienced discrimination when buying or renting a dwelling were 24 per cent (ethnic or immigrant background) and seven per cent (Jewish background). Of those who had experienced discrimination at work, 14 per cent considered their ethnic or immigrant background to be the reason and an equal share (14 per cent) considered their Jewish background to be the reason. In all situations, the most common grounds for discrimination were the respondents' ethnic or immigrant background. The table (Table 1) presents the three most common grounds for discrimination in the situations examined.

Table 1. The three most common grounds for discrimination reported by the respondents in different situations.

situation	1.	2.	3.
When looking for work	ethnic or immigrant background (29%)	age (14%)	Judaism (10%)
At work	ethnic or immigrant background (14%)	Judaism (14%)	age (9%)
In healthcare	ethnic or immigrant background (8%)	age (5%)	Judaism (5%)
In contact with school or university staff	ethnic or immigrant background (11%)	Judaism (8%)	religion or religious

			conviction (2%)
When renting or buying a dwelling or house	ethnic or immigrant background (24%)	Judaism (7%)	skin colour (5%)
Contacting public authorities or public services	ethnic or immigrant background (10%)	Judaism (5%)	religion or religious conviction (4%)
In connection with admission to a bar, nightclub, restaurant, hotel	ethnic or immigrant background (6%)	Judaism (4%)	skin colour (3%)

In the 2018 survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, discrimination was surveyed with five examples: discrimination when applying for work, working, school or traineeship staff, renting or purchasing a dwelling or house, and by public authorities or representatives of public services. During the 12 months preceding the survey, the respondents said that they had experienced most discrimination in working life on the basis of their Judaism. Nine per cent experienced discrimination based on their Judaism in job seeking and eight per cent in employment. In addition, eight per cent of the respondents experienced discrimination based on their Judaism by school or traineeship staff, four per cent when renting or purchasing a dwelling or house, and two per cent when dealing with public services or authorities.<sup>71</sup> Finnish respondents experienced slightly more discrimination on the basis of their Jewish status than in the 2018 survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

Respondents to the open question often pondered multiple discrimination without mentioning individual situations. The reflections were mainly related to individuals' perceived ethnic or foreign background.

“As an Israelite, it is also difficult for me to “conceal” my being a Jew. Many people also assume that I am a Muslim (perhaps on the basis of my appearance) and that it only increases unpleasant experiences (at least so far has increased).”

**Person who responded to the survey (woman, 30-34)**

“Some people may experience discrimination because of their name if it does not sound Finnish (but not because of skin colour or religion). Many are also descendants of immigrants, i.e. first-generation Finns (from one parent's side) ...”

**Person who responded to the survey (man, 30)**

## 4.2 Reporting discrimination

Respondents who had experienced discrimination on some grounds were asked to state whether they had reported their discrimination. Only eight per cent said they had reported their case. The majority (81%) had not reported. Those who had not reported the discrimination they had experienced were asked why they had not reported it. The main reason mentioned by the respondents was that it would not have been useful to submit a notification. This view was shared by 58 per cent of the respondents. The second most common reason (33%) reported that discrimination occurs all the time. A total of 27 per cent of the respondents did not report the discrimination they had experienced because they felt that the case was not serious enough.

<sup>71</sup>EU FRA 2018: 61.

In the 2018 survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, only 23% of the respondents reported having experienced discrimination. The three most common reasons for not reporting discrimination experienced were that reporting was not considered to be useful (52%), that the case was not considered serious enough (34%) and that the respondents did not have evidence of the incident (33%). The most common reasons for not reporting experienced discrimination were almost the same in all the countries that participated in the survey as in harassment cases.<sup>72</sup>

15 per cent of the respondents living in Finland said they were afraid of retaliation if they reported the discrimination they had experienced further. The participants in the focus group interview reported cases in which the discrimination was reported further, but no measures were taken. They also reported cases where members of their organisation were concerned about the possible negative effects of reporting. Despite this, participants in organisational roles said that they had assumed responsibility for reporting partly because members of their organisations had experienced a lot of anti-Semitic discrimination especially after 7.10.2023.

“In other words, everything happens, but people are afraid to report it anywhere. And at some campuses and workplaces, the atmosphere is so bad that at least I have heard from others that they are in places where co-workers do not even talk to them because they are, well, for example, one guy told me that they were raising money for Palestine, and then commenting that yes, you're probably not going to donate anything.”

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

“I've actually just started reporting everything. I can no longer care what you would say about this, even if you put your own safety at risk because of these types or something like that.” **Person who participated in the focus group interview**

### 4.3 As a Jew at work and school

Respondents who reported having worked or attended school or university in the previous 12 months were asked about their experiences of being a Jew in working life or studying. In these situations, individuals are, to varying degrees, open about their own Judaism. Some are open about their Jewish identity and speak about it on their own initiative, while others do not want or dare to actively share their Jewish identity with others.

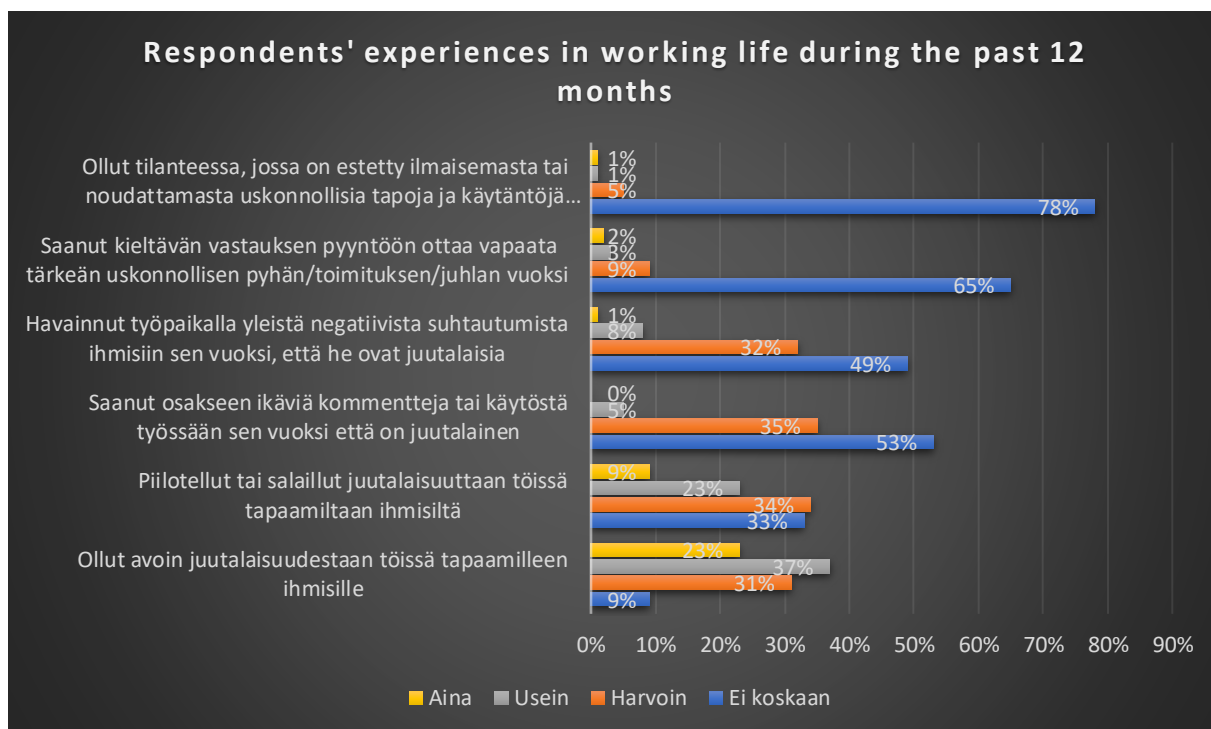
#### 4.3.1 Working life

72 per cent of the respondents said they had been in working life in the past 12 months. 23 per cent of them said they had always been open about their Judaism, while nine per cent said they had hidden or concealed it. Eight per cent of the respondents had often experienced a general negative attitude towards Jews at their workplace, and five per cent said that they had received negative comments or behaviour at their workplace because of their Jewish attitude. 78% of the respondents said that they had never been prevented at work from expressing or practising their religious practices and customs. In addition, 65 per cent of the respondents said that they were never forbidden to take leave due to important religious holidays or church services (see Figure 18).

Figure 18. “When you have been working in Finland in the past 12 months, have you ever...?”, (%).

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<sup>72</sup>EU FRA 2018: 63.



Some of the participants in the focus group interviews and respondents to the open question estimated that the situation had deteriorated at workplaces. This may be the result of the war that began on 7.10.2023.

“We had a death notice in the newspaper so I had siblings who wouldn't have wanted it because it had the Star of David and our last name. Because we did not know how colleagues would react to it, this and Dr, it is terrible.”

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

“A few months ago, the situation was different. I didn't hide my Judaism in any way, and I was sure I was safe. Today, because of my move to Helsinki and the situation in the world, my Judaism is taboo. At the workplace I only admit if asked directly. I feel very unsafe as a result of all demonstrations and online commenting.”

**Person who responded to the survey (woman, 82)<sup>73</sup>**

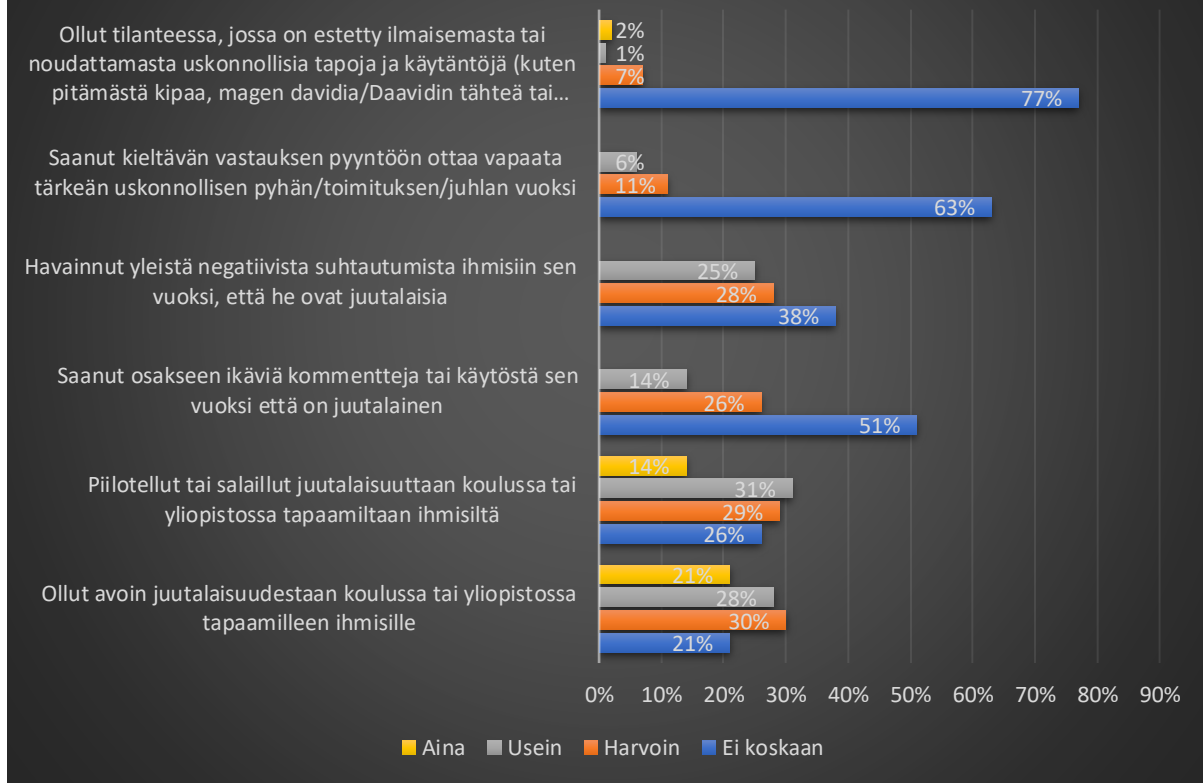
4.3.2 School

27 per cent of the respondents said they had been at school or university in the previous 12 months. 51% of them said that they have never (21%) or seldom (30%) been open about their Judaism. More than half (51%) of the respondents who had been at school or university in the previous 12 months had never encountered negative comments or unpleasant behaviour at school because of their Judaism, while 25% said they had encountered them often and 14% always. Six per cent of the respondents said that they had received a negative response to their request for leave due to an important religious holiday, delivery or celebration (see Figure 19).

Figure 19. “When you have been to a school or university in Finland in the past 12 months, have you ever...?”, (%).

<sup>73</sup>Based on the response, researchers assume that the respondent reported his or her age incorrectly. However, the age given was used in the statistical calculation.

## Respondents' experiences at school or university during the past 12 months



A comparison of anti-Semitism and discrimination in working life and the school environment (see figures 18 and 19) shows that the problem is greater in the school environment. In particular, representatives of Jewish youth organisations who participated in the focus group interviews expressed their concern over the increasing anti-Semitism of Finnish educational institutions and universities. According to them, this manifests itself as a negative attitude towards Jewish students and workers. Many of those who participated in the focus group interviews said that although educational institutions often encounter traditional forms of anti-Semitism, new forms of anti-Semitism seem to have become more common.

"I think about the university world, for example. It starts from the premise that we are, as it were, curable organisations. But, on the other hand, that Christian calendar is in the background and, if you do not adapt to it, then you are in trouble."

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

"Another person [from the organisation] said that they had participated in a workshop where only swastika posters were printed, and the students did not know what to do. We were informed. But they did not want to report it anywhere else, because it is their school and they are the only Jews in their school, so everyone would know that they filed a report."

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

"Yeah, mostly it's been on social media. But I've also heard things at school and with my sister. One guy actually said, "Hey, bitch, I'm gassing you."" That's what it said."

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

## 5 awareness of rights

### Key findings

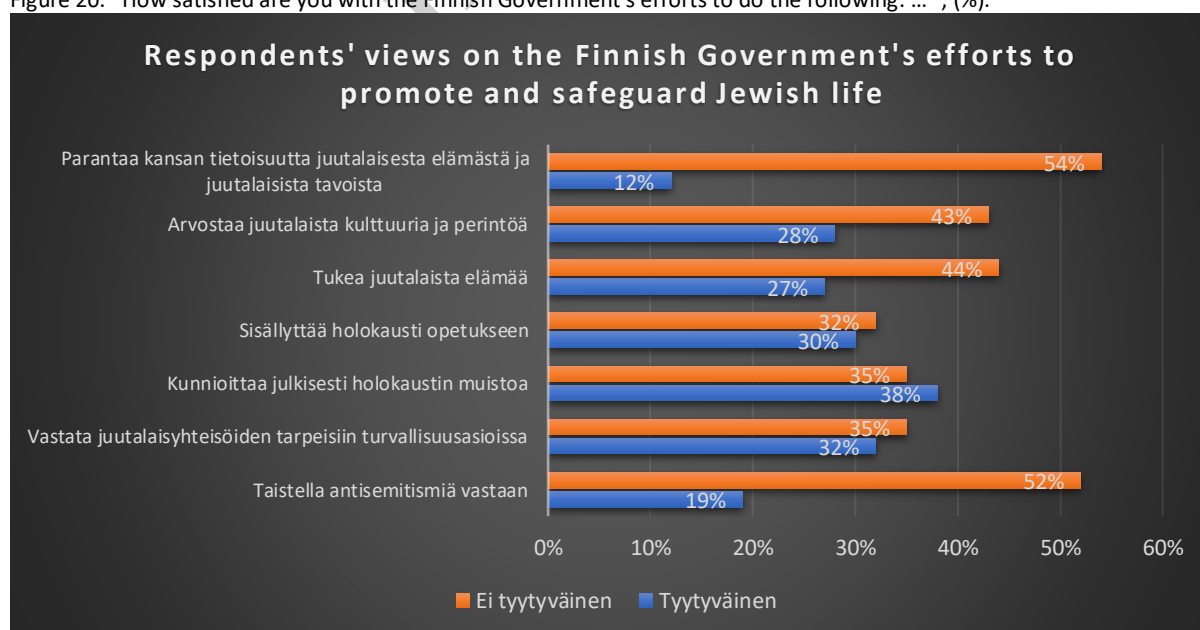
- More than half of the respondents (52%) were dissatisfied with the level of government anti-Semitism measures in Finland.
- More than half of the respondents (54%) were dissatisfied with government measures to raise awareness of Jewish traditions and customs.
- Slightly less than half of the respondents (46%) felt that prohibiting circumcision (*Brit Milah*) would be a major problem. 27% of the respondents felt that the prohibition of kosher slaughter (*shechita*) would be a major problem.

### 5.1 Measures taken by the State of Finland to safeguard and promote Jewish life

In the 2018 study conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the majority of respondents (70%) felt that their States did not work effectively to combat anti-Semitism. Slightly over half of the respondents (54%) considered national measures to ensure the safety of Jewish communities positive.<sup>74</sup>

The respondents were asked about their views on the measures taken by the State of Finland to secure and promote Jewish life. The respondents were asked to define, on a scale of 1-5, how satisfied they are with various measures, such as fostering the Jewish culture and heritage, responding to the security needs of Jewish communities and handling the Holocaust in teaching. In the responses, values 1-2 were interpreted as dissatisfaction, 3 as neutral attitudes and values 4-5 as satisfaction. The majority of the respondents were dissatisfied with the actions of the Finnish state in all areas. More than half of the respondents were dissatisfied with the level of anti-Semitism measures (52%) and the measures taken to increase the population's awareness of Jewish life and customs (54%) (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. "How satisfied are you with the Finnish Government's efforts to do the following: ...", (%).



<sup>74</sup>EU FRA 2018: 12.

As mentioned above, several open answers and focus group interviews highlighted the non-Jewish society's ignorance of Judaism, Jews and the Holocaust. Both the respondents and the interviewees associated lack of information with an increase in anti-Semitic attitudes and ideas. They also stressed that training and other preventive measures are necessary to avoid anti-Semitic hate crimes. In their opinion, increasing awareness of Jews in general and anti-Semitism in particular would help to reduce anti-Semitic attitudes in Finland.

“In connection with the Holocaust, Finland has not invested enough in providing young people with information about the Holocaust and the murder of six million Jews in Europe.”

**Person who responded to the survey (man, 75)**

“It is important to invest in the fight against anti-Semitism (and in ensuring the safety of Jewish congregations) before any attack can take place – such as in Copenhagen or Halle. I believe that the far right is extremely dangerous in this respect.” **Person who responded to the survey (woman, 33)**

“There are only around 2,000 Jews in Finland and most of them in the Helsinki and Turku regions, but despite this, it is advisable to tell Finns about Judaism, because Finland is also part of Europe, where a large number of Jews still live in large population centres. Sharing the right information makes people more tolerant.”

**Person who responded to the survey (man, 75)**

“They [government and administrative bodies] should have very clear tones in the protection of minorities ... all minorities! Nobody even talks about Jews as a minority... it doesn't really show up, and it makes me feel like it [Jewish minority] doesn't even exist and that they [government and administrative bodies] should see Judaism as a “bigger umbrella” with many sides, not just one.”

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

## 5.2 Knowledge of and trust in judicial bodies

Respondents were asked about their knowledge of the judicial bodies and authorities they could turn to when faced with discrimination, violence, violence or anti-Semitism in the form of trivialisation or denial of the Holocaust. This information is important because knowing these institutions may lower the threshold for reporting.

### 5.2.1 Knowledge of judicial bodies

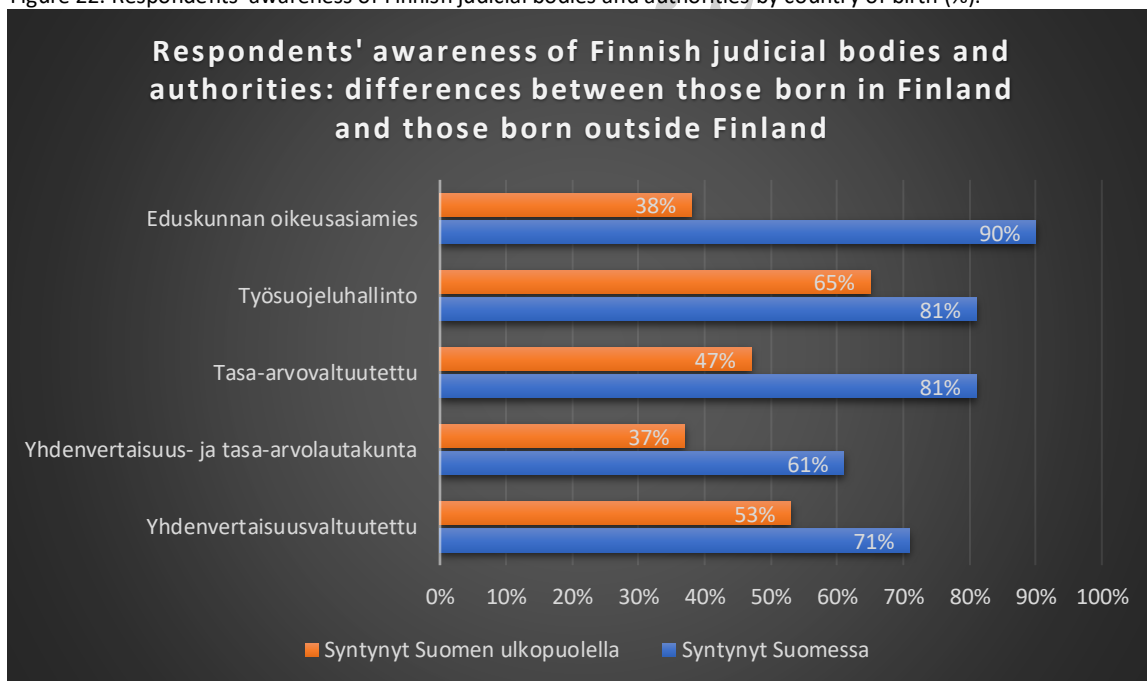
More than half of the respondents were aware of all five institutions that provide legal protection and safeguard, for example, the realisation of fundamental and human rights in Finland (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. “Have you ever heard of the following?”, (%).



Respondents born outside Finland were less aware of these actors. This means that it is more difficult for them to report discrimination or ask about their rights if they so wish. The difference was significant in familiarity with the Parliamentary Ombudsman: 90 per cent of the respondents born in Finland were aware of this actor, but only 38 per cent of the respondents born outside Finland knew about it (see Figure 22).

Figure 22. Respondents' awareness of Finnish judicial bodies and authorities by country of birth (%).



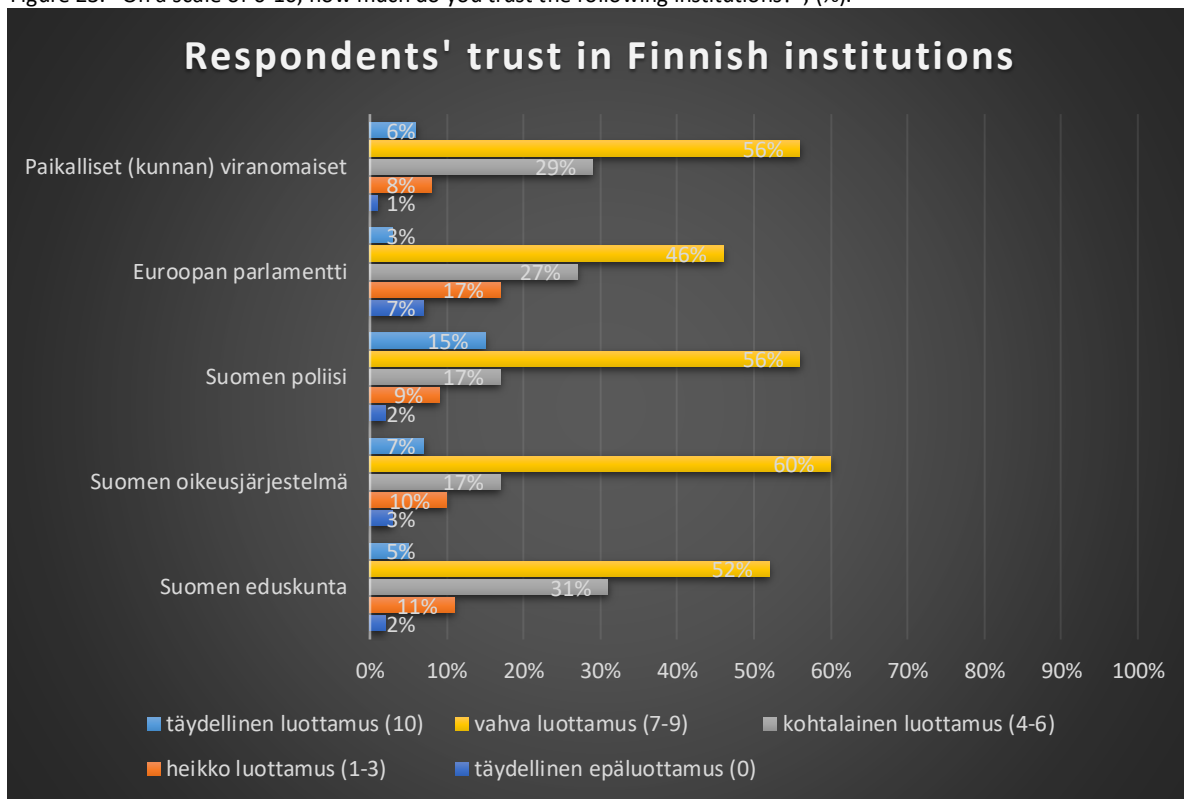
## 5.2.2 Trust in institutions

The reporting or non-reporting of hate crimes is influenced both by the awareness of victims of hate crimes of the effective legal remedies available to them and by their trust in the institutions to which



they should turn in the event of a hate crime.<sup>75</sup> The respondents were asked to state on a scale of 0-10 how much they trust different institutions. On this scale, 0 refers to total distrust, values 1-3 to weak trust, 4-6 to moderate trust, 7-9 to strong trust and 10 to complete trust.

Figure 23. "On a scale of 0-10, how much do you trust the following institutions?", (%).



The respondents had the least trust in the European Parliament (7 per cent do not trust the European Parliament at all, 17 per cent do not trust the Finnish police at all) and the most trust in the Finnish police. 15 per cent of the respondents fully trust the police and 56 per cent trust the police a lot (see Figure 23). Persons born in Finland trust the listed Finnish institutions slightly more than persons born abroad. For example, nine per cent of the respondents born in Finland said they fully trust the Finnish legal system, while three per cent of those born abroad said they trust the Finnish legal system.

### 5.3 Knowledge of laws protecting Jews

Among other things, Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government was caught in the middle of rumours related to racism in summer 2023. After this, the Government submitted a communication to Parliament on measures to promote equality, non-discrimination and non-discrimination in Finnish society.<sup>76</sup> The proposed measures also included a plan to criminalise the ban on the Holocaust. The Government also announced that it would examine the possibility of prohibiting the use of Nazism and communist symbols in situations where their purpose is to promote these ideologies.

<sup>75</sup>Feddes & Jonas, 2020; Encouraging hate crime reporting. The role of law enforcement and other authorities. 2021. EU FRA. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/hate-crime-reporting> (10.12.2023); Riku. Report on hate crimes: lack of trust in police work can be seen in the responses: <https://www.riku.fi/raportti-viharikoksista-epaluottamus-poliisin-toimintaan-nakyy-vastauksissa/> (31.01.2024)

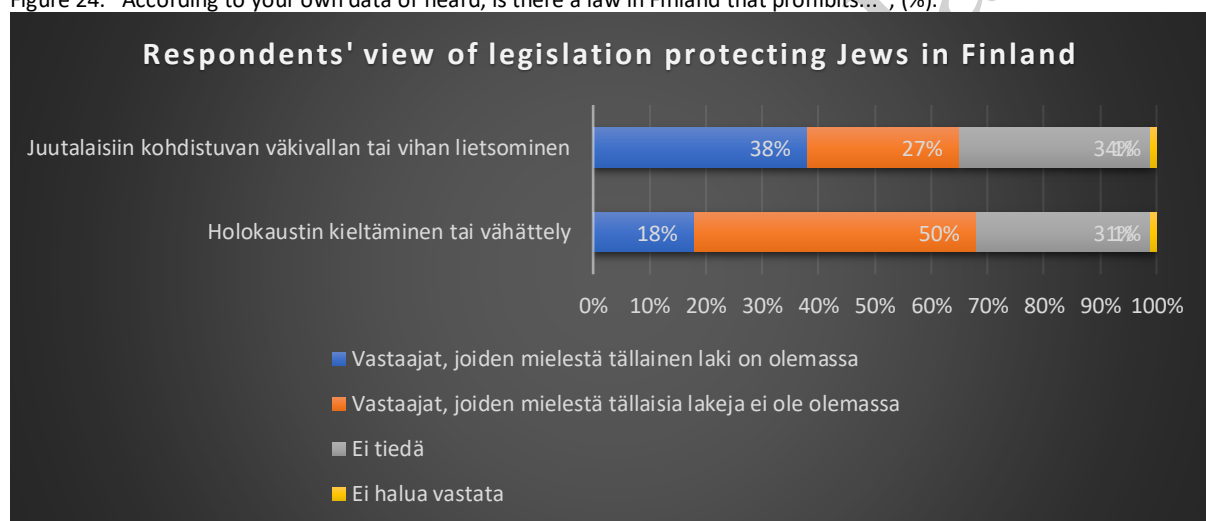
<sup>76</sup>Government statement on promoting non-discrimination, equality and non-discrimination in Finnish society <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe20230829111992>

Preparations for these measures and acts have begun. The current Finnish law prohibits ethnic agitation.<sup>77</sup>

The survey examined the respondents' awareness of legal measures against incitement to hatred and denial and disparaging the Holocaust. About one third of the respondents said that they do not know whether the Act prohibits incitement to violence against Jews (34%) or prohibiting and belittling the Holocaust (33%). Only half of them knew that there was no law prohibiting or belittling the Holocaust (see Figure 24).

A study conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2018 shows significant country-specific variation in the respondents' data on acts related to prohibiting or belittling the Holocaust. For example, fewer than one in five respondents in Denmark (13%) and Sweden (16%) believed that their country had legislation prohibiting or belittling the Holocaust. In these countries, the respondents' views were similar to those of Finland.<sup>78</sup>

Figure 24. "According to your own data or heard, is there a law in Finland that prohibits...", (%).



Both open answers and comments by the participants in the focus group show that the respondents are not fully aware of the situation of these acts in Finland.

"... [I wish that the Finnish Government] would be clearer about what is going on. We are not quite sure what the current government is doing. And we don't know what the previous government has been up to!"

**Person who participated in the focus group interview**

#### 5.4 Kasher slaughter (shechita) and circumcision (Brit Milah)

Brit Milah, the circumcision of Jewish boys and men and the Kasher slaughter, has recently been a controversial topic in several Nordic countries. Circumcision is one of the most obvious signs of Judaism worldwide. Eating kosher meat or complying with the restrictions on kosher diet is also considered a strong indication of Judaism. Diaspora views these issues and related religious guidelines differently.

<sup>77</sup>Ethnic agitation. Criminal Code. 10 § (13.5.2011/511). <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1889/18890039001> (28.12.2023)

<sup>78</sup>EU FRA 2018: 67.

Even if the motives for the ban on circumcision or kosher slaughter are not openly antisemitic, they can stigmatise Jewish individuals and create antisemitic rhetoric in the same way as the ban on Muslim communities' traditions can strengthen Islamophobic attitudes. This topic was not addressed in focus group interviews or open answers, possibly because the current legislation does not prohibit these practices.

The new animal Welfare Act entered into force on 1 January 2024. Article 65 also mentions religious slaughterings. The law does not refer directly to kosher slaughter, but it States that “religious slaughter is permitted where bleeding begins simultaneously with stunning of the animal or where an animal belonging to poultry, with the exception of ratites, is slaughtered by cutting the neck quickly with a sharp weapon.”<sup>79</sup> With regard to religious slaughter, no significant changes were made to the new Act compared to the previous animal Welfare Act.<sup>80</sup> Non-medically motivated circumcision of boys is allowed in Finland by following special instructions.<sup>81</sup>

The survey examined how often the respondents had encountered discussions about circumcision and kosher slaughter with non-Jews. The respondents were asked whether they had heard or seen a non-Jewish person present in the past 12 months that kosher slaughter and circumcision should be prohibited in Finland. More than half of the respondents (56%) said they had heard such proposals. 17% of the respondents reported having encountered proposals for a ban on circumcision and four% on kosher slaughter. 35% of the respondents reported encountering both (see Figure 25).

In the 2018 survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, nine per cent of the respondents said that they had faced proposals for a ban on circumcision, 11 per cent for a ban on kosher slaughter and 38 per cent for a ban on both. 42% of the respondents had not met such proposals. The responses were dispersed between different countries. Almost all respondents said that they heard from non-Jews that no circumcision or kosher slaughter should take place in Denmark.<sup>82</sup> The results of the Finnish survey are considerably closer to the average of the 2018 survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights than Denmark, even though the Jewish minority is of the same size as in Finland.

Figure 25. “Have you personally heard or seen a non-Jewish person bring up in the past 12 months that circumcision (Brit Mila) and kosher slaughter should be prohibited in Finland?”, (%)

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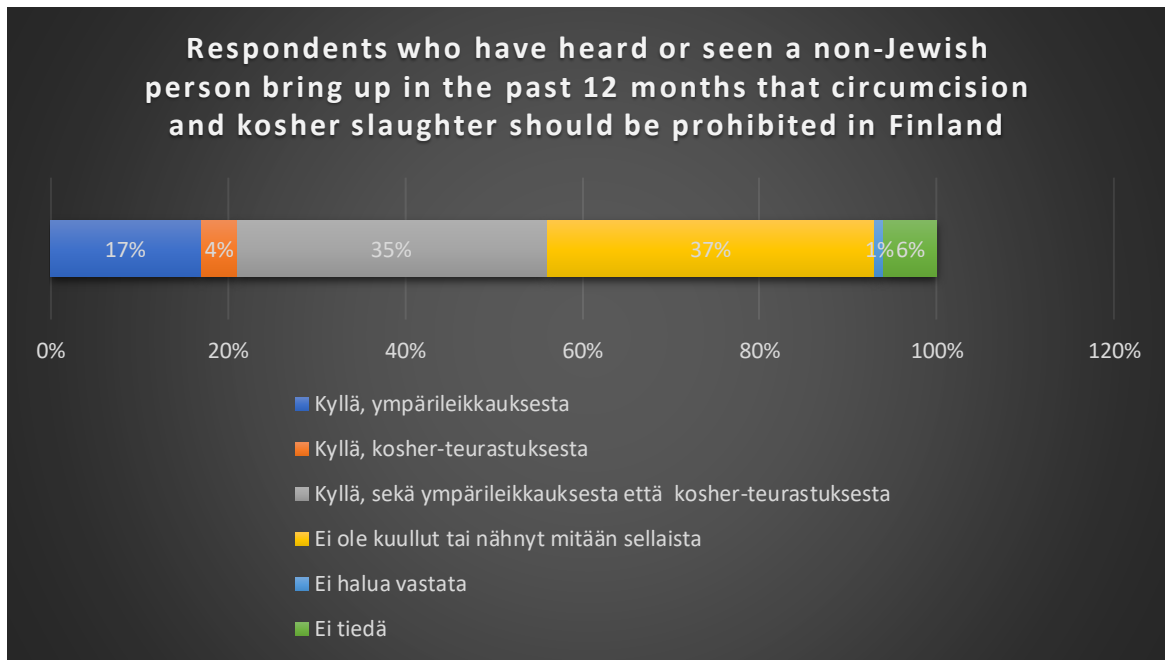
<sup>79</sup>Slaughter of animals. 65 §. 693/2023. Animal Welfare Act. <https://finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2023/20230693> (02.01.2024)

<sup>80</sup>Special method of slaughter to be followed for religious reasons. section 33b (9.8.2013/584). 1996/247. Animal Welfare Act. <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1996/19960247> (28.12.2023)

<sup>81</sup>Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2003:39 Memorandum on non-medical circumcision of boys: <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/73974/TRM200339.pdf?sequence=1> (28.12.2023); STM242/2015 instructions on non-medical circumcision of boys:

<https://stm.fi/documents/1271139/1367411/Ohje+poikien+ei+lääketieteellisestä+ympärileikkauksesta.pdf/80fa20c0-1917-4dc0-912d-16cc5fb380eb> (28.12.2023)

<sup>82</sup>EU FRA 2018: 69-70.



The survey examined the significance of circumcision and kosher slaughter for the respondents by asking how big a problem they would consider the prohibition of circumcision or kosher slaughter to be. 63% of the respondents considered the prohibition of circumcision and 48% that Kosher slaughter was a problem (see Figure 26).<sup>83</sup>

Figure 26. "How big a problem would the following alternatives be for you as a Jew, or would they be a problem in general?", (%).

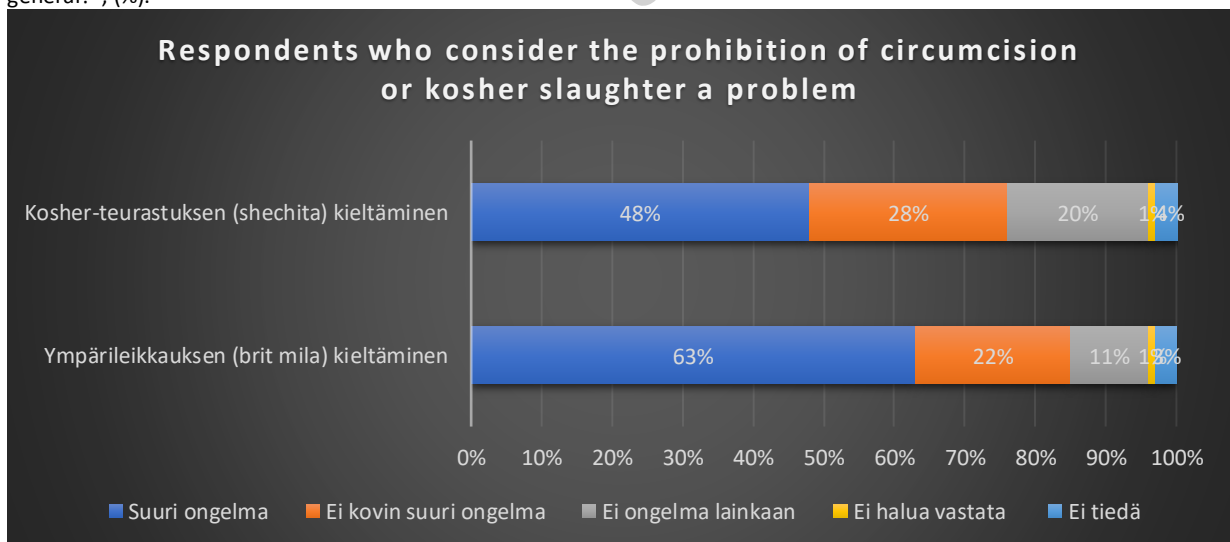


Figure 26. Respondents who would consider the prohibition of circumcision or kosher slaughter a problem.

<sup>83</sup>This figure includes respondents for whom the prohibitions would be a very big and fairly big problem.

## 6 Jewish minority in Finland

### Key findings

- 75 per cent of the respondents recognise themselves as Jewish on the basis of culture, 69 per cent of them on the basis of religion and 63 per cent on the basis of their parents' Judaism.
- 56 per cent of the respondents said they were “only Jews” or “earthly”.
- The majority of the respondents (68%) maintain a strong Jewish identity.

It is difficult to estimate the size of the Jewish population in Finland because one can experience one's own Judaism in many ways, and Finland does not systematically collect data on the number of persons belonging to the Jewish minority. Statistics Finland collects data on the members of the Finnish Jewish parishes, but there are also persons from different countries who may not be in contact with any Jewish Community or organisation. They may still identify themselves as Jews.

According to Statistics Finland, the number of members of Finland's three religious Jewish communities, the Jewish Community of Helsinki, the Jewish Community of Turku and Or Hatzafon Finland, was 1,073 persons at most in 2022.<sup>84</sup> Of these, around 900 were aged over 16.<sup>85</sup> According to Statistics Finland, 335 Israeli citizens aged over 15 lived in Finland in 2022.<sup>86</sup> Some of them were members of different Jewish congregations. Likely, the majority of non - parish Israelites identify themselves as Jews, though some may also identify themselves as Muslims, Christians, or Israelites of other religions or ethnic groups.

According to other estimates, there are also around 50 Jewish families (around 150 people) in the capital region who come from Russia or the former Soviet Union.<sup>87</sup> Researchers estimate that there are currently 1,500-2,000 permanent Jews over the age of 16 living in Finland, most of whom live in the capital region (see Table 2).

### 6.1 Jewish identity

A Jewish identity can be built in many and often intersecting ways. In order to chart the Jewish identity, the respondents were asked about compliance with Jewish practices, such as eating kosher food or attending a synagogue, and membership in the Jewish congregation and/or Jewish organisations. They were also asked about their way of classifying Jewish identity and whether they were native Jews, proselytes or Jews on the basis of education. They were also asked to assess the strength of their Jewish identity on a scale of 1 to 10.

The respondents were asked to explain on what grounds they considered themselves Jews. One or more alternatives could be selected in the question. 75 per cent of the respondents said that they recognise themselves as Jews on the basis of culture, 69 per cent of religion and 63 per cent of their parents' Judaism (see Figure 27).

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<sup>84</sup>Membership of a religious Community by age and gender, 1990-2022.

[https://pxdata.stat.fi/PxWeb/pxweb/fi/StatFin/StatFin\\_\\_vaerak/statfin\\_vaerak\\_pxt\\_11rx.px/table/tableViewLayout1/](https://pxdata.stat.fi/PxWeb/pxweb/fi/StatFin/StatFin__vaerak/statfin_vaerak_pxt_11rx.px/table/tableViewLayout1/) (22.12.2023)

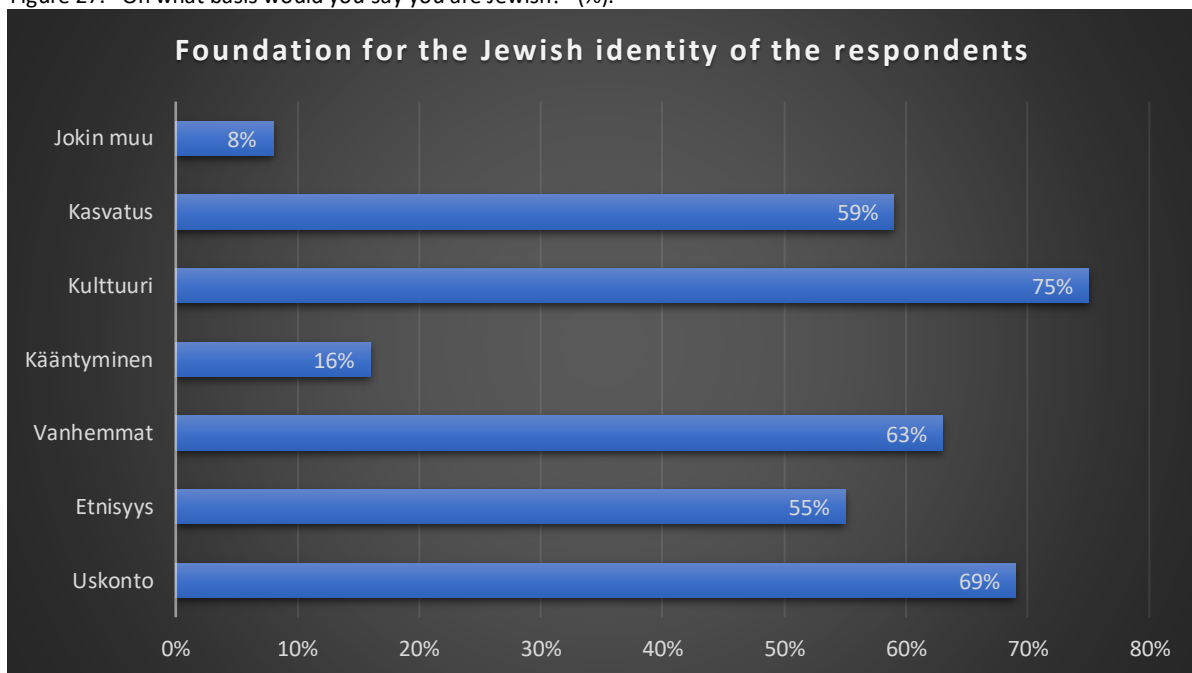
<sup>85</sup>According to information from the Jewish congregation in Helsinki, the Jewish congregation in Turku and Or Hatzafon Finland. We want to thank them for their contribution.

<sup>86</sup>Membership of a religious Community by age and gender, 1990-2022.

[https://pxdata.stat.fi/PxWeb/pxweb/fi/StatFin/StatFin\\_\\_vaerak/statfin\\_vaerak\\_pxt\\_11rg.px/table/tableViewLayout1/](https://pxdata.stat.fi/PxWeb/pxweb/fi/StatFin/StatFin__vaerak/statfin_vaerak_pxt_11rg.px/table/tableViewLayout1/) (22.12.2023)

<sup>87</sup>We would like to thank Chabad Lubavitch of Finland for their contribution.

Figure 27. "On what basis would you say you are Jewish?" (%).<sup>88</sup>



## 6.2 Description of the respondents' present Judaism

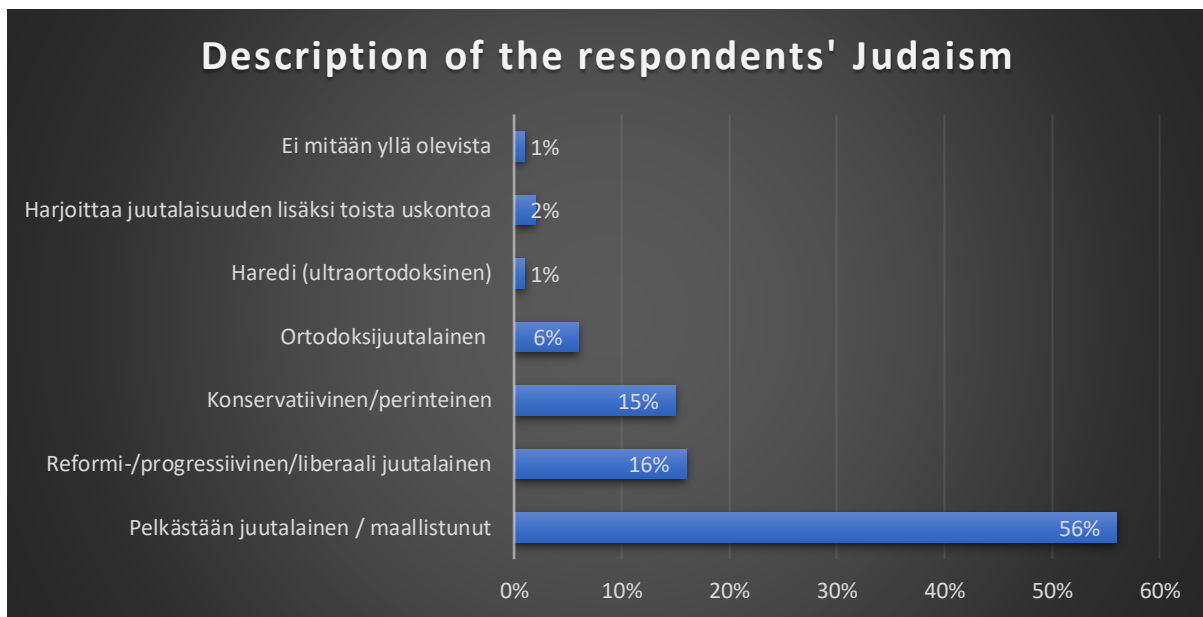
Jewish religion and Judaism are not monolithic. There are many different Jewish religions that take a different stand on certain Jewish practices and traditions. The respondents were asked to give their present Jewish identity. 56 per cent of the respondents said they were "only Jews" or "earthly", 16 per cent were reform Jews and 15 per cent Conservative Jews. Only six per cent of the respondents thought they were Orthodox Jews and one per cent were ultraOrthodox Harediet Jews (see Figure 28). This is interesting because currently two of the three Jewish congregations in Finland are modern Orthodox congregations and one is a reform Jew. Although the Jewish congregation of Helsinki and the Jewish congregation of Turku are nominally Orthodox, not all of their members are Orthodox Jews. This observation has also been mentioned in many previous studies.<sup>89</sup>

Figure 28. "Which of the following is closest to your current experience of Judaism?", (%).<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup>The "Don't want to say" answers were removed from the figure.

<sup>89</sup>See Illman, Czimbalmos & Pataricza, 2022; Czimbalmos, 2021; Illman, 2019

<sup>90</sup>The "Don't want to say" answers were removed from the figure.



#### 6.2.1 Activity in Jewish organisations

There are different Jewish organisations in Finland, such as cultural, youth or sports organisations, which aim to serve people who wish to practice their Judaism in non-religious ways. The respondents were asked whether they were active either in the congregation or in another Jewish organisation. 43% of the respondents said they were active members or volunteers in one or more organisations, 35% said they regularly worked with one or more organisations, and 38% said they followed the activities of one or more organisations. 20% of the respondents said that they were not actively involved in any organisation.<sup>91</sup>

#### 6.2.2 Observance of Jewish holidays and practices

Some people maintain Jewish traditions and practices, even if they otherwise do not strictly follow Jewish customs or are strongly religious, such as the Haredian or Orthodox Jews. The respondents were asked whether they followed Jewish customs or celebrated Jewish holidays, respected the memory of the Holocaust or participated in the activities of Jewish communities. 78 per cent of the respondents said that they spend Pesach seder and 67 per cent yo kippur every year or almost every year. These are the most important holidays of the Jews, which are usually also celebrated by Jews who consider themselves unreligious. More than half of the respondents (54%) said they complied with some of the Jewish diet laws. A minority of the respondents (9%) reported that they visited synagogues weekly or more often (see Figure 29).

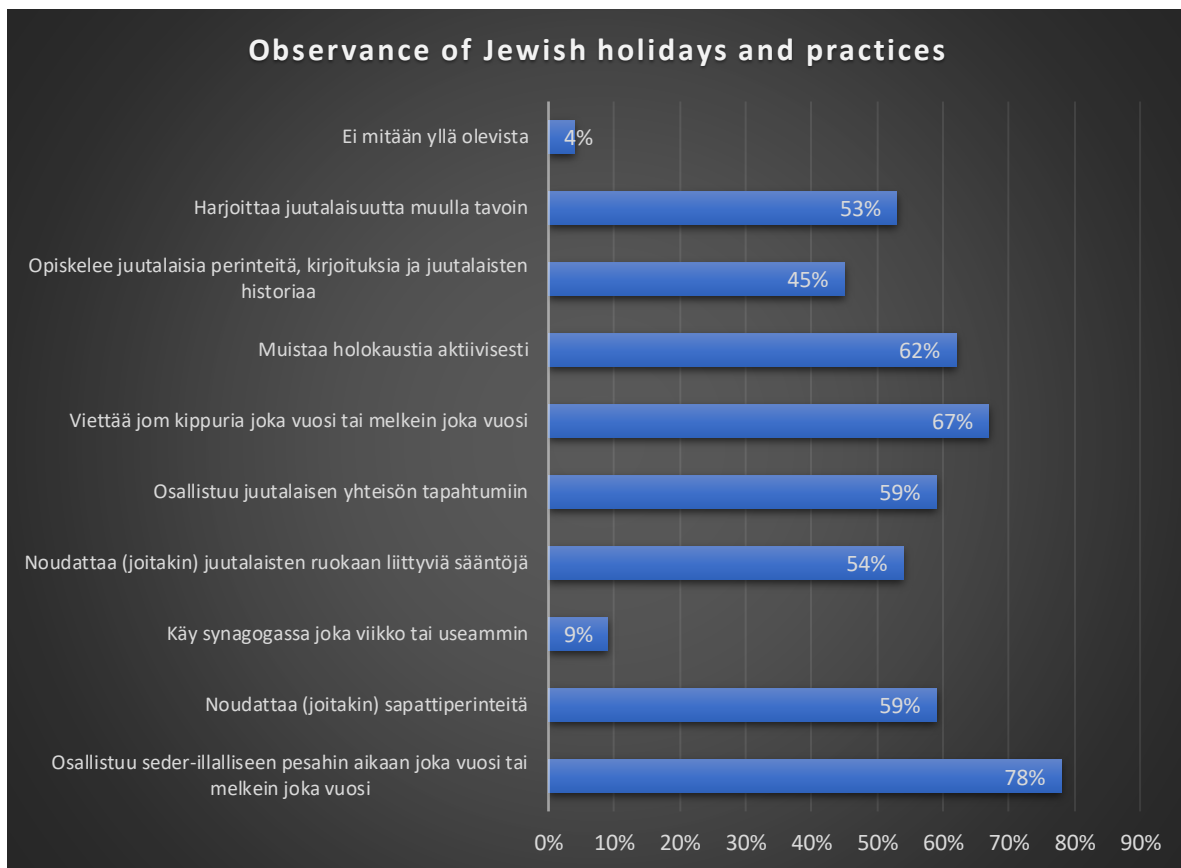
The respondents to the 2018 survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights were asked about their Jewish practices or holidays slightly differently from the survey conducted in Finland. The majority of the respondents said that they participate in Pesach seder (92%) and fast as Jam Kippur (84%) most often or every year.<sup>92</sup>

Figure 29. "Which of the following Jewish traditions or customs related to Judaism do you follow or participate in?", (%).<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup>More than one of the response alternatives could be selected.

<sup>92</sup>EU FRA 2018: 78.

<sup>93</sup>The "Don't want to say" answers were removed from the figure.



### 6.2.3 Strength of Jewish identity

The respondents were asked to define the strength of their Jewish identity on a scale of 1-10, where 1 means weak Jewish identity and 10 strong Jewish identity. The majority of the respondents (68%) said that they have a strong Jewish identity (values 8-10 on the scale). One-quarter (25%) defined their Jewish identity as medium-strong (values 4-7) and five per cent as weak (values 1-3).

In a study conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2018, the majority of the respondents (71%) felt that their Jewish identity was strong. One-quarter (24%) defined their Jewish identity as medium-strong and four per cent as weak. The average strength of the Jewish identity was the same in all 12 participating EU countries.<sup>94</sup>

### 6.3 Socio-demographic characteristics

Slightly more women (52%) participated in the survey than men (46%). In order for the groups to be sufficiently large for statistical analysis, the respondents were divided into three age groups. The youngest age group (aged 16 to 34) formed 25 per cent of the respondents, the middle group (aged 35 to 54) 38 per cent and the oldest age group (aged 55 or over) 36 per cent. Altogether 79 per cent of the respondents had completed at least a lower university degree, 48 per cent were in paid employment and 82 per cent lived in a large town or a suburb of a large town. The table shows the most common socio-demographic properties.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>94</sup>EU FRA 2018: 78.

<sup>95</sup>The "Don't want to say" responses were removed from the table.



The total sum of all percentages is not 100 because the figures have been rounded and the “Don't want to say” responses have been removed.

Table 2. Sociodemographic properties

		%	N
<b>Gender reported</b>	Woman	52%	174
	Man	46%	154
	Other	1%	3
<b>Age</b>	16-34	26%	85
	35-54	38%	128
	55 +	55%	121
<b>Country of birth</b>	Finland	64%	215
	Israel	13%	43
	Other EU Member State	8%	25
	United States	6%	21
	Russia or former Soviet Union	4%	13
	Other	3%	11
<b>Highest completed level of education</b>	Lower secondary school	1%	3
	Secondary school	4%	12
	General upper secondary school	9%	30
	Vocational school	7%	22
	Lower university degree	31%	102
	Higher university degree	39%	121
	Doctor's degree	9%	31
<b>Employment situation</b>	Paid work	48%	161
	Self-employed	15%	51
	Pupil, student, trainee	11%	36
	Retired	19%	65
	Attends to domestic work and care responsibilities	1%	4
	Not working due to illness or disability	1%	4
	Is inoperative for other reasons	2%	5
<b>Residential area</b>	Greater Helsinki (Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa)	73%	244
	Uusimaa (but not greater Helsinki)	7%	24
	Southwestern Finland	10%	32
	Pirkanmaa	2%	7
	North Savo	3%	9
	Other	4%	12
<b>Place of residence</b>	Big city	55%	183
	Suburbs or suburbs of a large city	27%	90
	Medium-sized or small town	12%	41
	Someone else	4%	14

## 7 recommendations

The main objective of this study was to survey the prevalence of anti-Semitism in Finland from people who define themselves as Jews and live in Finland. The data collection was supplemented with focus group interviews of persons working in organisations of the target population. Organisations and their representatives have in-depth knowledge of the challenges facing members of the Jewish minority in Finland. Their participation improves the quality and significance of research.

This report focuses on Jews living in Finland, but the results of the study and the societal challenges and recommendations presented in it are likely to be valuable and significant also in the wider Nordic and European context. The recommendations are based on information obtained from both the survey and focus group interviews (n = 2).

The recommendations have been organised in accordance with the survey and the key themes highlighted in the focus group interviews. The recommendations cover education, hate crimes against Jews, violence and discrimination, safeguarding Jewish life and culture, and research. The areas of the recommendations are not independent of each other; for example, the preservation of the Jewish culture is also related to education and research.

It should be noted that persons belonging to several minority groups are at the same time more likely than others to encounter adversity in different areas of their lives.<sup>96</sup> For this reason, some of the recommendations may also benefit representatives of other minority groups.

### 7.1 Education

Many generations have passed since the Holocaust, so there are always fewer people who have seen and experienced the Holocaust. It is therefore particularly important that children and young people are aware of the atrocities that affected Europe during World War II. It is important to be able to see how the lessons learned from history relate to hate crimes, conflicts and even genocide in today's societies. Due to academic self-censorship and self-protection, criticism of the Finnish government at the time of its role in the Second World War and the history of the Holocaust has only become part of Finnish research in recent years.<sup>97</sup>

The school system plays a key role in teaching the history, customs and culture of different minority groups and in recognising and fostering diversity. To achieve this, basic education must provide information on Judaism as a religion and the history of the Finnish Jews. Children and young adults must have the capacity to identify and combat both anti-Semitism and racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of intolerance.

- The ability of education professionals to identify antisemitic phenomena, expressions and acts as well as activities related to other forms of intolerance must be ensured. They must also have tools for preventing and handling them.
- Educational institutions must ensure that children and young people adopt critical media literacy that helps to dispel myths and prejudices against Jews and other minority groups.
- Educational institutions must systematically support the source-critical thinking of children and young people and their ability to question the fake news, propaganda and extreme and xenophobic attitudes and values they face.

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<sup>96</sup>Czimbalmos & Rask 2022.

<sup>97</sup>Ahonen, Muir & Silvennoinen, 2020; Muir & Tuori, 2019.

- The teaching of the historical aspects of anti-Semitism and Jewish discrimination must go beyond the forms of anti-Semitism associated with national Socialism and the Holocaust.
- Teaching must also include addressing the consequences of anti-Semitism and its newer forms in relation to modern society.
- The diversity of the Jewish population must be taken into account in teaching.

## 7.2 Discrimination, hate crimes and violence against Jews

While anti-Semitism has the direct and strongest impact on the Jewish Community, it also poses a threat to democracy, democratic values, security and the rights of all individuals. Antisemitism has many of the same features as racism, islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia and forms of hatred and intolerance such as women's hatred. However, antisemitism has unique characteristics that require tailored measures. Attacks on synagogues and Jews in Europe have revealed weaknesses in the security systems of religious institutions and Jewish organisations and the need for urgent action.

Trust in the authorities plays a key role in creating and maintaining people's sense of security. Previous studies show that people from different ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds have been dissatisfied with the ways in which the Finnish police have encountered them.<sup>98</sup> In addition, many people with different minority backgrounds feel that they cannot trust the Finnish police.<sup>99</sup> This report shows that few reported hate crimes have been reported to police officers, even though the respondents have often encountered harassment and hate crimes. This reflects underreporting of offences. Insecurity experienced by people in Finland signals a number of social problems that should be actively addressed.

- Awareness of legal remedies among victims of anti-Semitic discrimination and hate crimes must be increased by providing targeted information to Jewish communities.
- Cooperation between Jewish institutions, such as parishes and non-religious associations, and municipalities and authorities must be further strengthened.
- The expertise of the police, prosecutors and judges in anti-Semitism and discrimination against Jews and other minorities must be developed. The training must strengthen the ability of the authorities to identify antisemitic phenomena and the activities motivated by antisemitism, including traditional antisemitism and newer antisemitism fuelled by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Adequate technical and financial assistance as well as support for developing their security systems and ensuring their security must be ensured for Jewish institutions.
- Preventive dialogue between the authorities and Jewish communities must be strengthened.

## 7.3 Safeguarding Jewish life and culture

The study shows that anti-Semitism occurs in many forms and extensively in Finnish society. It is found, for example, in far-right, far-left and extreme Islamist contexts. Therefore, effective measures are needed to combat and prevent anti-Semitism, especially those targeted at anti-Semitism. It is important that these measures are taken in good time and also targeted at individuals and groups showing signs of emerging anti-Semitic attitudes. Both authorities and civil society actors must have sufficient capacity to detect anti-Semitism and to take timely and appropriate measures to combat it.

- Finland must draw up an action plan to combat anti-Semitism.

<sup>98</sup>For example: Himanen, 2021; Keskinen, Kivijärvi, Osazee et al. 2018.

<sup>99</sup>Czibalmos & Rask, 2022; Kääriäinen & Niemi, 2014; Sahramäki, Niemi & Kääriäinen 2014.

- Jewish educational institutions, associations, organisations and museums must be financially supported in order to raise awareness of Jewish life, culture and history in society, for example through communication campaigns and training.
- Non-Jewish actors, such as educational institutions, associations, organisations and museums, must be encouraged and supported financially so that they can participate in training on Finnish culture and history organised by Jewish associations and organisations.
- Security authorities and other authorities must develop and intensify measures to counter threats against Jews and Jewish targets.
- The name of the day commemorating the victims of persecution was changed to the day commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. This was an important step to commemorate Shoa, the Holocaust. Efforts to commemorate the victims of Shoa in public must be continued.

## 7.4 Research

Although the religion and traditions of Jews living in Finland have been studied in several scientific studies, there is not enough research data available on their experiences of anti-Semitism and discrimination. In large-scale studies on different minority groups in Finland, the number of respondents belonging to the Jewish minority is often relatively small. Correspondingly, larger population surveys do not refer to the experiences of Jews. Few Jews participate in studies that refer to the experiences of the Jews.

- Resources must be secured for research in order to enable systematic and comparable qualitative and quantitative research covering the Jewish population group in Finland in different areas of life. The planning of development work must be based on the results obtained.
- In further research on antisemitism in Finland, the results should be compared with the results obtained in other European countries in order to identify possible special characteristics of antisemitism in Finland and to find out how Finland could develop its counter-measures against antisemitism.
- The studies must also take into account the experiences of individuals belonging not only to the Jewish minority but also to other minority groups.

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