



ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS IN ITALY & THE REPRESENTATION OF JUDAISM AND ANTISEMITISM THROUGH ITALIAN TV NEWS PROGRAMS AND NEWSPAPERS: 2019 - 2021

This study focuses on the Italian context in the three-year period 2019 – 2021. It consists of two parts: the first part is an overview of antisemitism and antisemitic incidents that took place in Italy recorded and analyzed by CDEC Foundation's Osservatorio Antisemitismo¹ in its annual reports.² The phenomenon of hatred against Jews is studied from a quantitative and qualitative perspective, the latter framing the ideological foundations that fuel Judeophobia and the moments that trigger antisemitic acts and speech.

The second part curated by the Osservatorio di Pavia,³ an independent research institute specialized in media analysis, is dedicated to a quantitative and qualitative analysis conducted on the space given by the main Italian TV news programs and newspapers to antisemitism and Judaism, and who was interviewed reporting on antisemitism and Judaism.

¹ <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/>

² https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/approfondimenti_category/studi-dellosservatorio-antisemitismo/

³ <https://www.osservatorio.it/>

ANTISEMITISM IN ITALY: 2019-2021

CDEC Foundation's Osservatorio Antisemitismo⁴

Introduction

This report begins with an overview of relevant statistical data about Italy, the economic, social, security and welfare conditions of the population with the assumption of the existence of a link—evidenced by years of sociological studies—between social distress and antisemitism.

As far as Jews are concerned, the Jewish population represents a tiny fraction of the Italian population, the members of Jewish communities, according to data from the Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI) updated as of December 31, 2019, amounted to about 23,000 people, 0.03% of Italy's resident population, which, according to ISTAT data from January 2020, was around 59 million.⁵

Italy is going through a period of transition and crisis for years. In 2019, Censis reported on “a society that has lost its sense of investment in the future.” 7 in 10 Italians felt very stressed about family, work, relationships, or even for no clear reason.⁶ In 2020 the year of Covid19, the population felt terrified, undecided between resentment and hope: 73.4% of Italians indicated fear of the unknown and anxiety as the prevailing feeling in their household.⁷ In 2021 Censis refers to a feeling of “an eternal present,” which does not make one think about the future.⁸ More than a year and a half after the start of the pandemic, our lives are overtaken by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The years 2020 and 2021 were ruled by the pandemic. The launch of the vaccination campaign generated a feeling of relief to a huge part of the population but, after a brief period, it has produced a new social group, a vociferous anti-scientist and anti-vaccine minority, the so-called “No Vax”, who given their hostile behavior, helped normalizing hateful and conspiratorial rhetoric.

⁴ Written by: Stefano Gatti, Murilo H. Cambuzzi, revised by Betti Guetta.

⁵ <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/popolazione+residente>

⁶ Censis, “I grumi di nuovo sviluppo” (2019). Available at: <https://www.censis.it/rapporto-annuale/sintesi-del-53%C2%B0-rapporto-censis/i-grumi-di-nuovo-sviluppo>

⁷ Censis, “54° Rapporto sulla situazione sociale del Paese/2020” (2020). Available at: <https://www.censis.it/rapporto-annuale/54%C2%B0-rapporto-sulla-situazione-sociale-del-paese2020>

⁸ Giuseppe De Rita, “Questo eterno presente non ci fa pensare al futuro” (2021). Available at: <https://www.censis.it/governo-pubblico/%C2%ABquesto-eterno-presente-non-ci-fa-pensare-al-futuro%C2%BB>

The Covid-19 pandemic has been noted by a flood of information (news and fake news) shared by media outlets and users on the internet (especially through social media), which in turn has led to an increased in conflict and confusion in society. In this environment, conspiracy thinking—an attitude that has been rampant for years—has found further fertile ground for its spread.

Trust in institutions, both towards Italian and European ones, has grown since the enactment the first measures against covid-19 in in Italy when compared to 2019. Besides the institutions, trust has also grown on doctors, the health care system, and the education system.⁹

Ideological-cultural framework of antisemitism in Italy: 2019-2021

The three-year period 2019-2021 was marked globally by a sharp increase in antisemitic acts and rhetoric. Multiple factors explain this growth, especially the increasing social acceptance of conspiracy rhetoric and the trivialization of the Shoah related to the coronavirus pandemic, conflicts in the Middle East, and economic crisis.

The CDEC Foundation's Osservatorio Antisemitismo (Observatory of Antisemitism) and other international organizations that study online hate, believe that the Internet, and especially social media, has become the main medium for the spread of hate speech and antisemitism. Since the late 1990s, the Osservatorio has undertaken constant monitoring of the antisemitic cyberspace with a focus on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, VKontakte, YouTube, Telegram, TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.), systematically collecting posts with Judeophobic content. In the last three years alone, about 15 thousand pieces of content have been archived.

Major social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, etc. have generated an environment where any speech or opinion becomes possible, and where racism and antisemitism find space and acceptance, and often are no longer perceived as a threat: many users now assume that hate content is the norm on the Internet. According to the research center Hope Not Hate (2021), the amount of explicitly

9 SWG, “RADAR Niente sarà più come prima” (2021). Available at: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwj6i5O0tYj8AhW5gP0HHdSZCa8QFnoECBEQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.swg.it%2Fpa%2Fattachment%2F6177d6ca7f9f6%2FRadar_18-24%2520ottobre%25202021.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2ONPFR2mXIHuqffWKX82v6

antisemitic and violent material on each social is closely related to the level and moderation policies of the aforementioned.

Antisemitism in the last three years is animated mainly by conspiracy thinking, articulated in a series of anti-Jewish tropes, such as: “Kalergi Plan,”¹⁰ “Great Reset”,¹¹ the power of the “Zionist Lobby,” the Zionist pandemic, etc.

Relevant to this matter is the data present in a 2021 report published by Censis. The report affirms that there is “a wave of irrationality” in Italy and that a not insignificant segment of the population believes to some extent in several conspiracy theories, ranging from 5.9 percent who believe the Covid does not exist to 39.9 percent who think that there is a threat of ethnic replacement in Italy. The Censis states that “irrationality has infiltrated the social fabric, both in individual skeptical positions and in the protest movements that have inflamed the squares this year and is carving out no small space in the public discourse, conquering the peaks of trending topics in social networks, climbing the book sales charts, and occupying tv shows.”¹²



According to this conspiratorial rhetoric, Jews and/or Zionists are plotting to break up the world and then rebuild it according to Jewish rules. This plan would involve the destruction of traditions, “corruption,” “crossbreeding,” and “homosexualization” of the world¹³ and the establishment of global government ruled by banks and

10 According to the “Kalergi Plan,” Jewish-Zionists would like to replace the white European population with non-Europeans to “miscegenate” the continent to make it more receptive to globalist-globalist plans.

11 The “Great Reset” is a new conspiracy theory that states that “global elites” are using the coronavirus pandemic to promote their own “cosmopolitan” interests and advance a “globalist” project aimed at destroying the sovereignty and prosperity of all nations.

12 “La società irrazionale”, Censis (2021). Available at: <https://www.censis.it/rapporto-annuale/la-societa%C3%A0-irrazionale>

13 Through the so-called “Kalergi Plan” and the “Great Replacement”.

supranational bodies, evidently “Zionist.”

The theories touted are both Italian (e.g., there is a menorah engraved at Montecitorio Square in front of the Parliament;¹⁴ former Health Minister Roberto Speranza is allegedly an Ashkenazi Jew; etc.) and “imported” from abroad (e.g., Covid was allegedly created by Jews; Jews are behind vaccines; etc.).

The strategy behind the creation and the spread of these theories is that of instilling uncertainties and to spread doubts about the ability of liberal democracies to deal with people's problems, as well as to fuel hatred toward foreigners and the so-called “cosmopolitan” elites.

The most widespread anti-Jewish accusation—and one that echoes the antisemitic fallacy of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion—is one related to economic issues: shadowy Jewish-Zionist lobbies—thanks to the sprawling power of media, banks, and international bodies, evidently “Zionist”—rule and direct the world.

Jew haters continue to imagine them and justify their hatred according to archaic and consolidated Judeophobic tropes: blood libel, ritual cannibalism, deicide, hatred of humankind, tendency to usury and to conspire, poisoning. Jews are often portrayed according to Nazi archetypes and defined based on negative stereotypes with no historical grounding. Jews are all considered “Zionists” and Zionism is understood as a kind of metaphysical evil that controls them.

The ideologies that connote antisemitism in Italy in recent years are—in order of relevance—neo-Nazism, Israel-related antisemitism,¹⁵ and generic antisemitism lacking identifying features, they are almost never presented in their pure form, but often hybridized.

14 Ludovica Di Ridolfi, “No! Il pavimento di piazza Montecitorio non ha un messaggio in codice collegato ai Rothschild”, *Open* (2022). Available at: <https://www.open.online/2022/09/29/elezioni-politiche-2022-pavimento-piazza-montecitorio-rothschild-fc/>

15 Antisemitism related to Israel is meant as the transferring of antisemitic tropes (blood libel, deicide, hatred of mankind, perfidy, etc.) to the State of Israel and Zionism.

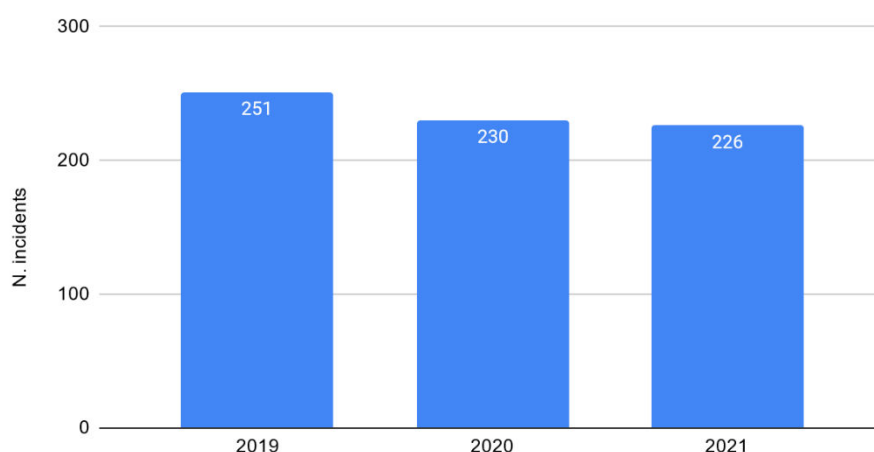
Antisemitic episodes in Italy: 2019 – 2021

The Osservatorio Antisemitismo classifies as an antisemitic incident any intentional act directed against Jewish persons, organizations, or property in which there is evidence that the action has antisemitic intent or content, or that the victim was targeted because they are Jewish or believed to be Jewish. The actual number of incidents of antisemitism is higher than the number recorded because the reporting of incidents varies according to type; more serious acts are reported more often while verbal or written offenses are more rarely so. There are two main problems related to the report of antisemitic incidents: under reporting, i.e., the lack of reporting resulting in an underestimation of the phenomenon, and under recording, i.e., the failure of police or other actors in the criminal justice system and civil society to recognize the discriminatory intention of the crime. In general terms, it can be said that the phenomenon of antisemitism is on the rise as is its visibility.

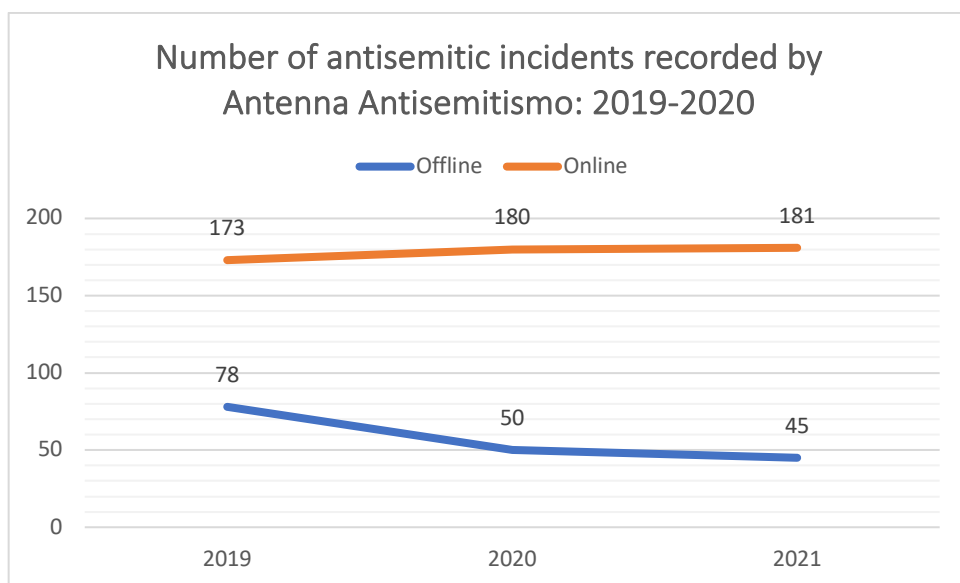
The Antenna Antisemitismo (Antisemitism hotline) collects reports of incidents from civil society via the Osservatorio Antisemitismo's website, email address (antisemitismo@cdec.it) and its Twitter profile (www.twitter.com/o_antisemitismo). Incidents are analyzed, and if deemed antisemitic in accordance with the IHRA's working definition of antisemitism, they are recorded and archived. The most serious incidents, crimes and/or hate speech, are reported to UCEI and OSCAD.

In Italy, the number of antisemitic incidents reported to the Antisemitism Antenna remained stable over the three-year period 2019-2021, as seen in the graph below:

Number of antisemitic incidents recorded by Antenna Antisemitismo: 2019-2020



Since 2019 we have seen a slight decline in the number of recorded incidents of antisemitism in the “physical” world, part of which can be explained by the outbreak in 2020 of the coronavirus pandemic, which forced the government to take measures to reduce contact for extended periods during the year. In 2021, although the country has seen a steady relaxation of restrictive measures, the number of incidents in the offline world has decreased further. However, the period of analysis is too short to allow us to conclude if this negative trend is lasting or momentary. On the contrary, we are witnessing a steady growth in reports of online incidents, a trend that is not limited to Italy but global and that emerges from multiple studies produced by major research centers on antisemitism.

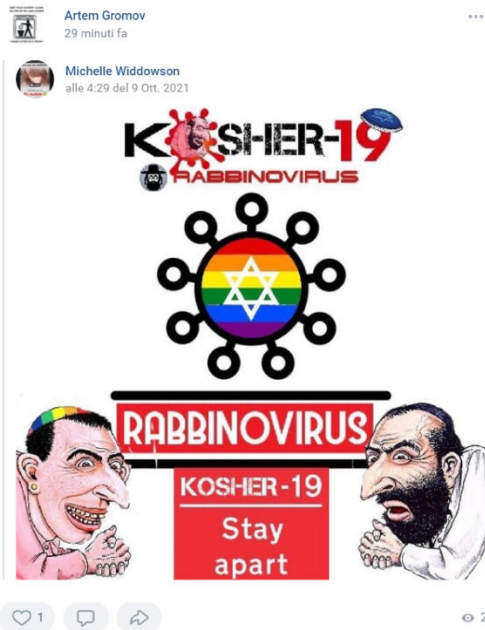


According to the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) report “Antisemitism - Overview of Antisemitic Incidents Recorded in The European Union: 2011–2021” security forces (DIGOS in 2019, and OSCAD 2020 and 2021) recorded 293 incidents of antisemitic criminal conduct in this three-year period: 2019 - 91, 2020 - 101, and 2021 - 101. The number of people cited with antisemitic criminal conduct were 73 (2019: 22, 2020: 11, 2021: 40) and three have been arrested (2019: one, 2021: two).¹⁶

The years 2020 and 2021, a period shaped by the coronavirus pandemic, have been marked by a steady rise and normalization of conspiracy-antisemitic theories and episodes of trivialization of the Shoah. Over the course of these years, conspiracy tropes have ceased

¹⁶ FRA, “Antisemitism -Overview of Antisemitic Incidents Recorded in The European Union: 2011–2021” (2022). Available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/antisemitism-overview-2011-2021>

to be the exclusive tool of extremist groups to enter the mainstream cultural, political, and social arena.



Old anti-Jewish tropes have been modernized and adapted to Covid-19: the claim that Jews poisoned wells in the Middle Ages has been revived, coupled with the Jewish power trope, have been the basis to several conspiracy theories and fake news spread online and offline. Jews (“Ashkenazi/Zionists”) have been accused of creating and sometimes spreading the Covid virus (“Kosher-19,” “Rabbi-virus”) to control humanity, decrease the population, profit economically and socially from the disorder created by the pandemic, etc. The so-called “Ashkenazi-Zionist cabal” has been blamed for being behind the creation of the vaccine, considered by a

great number of conspiracy thinkers as a false remedy, a poison or a tool of population control, and so on. Several users believe that Jews, remembering the Nazi experience, want to carry revenge by imposing the “yellow star” (i.e., persecution and ghettoization) on non-Jews.

Covid triggered the resurgence and the reframing of the trivialization of the Shoah, which intensified as demonstrations against the Green Pass began. In August 2021, a tweet posted by the Jewish Community of Rome announcing the need for presentation of the green pass to access the museum was the subject of comments comparing the Green Pass to the yellow star imposed by the Nazis on Jews and the community's “lack of memory.” In No-Vax groups on Telegram we were able to find Holocaust deniers who, in an anti-vaccinationist twist, call themselves the “new Jews” subjected to a



Nazi-sanctioned dictatorship, hence the slogan “Vaccine sets you free.” Italy's No-Vax activists were not the only ones to compare the health measures taken by different governments to contain the pandemic to Nazi measures; in fact, this rhetoric has been adopted by various protesters in all corners of the world.¹⁷

Israel-related antisemitism has been a constant feature of the anti-Jewish rhetoric for decades, which saw a flare-up in May 2021 during Operation Guardian of the Walls. Both online and offline, May, and to a lesser extent the following months, have been marked by anti-Zionist discourse mingled with antisemitism, in Italy and abroad.¹⁸ Some of the themes are accusations of bias or silence of the mainstream media: “they give too much space to Israel,” “they only talk about Hamas rockets”; comparisons and links between the Shoah and Israel: “they [Jews] suffered the Shoah, how do they do this to the Palestinians?”, prompting the accusation of “Nazism”; any support for Israel is seen as “servitude” by a segment of users. The rise of antisemitic discourse related to Israel during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been present—even in more radical expressions—abroad, as seen in studies published by the CST,¹⁹ RIAS/IIBSA,²⁰ INSS,²¹ and what has been reported by the media.²²

The three-year period 2019-2021 was characterized by an uptick in anti-Jewish incidents and discourse in Europe as well as a surge in discussion on the importance of countering antisemitism in public and political debate, which led to three important achievements: the establishment of the Extraordinary Commission to Counter Intolerance, Racism, Antisemitism and Incitement to Hatred and Violence in 2019;²³ the establishment

17 Gabriella Mazzeo, “Germania, paragonare i vaccini all'Olocausto è reato: sanzioni per chi indossa stella di David in piazza”, Fanpage (2021). Available at: <https://www.fanpage.it/attualita/germania-pene-piu-severe-per-chi-indossa-la-stella-di-david-durante-le-manifestazioni-no-vax/>

18 Nathan Greppi, “Regno Unito: aumentati gli episodi di antisemitismo durante l'operazione a Gaza”, Bet Magazine Mosaico (2021). Available at: <https://www.mosaico-cem.it/attualita-e-news/mondo/regno-unito-antisemitismo-operazione-gaza/>

19 “Antisemitic Incidents: January-June 2021”, CST (2021). Available at: <https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/f/c/Incidents%20Report%20Jan-Jun%202021.pdf>

20 Ben Cohen, “‘Eruption’ of Antisemitism in Germany During Israel-Hamas Conflict Shows Need for Authorities to Boost Protection Efforts, Says New Report”, *Algemeiner* (2021). Available at: <https://www.algemeiner.com/2021/11/25/eruption-of-antisemitism-in-germany-during-israel-hamas-conflict-shows-need-for-authorities-to-boost-protection-efforts-says-new-report/>

21 Shahar Eilam, Tom Eshed, “Increased Antisemitism in the United States Following Operation Guardian of the Walls: Permanent or Short-Lived?”, INSS (2021). Available at: <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/antisemitism-and-guardian-of-the-walls/>

22 “Israel-Palestinian conflict fuels antisemitism in U.S. and Europe”, CBS News (2021). Available at: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/israel-palestinian-conflict-fuels-anti-semitism-us-and-europe/>

23 <https://www.senato.it/leg/19/BGT/Schede/Commissioni/0-00143.htm>

of the role of National Coordinator for Combating Antisemitism in 2020;²⁴ and the European Strategy for Countering Antisemitism and Promoting Jewish Life in 2021.²⁵

Victims of antisemitic acts: 2019-2021

513 (2019: 192; 2020: 151, 2021: 170) episodes targeted undefined Jews and/or Jewish entities and portrayed them according to negative stereotypes: racist, rich, cheap, inclined to domination and conspiracy, “Zionists.”

194 (2019: 59; 2020: 79; 2021: 56) targeted Jewish individuals and/or Jewish entities, who are also demonized and stereotyped according to established negative tropes. In some cases, the victims are not Jewish but believed to be so, such as the journalist David Puente or the former Health Minister Roberto Speranza.

The main target of antisemitic attacks is the Shoah survivor and Senator for life, Liliana Segre. This analysis comes both from incidents reported to the Antenna antisemitismo and the analysis of websites and social networks monitored on a daily basis by the Osservatorio. Attacks against Segre—since her appointment to Palazzo Madama in 2018—have become a regular feature of Italian antisemitism, the pattern of which consists of the publication on social platforms of insults (sometimes with the wishing of her death) and/or offensive photomontages/memes designed to instigate hatred toward the senator, or to heavily mock her experience in the Auschwitz death camp. Liliana Segre is labeled as an “hypocrite” by a portion of users because she affirms to fight against discrimination but not against anti-covid and green pass measures that are considered persecutory and similar to the Racial laws. Frequently the insults directed at the senator are not only antisemitic but also misogynistic and ageist.

Other Jews (and people perceived as such) often at the center of anti-Jewish hatred in the last three years include: former PD congressman Emanuele Fiano, the Elkann family

²⁴ “Il Coordinatore Nazionale per la lotta contro l’antisemitismo”. Available at: <https://www.governo.it/it/noantisemitismo/il-coordinatore-nazionale-la-lotta-contro-l-antisemitismo/18979>

²⁵ “EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021 – 2030)”. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/eu-strategy-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life-2021-2030/about-eu-strategy_en

(FIAT and GEDI Group), Albert Bourla (CEO of Pfizer), Bill Gates (non-Jew), Roberto Speranza (non-Jew).



The press (television, newspapers, journalists) is often the victim of anti-Jewish attacks, as it is seen as the *longa manus* of the Jewish/Zionist lobby in its work for world domination. RAI (referred to as “Israeli Radio Television”), the Elkann family's GEDI publishing group, and some journalists (Gad Lerner, Maurizio Molinari, David Parenzo, Paolo Mieli, Enrico Mentana) are frequently

targeted, especially on social media, by haters who accused them of being manipulators of the truth. It seems clear that these tropes are inspired by the antisemitic book *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The antisemitic attacks against the press are part of a broader pattern of insults, mockery and threats aimed at Italian journalists²⁶ and hostility toward the mainstream media²⁷ seen as tools designed to deceive and subject the average Italian citizen to lobbies and elites.

For the full list of antisemitic incidents visit the link below:

<https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/episodi-di-antisemitismo-in-italia/>

26 Grazia Pia Attolini, “In Italia 384 giornalisti minacciati nel 2021. Ossigeno ha aggiornato i dati di dicembre”, Ossigeno (2022). Available at: <https://www.ossigeno.info/in-italia-384-giornalisti-minacciati-nel-2021-ossigeno-ha-aggiornato-i-dati-di-dicembre/>; Alberto Ferrigolo, “Il nuovo bersaglio degli odiatori sui social sono le giornaliste”, AGI (2021). Disponibile su: <https://www.agi.it/cronaca/news/2021-02-20/hate-speech-odio-in-rete-contro-giornaliste-11471529>

27 Pier Luca Santoro, “Gli Italiani si Fidano più delle Informazioni di Amici e Conoscenti che di Quelle dei Media”, Data Media Hub (2022). Available at: <https://www.datamediahub.it/2022/02/14/gli-italiani-si-fidano-piu-delle-informazioni-di-amici-e-conoscenti-che-di-quelle-dei-media/>

To access the full annual reports on antisemitism in Italy (available in English) visit the links below:

- **2019** - <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/approfondimenti/relazione-annuale-sullantisemitismo-in-italia-2019-a-cura-dellosservatorio-antisemitismo-della-fondazione-cdec>
- **2020** - <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/approfondimenti/relazione-annuale-sullantisemitismo-in-italia-2020>
- **2021** - <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/approfondimenti/relazione-annuale-sullantisemitismo-in-italia-2021>

Media reporting on antisemitism and Judaism: events, themes and protagonists of a three-year period (2019-2021)

Osservatorio di Pavia²⁸

Introduction

This section of the report presents the results of a content analysis concerning the visibility of themes and events related to antisemitism and Judaism in some Italian generalist media. The items analysed are the prime-time editions of the news programmes of the seven national generalist television stations - Tg1 at 20:00, Tg2 at 20:30, Tg3 at 19:00, Tg4 at 18:55, Tg5 at 20:00, Studio Aperto at 18:30 and Tg La7 at 20:00 - and two of the most popular newspapers, Corriere della Sera and La Repubblica.

The analysis of this report covers a three-year period, from 2019 to 2021. This part of the report focuses on the news programmes, illustrating their thematic agenda and protagonists over the period under consideration. A box dedicated to the press highlights the trend in the attention devoted to these issues by print media over the period under examination.

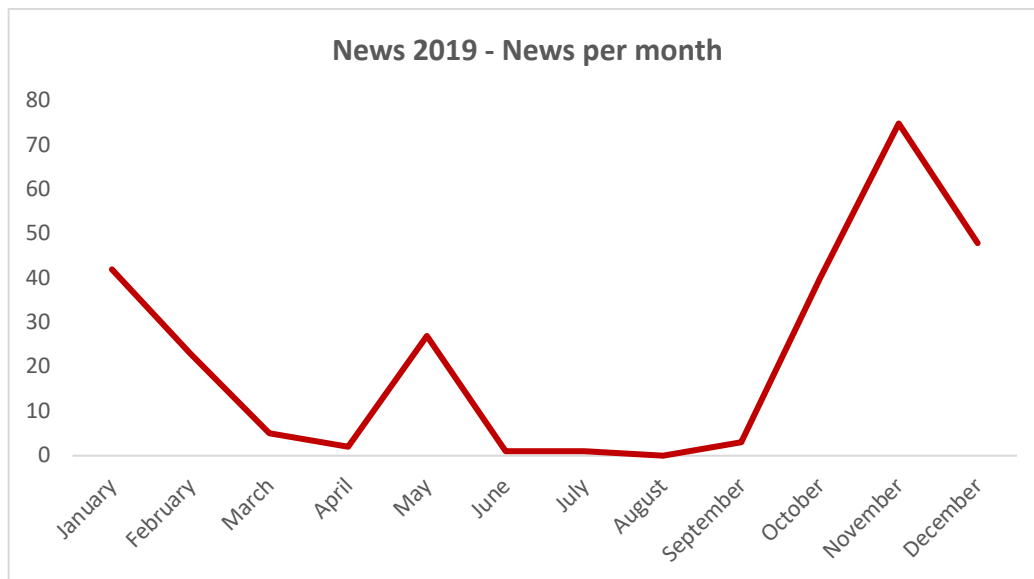
News coverage in 2019

Episodes of antisemitism in Italy in 2019

In 2019, *Antenna Antisemitismo* recorded 251 antisemitic incidents in Italy

In 2019, there are 267 news items with a more or less central focus on Judaism and antisemitism. Looking at the monthly trend of media attention, it can be noticed that the peak of coverage is mainly condensed in the month of November, with an increase in attention from as early as September and two, although more limited, peaks in January and May.

²⁸ Written by Mirella Marchese- Senior Researcher Osservatorio di Pavia



The focus in the month of **January** is sort of a 'physiological' feature in news coverage due to the Day of Remembrance on 27 January, a recurrence that in the days leading up to the date of the celebration turns the spotlight on the issue, which is in fact called the Week of Remembrance. In particular, this year the focus is on President Mattarella's warning against hatred and racism with the head of the state stating: "*not lower our guard we must fight every outbreak of hatred, racism, indifference, denialism wherever it lurks*" (Tg1, 24 January) because "*The Shoah is a virus ready to awaken*" (Tg2, 24 January). The interest of the news programmes unfolds in a journey between the past and the present. In the week in question, TG3 dedicates a 'thematic' series in the form of reportage, describing it as "*our journey between past and present, where the memory of the Holocaust evoked through the testimonies of survivors alternates with the narration of the signs and concern about a new antisemitism that is advancing*". In January there are also some reportages, although not many, dedicated to the affair of Five Star Movement senator Elio Lannutti who published on his Facebook profile a comment supporting the thesis of the anti-Semitic pamphlet Protocols of the Elders of Zion. "*That disgraceful senator*" anchorman Enrico Mentana labels him in his news bulletin Tg la 7 of 21 January.

In **February**, two violent acts, both of which occurred in France, are prominently featured in the news: the anti-Semitic insults to the philosopher Finkelkraut by exponents of the yellow vests protesters ("*a new mixture of intolerance*" Tg5 defines them, "*hateful and unacceptable episode*" are the words of the journalist of Tg La7) and the desecration of 96 graves in a Jewish cemetery in Paris ("*a jolt of racial hatred*" Tg1 19 February; "*racist paranoia: fascism on one side, anti-Israeli Islamism on the other*" Tg1 20 February).

In **March** and **April**, some episodes of antisemitism in Italy (swastikas in Rome and insults to a child in Ferrara) find little relevance in the media agenda and there are generally few news reports on these events.

In **May**, attention to the question re-emerges in a more evident manner with news reports dedicated to the attack on a Jewish woman in Stockholm, often related in news coverage to the broader issue of the increase in attacks against Jews in Europe ("*the Swedish case is an episode that rekindles concerns about the safety of Jewish communities in many countries*" Tg2 15 May). The news also devote coverage to the case of the teacher Rosa Maria Dell'Aria suspended in Palermo because in a video her students compared the Italian Security Decree to the Racial Laws. However, the story only tangentially brings attention to the Jewish oppression, focusing instead on the issue of academic teaching. Finally, news channels cover President Mattarella's visit to the Shoah Memorial in Milan.

During the summer, **from June to September**, the topic hardly enters the news agenda except for a few reports that focus on the resurgence of anti-Semitic acts and other reports concerning historical events linked to the memory of the Shoah.

In **October**, the attention of the news media is awakened by the Halle bombing, a raid in a German synagogue perpetrated by a young extremist. This event, widely followed by the news, also becomes an occasion to reflect on the rise of extreme right-wing racial extremism. Equally visible in the October are the anti-Semitic insults on social networks targeting the senator for life Liliana Segre ("*Anti-Semitic impulses find unlimited resonance on the web*", emphasised Tg3 on 26 October) and the establishment of the Senate Commission against hatred. The news also extensively focus on the criticism against centre right parties for their abstention from the vote on the establishment of the Commission. Also in October, the news recalled the deportation of the Roman Jews on 14 October 1943 and the establishment of an extraordinary commission against racism and antisemitism, called the Segre Commission.

In **November** it is still Senator Segre and the Commission that bears her name prompting media attention to the theme of antisemitism along sub-themes, namely: the political controversy surrounding the establishment of the said Commission, with comments on the abstention of the centre-right parties, the then Minister of Interior, Matteo Salvini's declarations expressing his desire to meet the senator, and the assignment of a security detail to Senator Segre following the threats she received. "*Hatred and intolerance today are real dangers*", underlines Tg1, while TG5 speaks of "*boorish racism*" (11 November) and

all the news widely cover declarations of blame and solidarity expressed by various institutional actors, including those of the Israeli president Reuven Rivlin.

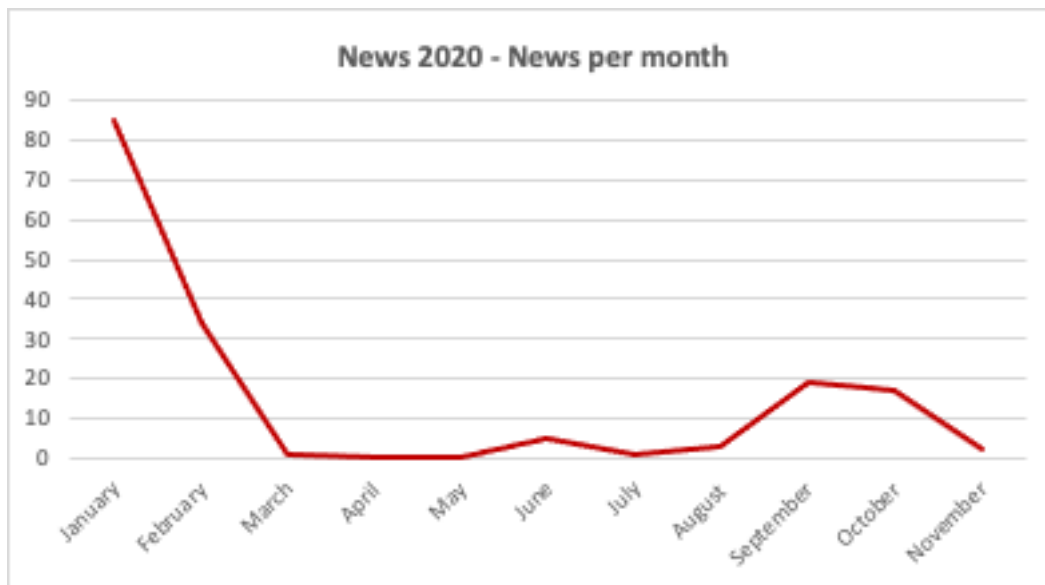
In **December**, Liliana Segre is again the trigger for the increased coverage of the question of antisemitism in Italian news which gives prominence to the so-called 'March of the mayors', an initiative against hatred and in support of Senator Segre, in which 600 mayors from all over Italy participate. There are also two episodes of violence, both in the United States, that bring antisemitism into the news headlines in December. The first is a shooting in Jersey City in the outskirts of New York City where a couple belonging to an extremist anti-Semitic movement ("*the Black Hebrew Israelis Movement, the so-called black Israelites who consider Jews to be impostors*") as Tg1 29 December defines this group) killed three people in a kosher shop. The second is an assault against the home of a rabbi near New York City by an African-American man who entered the house armed with a machete during the celebration of Hannukkah. The news reports of the two assaults become again a reason for commenting on the worrying growth of the phenomenon. "*A phenomenon that worries*" this is how Tg5 defines it on 29 December; "*religious hatred that is becoming an emergency*" underlines TG1 on the same day, "*a long series of episodes of antisemitism that are on the rise in the United States and also in Europe*" recalls TG3. In December, the news bulletins also report the pro-Nazi, anti-Semitic Tweets of Professor Castrucci of the University of Siena and the desecration of Jewish graves in the Strasbourg region.

News coverage in 2020

Episodes of antisemitism in Italy in 2020

In 2020, *Antenna Antisemitismo* recorded 230 antisemitic incidents in Italy

In 2020, there are **167 news** items with a more or less central focus on Judaism and antisemitism with a concentration in the month of **January**, where 87 news items are recorded, and much less attention over the rest of the year.



In the first month of the year, the news focus on several episodes of anti-Semitic aggression and intimidation. At the beginning of **January**, the attack against MP Arturo Scotto - who was badly beaten up in Venice by a group of young people who were praising the fascist leader Benito Mussolini and mocking Anna Franck - catalyses media attention. A progression of threatening cases also emerges: the anti-Semitic writing on the door of the house in Mondovì of Aldo Rolfi, the son of the deported partisan Amleto Livi²⁹, the discovery of a flyer calling for the reopening of the 'Nazi ovens' in front of the headquarters of the Democratic Party in the Vicenza area, swastikas and Nazi symbols on the doorbell of Laura Beccuti, daughter of a partisan and trade unionist in Turin and, again in Turin, the discovery of insults painted on the wall of the house of a Jewish woman, Maria Bigliani, daughter of a partisan woman. There is unanimous condemnation: Tg La7 speaks of "*Infamous history returns*" (24 January), "*a worrying escalation of anti-Semitic hatred*" according to Tg1 of 28 January, "*a dangerous resurgence of the phenomenon*", comments Tg5 30 January.

The many initiatives directly linked to or organised around Remembrance Day substantially contributes to the visibility of the theme in **January**, consistently with what observed in 2019. As a matter of fact, this recurrence is a strong catalyst for media attention. Reports on students trips to concentration camps, on Liliana Segre's meetings and speeches in Italy and at the European Parliament and on the celebrations at the Quirinal Palace with President Mattarella's speech are the key media events related to this anniversary. In addition, news largely cover a series of events such as: the conference

²⁹ He was captured by the Nazi-Fascists after 1943 and destined for deportation to Germany.

organised by the Northern League Party on new forms of antisemitism, the World Holocaust Forum in Jerusalem on the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, the Run for Mem (a run for memory organised by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities to commemorate the victims of the Shoah).

In **February**, newscast concentrate on a series of intimidating episodes, the seriousness of which is always stressed in media reporting. Over this period coverage focusses on the anti-Semitic inscriptions that appear in San Daniele del Friuli, in Turin and on the walls of two schools in Pomezia. President Sergio Mattarella's visit to the Jewish community in Rome and the honorary doctorate awarded to Liliana Segre by La Sapienza University are also reflected in media accounts.

From **March to August**, antisemitism and Judaism are nearly non-existent on prime-time news bulletins. Even the threats received by the Italian politician Emanuele Fiano pass under the radar with only a few dedicated media reports.³⁰

In **September** and **October**, attention on the matter reawakens. In **September**, there are essentially four main focuses of media interest: the European Day of Jewish Culture with President Mattarella's warning against the risks of intolerance and racism, the presentation at the Venice Film Festival of the film *Thou Shalt Not Hate*³¹, Senator Segre's 90th birthday, and the President of the Republic's message to the Italian Jewish communities in view of the Jewish New Year. In **October**, Liliana Segre is again at the centre of news coverage which focuses on her public testimony (*'A lady of whom we are proud'* as defined by La7 news programme on 9 October) at a meeting with students in Rondine, the citadel of peace near Arezzo, also attended by the highest state officials. This event catalyses the attention of almost all the news channels. However, media dedicate less attention to the commemoration of the Nazi-Fascists' rounding up of the Roman ghetto with the deportation of more than a thousand Jews in 1943.

At the end of the year in **November** and **December**, very little attention is paid to the matter, with only a couple of news items relating to anti-Semitic attacks via social media on the participant in an Israeli beauty contest in France.

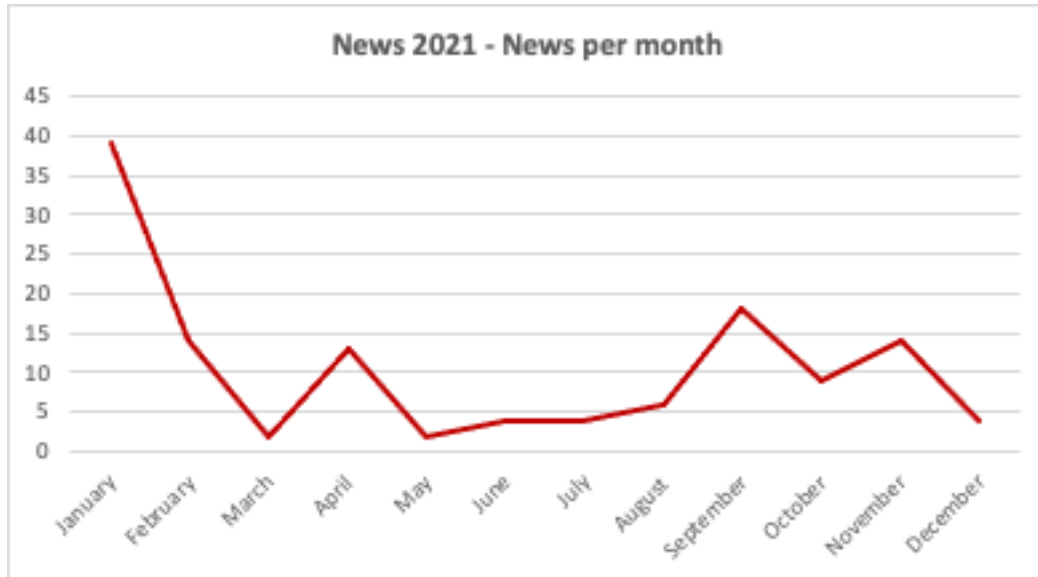
³⁰ Emanuele Fiano is an Italian politician and the son of Nedo Fiano, a Jew deported to Auschwitz and the only survivor of his entire family.

News coverage in 2021

Episodes of antisemitism in Italy in 2021

In 2020, *Antenna Antisemitismo* recorded 266 antisemitic incidents in Italy

There are **129 news** items focusing on the Judaism and antisemitism in 2021.



Due to the theme of Remembrance Day, **January** is the month when visibility for the issue of antisemitism reaches its highest peak. News reports focus on the appeals against hatred made by Pope Francis and President Mattarella, as well as on the initiatives organised by various associations on this commemoration. Information also concentrates on the testimonies of survivors and witnesses of the Shoah. On Remembrance Day, media attention is also given to Emanuele Filiberto's letter to the Jewish community, in which he apologises for the racial laws of 1938 his great-grandfather signed.³²

Media coverage in **January** also devotes some attention to the raid by Nazi-fascists groups who interrupted with anti-Semitic insults the online presentation of the book 'The Desert Generation' by writer Lia Tagliacozzo.³³

In **February**, news reports mostly deal with three events: the attack in Paris against the Polish Jewish writer Marek Halter, a survivor of the Shoah; the threats to Liliana Segre, victim of anti-Semitic and racist insults via social media on the day the life senator underwent the anti-covid vaccine (*"Evidently a vaccine against intolerance, against racial hatred, has*

³² Emanuele Filiberto Umberto Reza Ciro René Maria di Savoy is a member of the House of Savoy. He is the son and heir of Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy and only male-line grandson of Umberto II, the last King of Italy. His great-grandfather, Victor Emmanuel III King of Italy, authorised the marginalisation of Italian Jews by signing the racial laws of the fascist regime.

³³ Mrs Tagliacozzo is the daughter of two Holocaust survivors, an expert on Jewish culture and a journalist.

yet to be found" is the comment of the Tg3 on 19 February); and the visit of Pope Francis to the poetess Edith Bruck, another survivor of the Shoah.

There is no media attention in **March** for the issue. However, in **April** news dedicate substantial coverage to the controversy surrounding the no-vax and anti-Semitic preface written by the Italian Magistrate and writer Nicola Gratteri in the book *'Strage di Stato'* (State Massacre), as well as to the celebrations in Israel for the Holocaust victims and to the protests in France following the decision of the Cassation Court not to try the man who in 2017 killed Sarah Halimi, a Jewish woman murdered in her flat in Paris by her neighbour Kobili Traoré, who shouted "*Allahu Akbar*" while pushing Sarah out of window.

Between **May** and **August** news dealing with Judaism and antisemitism are few and of diverse nature. Among the events that receive media attention there are the protests against the Halimi murder verdict, the approval in Poland of a law blocking the return of properties confiscated from Jewish victims of the Shoah, the dismissal for anti-Semitic remarks of the artistic director of the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics and the increase in anti-Semitic incidents following an escalation of the Middle East crisis between Israel and Palestine.

In **September**, news cover Pope Francis' apostolic trip to Hungary and Slovakia during which he launches a warning against antisemitism. Also on the media agenda there is a 'political' affair namely the criticism of Rome's Jewish community against the mayor Virginia Raggi who, in the midst of the election campaign for the municipal election for Rome, announced the start of the construction of the Shoah Museum. The awarding of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany to Liliana Segre is another event which catalyses media attention over this month.

In **October**, media coverage is limited and concentrated on the controversy over the anti-Semitic remarks made by Rome centre-right mayoral candidate Enrico Michetti. His statement on the *'lobbies capable of deciding the fate of the planet'* dominates media reporting, which is also focused on the anniversary of the deportation of the Roman Jews and on the insults addressed to Senator Segre by a leader of the No pass movement, who later apologised.

November media coverage focuses on the controversy concerning a No Covid Green Pass demonstration in Novara, where covid restrictions are equated to the Shoah (Tg4 of 1 and 2 November: *'The shock parade in Novara with the No Green-passers dressed as*

Auschwitz deportees; "Demonstrations that were really at the limit of decency"). Media also focus on the spread of antisemitism at present, on the occasion of the publication of the report by the European Agency for Fundamental Rights, which highlights how forms of anti-Jewish hatred proliferate in Italy and Europe, especially on the web.

In **December** news focus on a variety of topics, namely: threats and anti-Semitic insults to Lucio Allegritti, an ANPI volunteer, an interview with Liliana Segre, an exhibition in Rome on the crucial role of Jews in the history of the *Risorgimento*.³⁴

Voices: who speaks in the news

There are a number of actors appearing on screen either to bring testimony or to provide for an expert opinion. The first finding of this study is that there is a **progressive decrease of voices**, a datum which is correlated to the lowered attention given to the theme of antisemitism in Italian news over the period 2019-2021.

Political actors are the ones receiving the greatest visibility: President Mattarella as well as local administrators, in their different institutional capacity and in their efforts to condemn anti-semitic attacks. Liana Segre is also very present due to her dual role as a politician and a survivor.

The commemoration of the Shoah, first and foremost the Holocaust Remembrance Day, represents an occasion to give voice to the victims of racial laws, to the survivors of the nazi-fascist death camps and to the descendants of the victims of Shoah. Other actors who receive media attention include:

- representatives of the Jewish community who intervene to comment and censure episodes of antisemitism or to comment on the spread of hatred against Jews.
- ordinary people, in the role of witnesses or commentators on act of violence or hate against Jews.
- victims of present anti-Semitic attacks; however, they are less visible than the victims of antisemitism in the past.

³⁴ Risorgimento, (Italian: "Rising Again"), 19th-century movement for Italian unification that culminated in the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861.

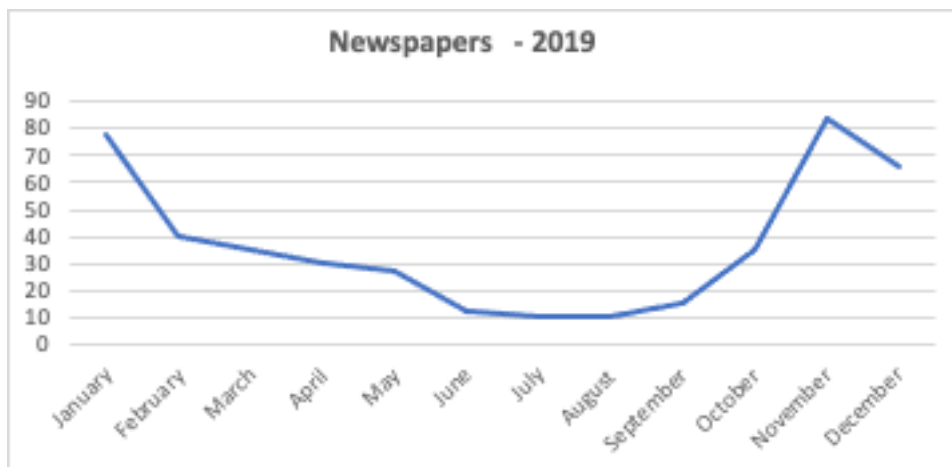
- representatives of schools, teachers and students involved and engaged in remembrance-related initiatives.
- representatives of research and study centres on antisemitism and judaism, as experts.
- representatives from the world of journalism, as commentators.

TV News 2019		TV news 2020		TV News 2021	
Political actors	65	Political actors	40	Political actors	18
Segre Liliana	32	Segre Liliana	26	Victims and survivors/Descendants of the victims	18
Victims and survivors/Descendants of the victims	27	Victims and survivors/Descendants of the victims	20	Journalists	11
Representatives of the school world	18	Representatives of the Jewish community	17	Segre Liliana	10
Representatives of the Jewish community	15	Victims of present antisemitic attacks	15	Catholic church representatives	8
Ordinary people	12	Ordinary people	14	Representatives of the Jewish community	7
Researches and experts on antisemitism and judaism	7	Representatives of the school world	15	Victims of present antisemitic attacks	7
Other experts/Intellectuals/Academia	6	Researches and experts on antisemitism and judaism	5	Researches and experts on antisemitism and judaism	5
Artists/Showbiz representatives	5	Journalists	5	Other experts/Intellectuals/Academia	5
Rabbis	3	Sportsmen/women	4	Ordinary people	5
Journalists	2	Other experts/Intellectuals/Academia	4	Diplomats	2
Catholic church representatives	2	Artists/Showbiz representatives	4	Other actors	2
Victims of present antisemitic attacks	2	Catholic church representatives	2	National Association of Italian Partisans	2
National Association of Italian Partisans	2	Other actors	1	Judges	2
Diplomats	1			Doctors	2
Other actors	1			Trade unionists	1
NGOs representatives	1			Esponente forze dell'ordine	2
				Representatives of the school world	2
				Artists/Showbiz representatives	1
Total number	201	Total number	171	Total number	110

Newspaper coverage in the period 2019-2021

Quantitative analysis was also carried out on all issues published by the two main Italian newspapers, La Repubblica and Il Corriere della Sera. A summary of the events and topics that were most visible are presented below.

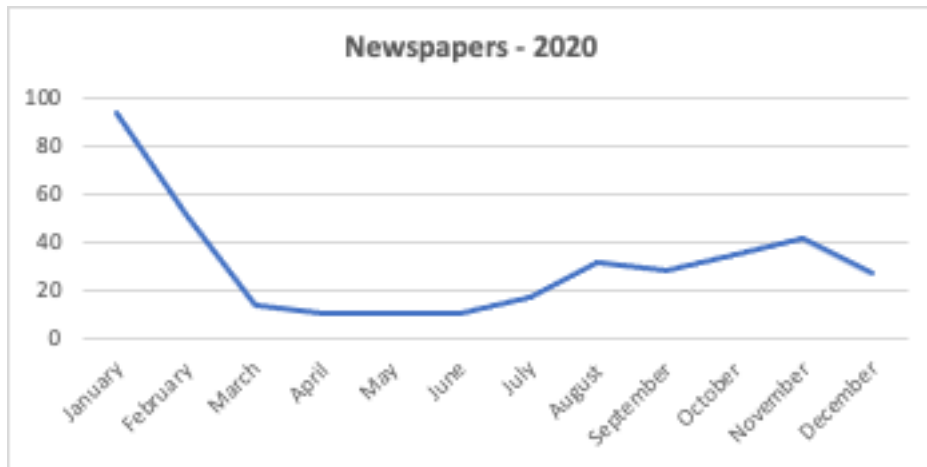
There were **442 articles** found in the two newspapers in 2019. Two events during the year catalyse their attention: in **January**, it is the Remembrance Day with articles on celebrations, testimonies and warnings against antisemitism between the past and the present. The case of Senator Iannutti and his statement concerning the Elders of Zion is also part of the newspapers' agenda. The other peak of attention is in **November** with the controversy related to the right-wing parties' abstention on the commission against antisemitism promoted by Liliana Segre, the related Segre-Salvini meeting and the assignment of an escort to Senator Segre, following social media attacks against her.



In 2020, **373 articles** were found. The peak of attention for both newspapers is mainly in January (94 articles in total for both outlets). The Day of Remembrance is, as always, the main catalyst of journalistic attention and it represents an occasion to cover both the historical events related to it as well as the specific celebrations organised to commemorate it. In January, the episodes of anti-Semitic intimidation occurring in Mondovì, Vicenza and Turin are the other focus of media coverage and they are often linked to the Day of Remembrance.

No major peaks of attention are noted for the rest of the year. In **August** and **November** articles are present but scattered along different topics and events, with the

exception of a few articles dedicated to a terrorist attack in Vienna near the synagogue at the beginning of November.



In 2021, **209 articles** dedicated to the question were found. The trend of attention towards antisemitism and Judaism shows the usual peak in **January**. In **May** there is an increase of visibility due to a number of different issues and events, including an anti-Semitic demonstrations in Germany. In **October**, media attention is focused on a variety of items, including an undercover investigation in the ranks of Fratelli d'Italia in Milan, the anti-Semitic phrases of the candidate for mayor of Rome Michetti, and the visit of the Milan institutions and Senator Segre to platform 21 of Milan station.

