



Antisemitic incidents in Berlin, 2018

Summary in English

In 2018, the Department for Research and Information on Antisemitism Berlin (RIAS Berlin) recorded a total of 1,083 anti-Semitic incidents in Berlin. This is an increase of 14% compared to the previous year (2017: 951 antisemitic incidents). The 1,083 antisemitic incidents included 46 assaults, 43 cases of damage or desecrations of property, 46 threats, 831 cases of abusive behaviour (including 48 gatherings) and 117 circulars.

The increase was particularly striking regarding incidents with a high risk potential: the number of antisemitic attacks increased by 155% compared to 2017; the number of antisemitic threats grew by 77%. We thus observe an increasing brutalization of antisemitism in Berlin. The perpetrators' inhibition threshold is sinking: people with antisemitic attitudes are increasingly prepared to take violent action against political opponents, critics of antisemitic statements and, last but not least, against recognizable Jews.

This conclusion is supported by the number of those directly affected by antisemitic incidents of all types: a total of 368 people in 2018 (as compared to 213 in 2017). 187 of the victims were Jewish or addressed as Jewish by the perpetrators.

Antisemitism expressed in connection with National Socialism and the annihilation of European Jews – as manifested, for example, in perpetrator-victim reversals and in the distortion or denial of the Shoa – remains the most widespread form of antisemitic expression, occurring in 52% of all incidents. Israel-related antisemitic stereotypes were used in half of all incidents in 2018.

The political spectrum to which most incidents of 2018 could be attributed was right-wing extremism (18%), followed by anti-Israel activism (9%). The RIAS Berlin assigns 19 incidents (2%) to the Islamist spectrum. However, seven of these 19 incidents were threats – which shows the potential danger posed by this spectrum. The political background could only be clearly attributed in half of the cases.

In 2018, the RIAS Berlin learned of 48 gatherings in the German capital at which antisemitic statements were made. Many of these demonstrations, rallies or public events involved a degree of ritualization: events such as the so-called Nakba Day or the Qudstag March take place year after year, independently of current political developments, and are aimed above all at a relatively small target group already in political agreement with the organisers. This is reflected in a more detailed analysis of the occurrences in May 2018 – the month with the highest number of antisemitic incidents last year. The 163 incidents recorded in May 2018 make it the month with the highest number of incidents since the beginning of civil society recording.

Please find the full report (in German) under <https://report-antisemitism.de/media/bericht-antisemitischer-vorfaelle-2018.pdf>.

The Department for Research and Information on Antisemitism Berlin (RIAS Berlin) was founded in January 2015 by the Association for a Democratic Culture in Berlin (VDK e.V.). Together with other Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, the RIAS Berlin has built up a Berlin-wide network for reporting antisemitic incidents.