



2019

Summary of the Report on Anti-Semitism

In 2019, the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities (SIG) registered 38 antisemitic incidents (excluding on-line ones). They included nine cases of verbal abuse and seven involving graffiti. There were no reports of assault or property damage. A total of 485 online incidents, i.e. on social media and in newspaper comment columns, were reported. In addition, there is an unknown number of unreported incidents.

Based on content, a distinction was made between four different categories: general antisemitism (152 incidents), Holocaust denial or trivialization (18), Israel-related antisemitism (163) and modern-day antisemitic conspiracy theories (190). There continues to be a boom in antisemitic conspiracy theories, in particular. The most varied and absurd theories emerge, some of them interlinked. All of them ultimately point to a supposed “Jewish world conspiracy” (see Chapter 2.1). The recent attacks by right-wing extremists in Pittsburgh, Christchurch, Poway, and Halle show just how dangerous these theories are. Their instigators all cited the antisemitic “Replacement Theory” as the justification for their actions. This demonstrates the grave real-world consequences that the dissemination of and interest in conspiracy theories can have.

Over 90 percent of the recorded online incidents occurred on the social media platforms Facebook and Twitter. Just a tiny percentage came from the comment columns on Swiss media websites. This is presumably due to stepped-up efforts to check external comments prior to publication (see Chapter 2.2).

Triggers play a pivotal role in the distribution of antisemitic incidents. These are events or occurrences that result in a massive increase in antisemitic incidents for a limited period of time. On the Internet, in particular, many antisemitic comments are unleashed by such triggers or reports about them. Internationally, these are mostly events in the Middle East. Triggers for an above-average number of antisemitic comments and posts in Switzerland in the reporting year were, in particular, the reports about the verdict against the right-wing extremist Kevin G., an article about the rockets attacks against Israel from the Gaza Strip, a report on the devoutly religious Jewish community in Zurich, the attack in Halle, and the reports about the new album of the right-wing extremist band Amok (see Chapter 2.3).

The most serious incidents in 2019 were as follows (see Chapter 3):

- In Zurich, a man yelled at the Jews gathered in front of a house of prayer, saying among other things: “I am going to kill all Jews!”
- The right-wing extremist band Amok released a new album in December. One song describes and glorifies the attack on an Orthodox Jew in Wiedikon by the right-wing extremist Kevin G. It calls Jews hippos and declares open season on them. The band members refer to themselves as hippo hunters that are all set to go hunting again soon.
- A hotel caretaker in a tourist town made a big fuss about too many cars of Jewish guests in the parking lot, claiming the vehicles hindered his work. On being asked if there was a problem, he said: “Yeah, they should all be...” and moved his hand across his throat as if slitting it.
- Comments directed at several Jewish guests from England at the bottom station of a mountain railway: “I hate these people’s guts!” “Too bad Hitler isn’t still alive!” “They reproduce and reproduce, and fill up the whole world!”
- In January, several cars thought to be owned by Jews were marked with graffiti featuring swastikas and Stars of David.
- The numerous antisemitic remarks in reaction to the attack in Halle and the attacks on Jews in New York. In them, Jews themselves and their supposed conduct or Israeli policies were often blamed for the fact that antisemitism exists and attacks on Jews happen.

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