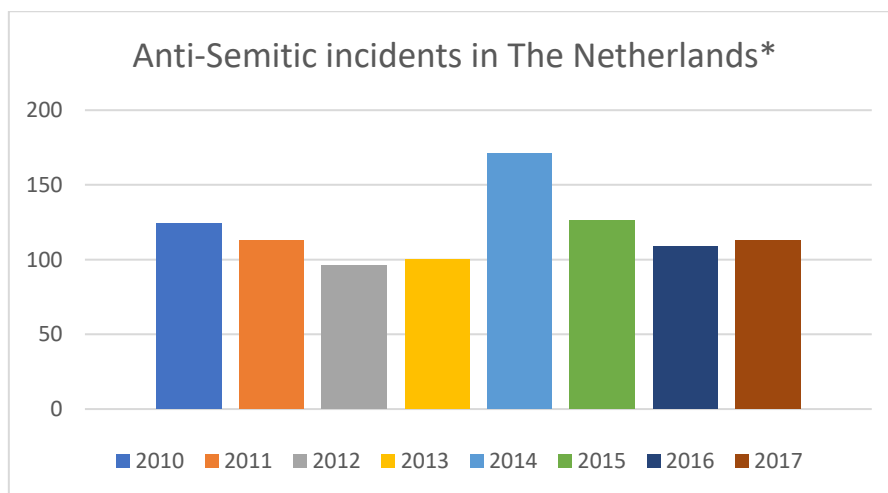


Netherlands: Rise in Anti-Semitism on Internet & Social Media and in Politics

The number of incidents involving anti-Semitic vandalism recorded last year in The Netherlands increased by 40 percent, to a 10-year high of 28 cases. The increase in vandalism was part of a small [overall rise in anti-Semitic incidents](#) in 2017 over 2016. CIDI recorded 113 incidents in 2017 compared to 109 in 2016. Important are the many incidents in the political arena and the growing role of websites and social media.

As of 1983 CIDI, the Centre Information and Documentation Israel¹, has been publishing the yearly report on anti-Semitic incidents in the Netherlands. A short English summary of the main findings and conclusions of the 2017 report² can be found in the graphic below.



(*internet incidents excluded)

The growing role and importance of internet and social media as a source of information and opinions is still underestimated. Holocaust denial, anti-Semitic complot theories and the like thrive on these platforms with constantly growing audiences, causing an increase in anti-Semitic verbal and physical assaults in the “real world”. The Dutch Internet-discrimination Watchdog MiND cooperates with CIDI to eliminate anti-Semitism on internet and social media. In 2017 CIDI addressed - for the first time - internet incidents in this monitor. In the domain “public space” incidents related to politics were grouped, showing a growing trend.

In 2017 CIDI filed 8 charges against websites and actors for publishing anti-Semitic content on social media platforms. The international, borderless character of the Internet and the big differences in legislation among countries complicate the ability to act against offenders. Websites hosted in the US, for example, cannot be removed, falling under the “freedom of speech” right.

¹ CIDI is a Dutch NGO established to **combat racism and antisemitism** as well as to broaden and deepen the knowledge about Israel and its inhabitants in the Netherlands, thus contributing to the creation of peace between Israel and the Palestinian people. www.cidi.nl

² <https://www.cidi.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Monitor-antisemitische-incidenten-in-Nederland-2017.pdf>

Methodology

In order to determine whether an incident is anti-Semitic we use the Working Definition of anti-Semitism.³ In short, anti-Semitism is defined as “Treating Jews—individually or as a group—differently than other individuals or groups, and especially in a way which is hostile or violent and is founded in prejudice.”

Anti-Semitic incidents are acts that are motivated by negative emotions toward Jews and committed with the intent of targeting the (assumed) Jewish identity of the victim.

Incidents concerning criticism about Israel are not registered as anti-Semitic, unless something offensive is said about Jews or about the Israelis as a population.

CIDI considers a related series of crimes against one individual as a single incident; equally, a series of incidents perpetrated against various individuals by a single perpetrator is, again, counted as one single incident.

The findings

CIDI registered **24 Internet incidents in 2017**; In the category “Politics”, another 6 Internet incidents are noteworthy. As CIDI counts each incident once and because we see a rapid growth in incidents in local and central politics, we have categorized those incidents under “Politics”. They form 6/8 of all incidents in this category, another illustration of the growing importance of websites and social media in the public debate. As explained, this is the first year we include Internet Incidents in the monitor. Only reported incidents which were validated against our criteria and the *work definition* (see methodology) are included here. The real volume of anti-Semitic abuse in websites and on social media is much bigger. The Dutch Internet anti-discrimination watchdog MiND registered 236 reports on anti-Semitism in 2017, 17% of the total reports on discrimination. A very high percentage, considering that only 0.3% of the Dutch population is Jewish. Again, this is the top of the iceberg, and an important point of concern.

In 2017 CIDI registered **a total of 113** anti-Semitic incidents other than on the Internet. In **2016** we registered **109 incidents**.

Real life incidents occurring between people who do not know each other: physical and verbal assault, vandalism fall in this domain⁴. **4 physical assault** incidents were registered in 2017. The incidents were severe, for example the attack on two Israeli orthodox tourists. They were recognizable by their clothes, and witnesses testified about the anti-Semitic character of the attack. (in **2016 we counted 3** such incidents). **28 incidents of vandalism** were reported this year, the highest number since 2007. 25% percent of the instances were aimed specifically against a Jewish target (example, a kosher restaurant, a religious center), the other incidents concern anti-Jewish content in public spaces. In **2016 we registered 21 vandalism** incidents. CIDI recorded **18 scolding incidents, a decline** compared to **25 incidents in 2016**.

In the **domain “Real life”** we registered in **2017 a total of 57** incidents, the **same number as in 2016**.

In the **direct sphere** (neighbors, friends, colleagues, schoolmates, et cetera. - people who know each other) we recorded **24 incidents**, an increase compared to the 21 reported incidents in 2016. Additionally, **14 direct addressed written anti-Semitic assaults**. An increase in comparison to the 11 incidents reported in

³ as published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. <http://www.antisem.eu/projects/eumc-working-definition-of-antisemitism/>

⁴ A “domain” groups several “categories” of incidents, for example: Internet consists of Websites, Tweeter, Facebook, etc.

2016. We notice a clear shift to digital correspondence i.c. e-mail messages and direct messages via the social media.

In the domain Public sphere we recorded 18 incidents, a slight decline comparing to 2016 (20 incidents). The new category – politics – which we added this year to the “Public Sphere” domain, is responsible to one third of the incidents in this category, a concerning rise in the number of politically related incidents, by members of parliament as well as by local politicians. The related social media platforms contain talk-backs and discussions with a strong anti-Semitic character (the related incidents were noted under “politics” rather than under “social media”. Needless to say they were NOT counted twice). Because of their position and public role we consider the growth in anti-Semitic speech in politics very concerning. This is also a growing trend in relation to other discrimination forms, such as Muslim-discrimination. We registered in 2017 7 incidents in the category politics.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Real life	34	55	35	38	76	53	57	57
Immediate sphere	23	24	16	27	30	36	21	24
Writings	54	21	26	13	38	21	11	14
Public sphere	13	13	19	22	27	16	20	18
Total	124	113	96	100	171	126	109	113**
Internet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24*
Total incl. Internet	124	113	96	100	171	126	109	137

* Internet incidents are included in the CIDI-monitor for the first time in 2017. Not included in this monitor are the 236 incidents on anti-Semitism received by the Dutch Internet antidiscrimination watchdog MiND.

** 4 reported incidents were not included in the monitor because CIDI did not have the means to validate them.

Scolding

Last year we already signalled the worrying increase of the use of the word Jood (Jew) in scolding. The police reports an alarming 30% increase in such incidents between 2015 and 2016. The police statistics for 2017 are not yet available. Scolding is a growing concern on social media, too.

Europe

The situation in other European countries does not show a clear line. The sources of information differ too. According to the German federal government the number of anti-Semitic incidents was similar to last year. According to the police, most incidents were motivated by “extreme right” ideologies. Critics say this is the case because ALL incidents involving Nazi-symbols are registered as extreme right. In practice, these symbols are also used by extreme-left and by Muslim groups. CST, the anti-Semitism watchdog in the UK, reports an increase in the number of anti-Semitic speeches as well in the number of anti-Semitic violence incidents. No incidents involving injuries was reported in The UK. The number of registered incidents on the social media has declined too. The French authorities registered less incidents, but more violence and damage to properties. The most severe incident in France was the killing of a 65 year old doctor an immigrant of Muslim origin. Demonstrations in Sweden condemning Trumps declaration recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel included both violence and anti-Semitic slogans. In one of those demonstrations a Molotov-cocktail was thrown at a nearby Synagogue. The discussions in Poland concerning the law on discussing and

arguing WW2 issues led to a growing gap between the small Jewish community on the one hand and the authorities and parts of the population on the other hand.

Recommendations

CIDI urged the **judiciary to impose heavier sentences** on offenders to increase deterrence. Anti-Semitic offences should be explicitly voiced in the charges.

In order to improve understanding of what anti-Semitism actually is, CIDI recommends that the Dutch government and judiciary adopt the **Work definition of anti-Semitism**. The current situation, where the definition is unclear and ambiguous, is an obstacle in the struggle to combat anti-Semitism. The distinction between critique on Israel and anti-Semitic speech - masked as anti-Zionism or critique on Israel - should be established and understood. Subsequently, the definition was recently adopted by Germany, the United Kingdom and Romania, among other countries.

Education. CIDI has advocated revisiting the way schools teach about diversity, discrimination, democratic values, the attitude to minority as well as teaching the history of World War Two, the Holocaust, and anti-Semitism. We believe these subjects must be taught from a very young age on, in the regular as well as the less-formal educational environment. Teachers should be trained in the **challenges of social media**, **conspiracy theories** and how to provide a safe environment to the pupils.

Education programs for new **immigrants** from Muslim countries should be developed to tackle the anti-Semitic prejudice they have been raised with. At the same time, strong measures against **repatriating ISIS-recruits** should be implemented for security reasons.

The European Union and national governments should take measures in order to protect people from **Internet abuse, across country borders**. Freedom of speech must be limited when it results in insulting or threatening individuals and groups. Social media companies and Internet-providers should take active measures to prevent internet-abuse, which unfortunately “flows” easily from the virtual into the real world.

Police should be trained to recognize specific discrimination acts and hate crimes, recognizing the specific sensitivities and act accordingly. A swastika on a car is not “just” vandalism, it is also sending a very specific message, which the police should understand.

Sport organisations, soccer clubs in particular, must take active measures to stop discrimination in and around matches. Zero-tolerance on the one hand, education to supporters on the other hand. Supporters clubs should establish awareness programs.

CIDI also recommends investing in **dialogue projects between minority groups**, particularly between Jewish and Muslim religious organizations, as well as projects involving youths.

Statistics

'Real Life' incidents	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Violence and assault	4	1	4	3	6	5	3	4
Threats	1	3	2	1	3	0	4	2
Verbal abuse	9	28	14	21	40	24	25	18
Phone & WhatsApp	3	1	1	3	5	4	4	5
Total	17	33	21	28	54	33	36	29

Vandalism	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Damage Jewish objects	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	4
Desecration Jewish objects	5	6	3	4	5	4	2	3
Other damages/ desecration	10	13	10	4	15	14	18	21
Total	17	22	14	10	22	20	21	28

Direct Environment	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Neighbors/ neighborhood	10	11	8	8	10	12	10	11
School	7	5	5	11	15	16	10	9
Work	6	8	3	8	5	8	1	4
Total	23	24	16	27	30	36	21	24

Writings	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Letter/fax/flyer/sticker	7	4	3	3	9	9	4	4
E-mails and Digital private messages	47	17	23	10	29	12	7	10
Total	54	21	26	13	38	21	11	14

Public Sphere	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Sport	3	5	13	6	5	10	9	5
Demonstrations	0	0	1	1	8	3	3	3
Extreme right				3	8	2	4	0
Media	7	3	4	9	2	0	3	0
Books, films, games, etc.	3	5	1	3	2	0	0	2
Music	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1
Politics	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Total	13	13	19	22	27	16	20	18

Subtotal not counting internet	124	113	96	100	171	126	109	113¹
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Internet ²	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Facebook	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Twitter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
YouTube	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Websites	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24²

Total reported	124	113	96	100	171	126	109	137³
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1. 4 more incidents reported to one of the local counties (Gelderland-Midden) were not included in the statistics because CIDI was unable to validate them, due to lack of information: 1 media-incident, 1 school-incident and 2 in the public domain.
2. MiND, the Dutch Internet-discrimination watchdog counted 236 anti-Semitic incidents, which is 17% of the total incidents reported to MiND. MiND applies different methodology and definition. Due to privacy reasons CIDI could not validate the incidents. MiNDs statistics are not counted in this monitor.
3. Police statistics on 2017 are not available yet.