

# Report on Antisemitism 2022

for the German, Italian and  
Romansh language areas  
of Switzerland



Stiftung gegen  
Rassismus und  
Antisemitismus

Fondation contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme  
Fondazione contro il razzismo e l'antisemitismo  
Foundation against racism and antisemitism



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[Official website](#)

## Foreword

Antisemitism in Switzerland did not decrease in 2022, but once again was slightly on the rise. The main cause was an emerging subculture and not typical trends of left- and right-wing or Islamist extremism. Born out of opposition to Covid measures, an explicitly anti-state and anti-society subculture has developed in Switzerland which is particularly obsessed with conspiracy theories of all kinds. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has only broadened the pool of conspiracy theories and intensified their spread.

This subculture is extremely heterogeneous, both in its political orientation and in its radicalism. What the members have in common is that they see a secret power behind everything and everyone, which wants to dominate, enslave or even exterminate mankind. This secret power is seen as a “small elite class” with many faces. As so often in the past, the connection to “the Jews” (or alternatively “the Rothschilds” or “the Zionists”) is quickly made. It is apparent too that a general increase in conspiracy theories also leads to an increase in antisemitic conspiracy theories.

It is certainly not the case that all members of this subculture represent an antisemitic ideology, regardless of how deeply they are rooted in that subculture. The open and very aggressive antisemitic comments in particular – which are usually made in Telegram groups – consistently come from the same people. However, there is a lack of opposition to such statements, and it is not possible to say with certainty whether this is due to tacit approval or an exaggerated defence of freedom of expression. It is worth noting that this is not only the case with antisemitic comments, but also with the equally frequent incitement against Muslims and Black people, as well as against homosexuals and transgender people.

In the future, it will be a major challenge to re-integrate those devoted to this subculture into society. Someone who believes that their own state is actually a corporation, that they are cheated in elections or that the government is made up of puppets, will scarcely be receptive to objective arguments. And even though the potential for violence is certainly greater among the left, right or Islamist extremes, an attack on authorities, politicians or Jewish institutions by an extreme member of this subculture cannot be ruled out. The constant repetition of all sorts of conspiracy theories and the naming of the alleged culprits, especially in Telegram groups, is certainly leaving its mark.

Based on these findings, we call for government involvement in monitoring antisemitism and racism, as well as an examination of the legal means to track and limit hate speech. It is unacceptable that these tasks should be the sole responsibility of NGOs and associations. Politicians must also influence social media platforms to prevent or at least limit the spread of such hate messages towards minorities. The catalogue of measures against antisemitism in general must be broad. Moreover, a ban on Nazi symbols must be implemented. A report by the Federal Office of Justice at the close of 2022 showed that a ban on such symbols, gestures and flags is possible in principle. It is now up to Parliament to act and push for such a ban.

Ralph Lewin, President of the SIG, and Pascal Pernet, President of the GRA



## Report an antisemitic incident



Have you experienced or witnessed an antisemitic incident?

Have you seen an antisemitic post on social media?

Contact us via

+41 43 305 07 77

[incident@swissjews.ch](mailto:incident@swissjews.ch)

[swissjews.ch/reportincident](https://swissjews.ch/reportincident)

[Report incident](#)

Any antisemitic incidents you have personally experienced or witnessed in the German, Italian or Romansh language areas of Switzerland can be reported to the SIG Office. These may include physical assaults, verbal abuse, offensive graffiti, letters and messages, or posts or comments seen on the internet or social media. The incidents will be analysed and classified by us, and counselling offered to those affected.

Please get in touch even if you are unsure whether the incident is antisemitic in nature or not. We will gladly help you with the classification.



## Overview

57

incidents  
(real world)

of which

1

Physical assault

9

Offensive graffiti

16

Verbal abuse

29

Comments

1

Public act

1

Poster

853

incidents  
(online)

of which

57%

Conspiracy theories

32%

General antisemitism

6.5%

Israel-related  
antisemitism

4.5%

Shoah denial /  
trivialization



# 1. General analysis

## Antisemitism in the real world

Compared to the previous year, there was once again an increase in the number of real-world antisemitic incidents recorded (2022: 57, 2021: 53). The upward trend since 2018 is therefore continuing. For the first time since 2018, a physical assault was reported to the SIG. The number of insults (16) remained the same as in 2021. There were only minor shifts in the number of public statements (6), offensive graffiti (9) and items sent by post (26). In addition, there was one public act of antisemitism and one antisemitic poster.

Furthermore, especially in the case of verbal abuse and comments, several unrecorded cases must be figured in, since many incidents are not reported to the SIG or the police. This is unavoidable for any collection based on voluntary reporting. However, if the reporting behaviour remains roughly the same, comparisons are still possible over time.

## Antisemitism online

In 2022, antisemitic incidents in the digital world once again increased by around 6% in one year to 853 incidents. However, this is a smaller increase than in 2021. The lion's share of observed and reported incidents came from the Telegram messenger service (75%), representing a tremendous increase compared with 2021 (61%). The short message service Twitter now accounts for only 17%. The figure from Facebook (5.5%) has remained roughly the same and the comments sections of online media outlets have become almost irrelevant (1.7%).

There are two main reasons why Telegram accounts for such a large number of incidents:

Firstly, it is one of the few large platforms used in Switzerland where practically any statement is permitted without it being deleted by the platform operator and the author blocked. Twitter\*, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, etc. have taken a much stricter stance on hate speech. As many people felt restricted as a result, they switched platforms.

\* Since being purchased by Elon Musk, Twitter is in a state of upheaval as far as guidelines for acceptable content are concerned. However, monitoring has been unable to ascertain any discernible changes.

Secondly, in Switzerland, as in other countries, an anti-state, anti-society and conspiracy-loving subculture has developed which communicates predominantly via Telegram. Many conspiracy theories with antisemitic content are shared in this environment (more on this in the following sub-section).

It is often difficult to classify the authors of antisemitic comments politically. On one hand, the possible categories continue to trend towards the familiar milieus: right-wing extremists, left-wing extremists, radical animal rights activists, Islamists, as well as members of so-called "mainstream society". On the other hand, incidents can increasingly be attributed to the aforementioned subculture. However, they cannot be clearly classified within a traditional right-left framework.



## Conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories have gained enormous momentum in the last three years. This has also led to an increase in antisemitic conspiracy theories, which accounted for 57% of online incidents this year (2021: 51%). As in recent years, these conspiracy theories, which circulate almost exclusively on the internet, are by far the largest of the four content categories (see section 11.2.6. for an explanation of the content categories).

After discourse around Covid was incorporated into many of the already circulating (antisemitic) conspiracy theories in 2020 and 2021, the same happened with the war in Ukraine in 2022:

- Ukraine was praised as the ultimate arena for the fight against the "deep state":\*
- Russian troops would free masses of children trapped in deep tunnels from the hands of paedophile Satanists.
- Russian bombardments would destroy dozens of American bio-laboratories that have produced and spread Covid, among other things.

\* The "deep state" refers to the conspiracy theory that in most countries, it is not the official government that holds the power: in reality, a small, elite group controls everything. Their dealings usually do not benefit the majority of the population.

These and many other theories are propagated with and without elements of antisemitism. This depends entirely on how the "elite" responsible are portrayed. For example, they might include Klaus Schwab, the Illuminati or Satanists, or with an antisemitic twist the Rothschilds, the Zionists or the Jews.

One antisemitic conspiracy theory that has gained in popularity since the beginning of the war in Ukraine is the so-called "Khazar theory". The "Khazars" or "Khazar Mafia" are often blamed in Telegram groups as being the originators of "all evil".

Historically, the Khazars were a nomadic Turkic people, who founded an empire in the North Caucasus in the 7th century and later extended it to present-day eastern Ukraine and present-day southern Russia. Around the year 800, the Khazars converted to Judaism. It is not entirely clear whether the entire population converted or only the upper classes. However, archaeological findings suggest that at least part of the population practised Judaism. The reason for the conversion is also unclear. One possibility is that the empire, confined between Christian and Muslim empires, wanted to position itself neutrally. In 970, the Khazar Empire was destroyed by the Kievan Rus, supported by the Byzantine Empire.

The Khazar conspiracy theory states that the Khazars dispersed throughout Eastern Europe after their defeat and thus became the ancestors of the Ashkenazi Jews. This theory was originally developed to de-legitimise Israel. Ashkenazi Jews make up a large part of Jewish Israelis. If they are not descendants of the original population of ancient Israel, they would not have the right to resettle in that area. This line of reasoning is therefore intended to deny Israel the right to exist.

Over time, however, the theory was further developed. The Khazars worshipped Baphomet (a type of devil) and sacrificed little children to him. That is why they were destroyed by the Kievan Rus. However, they took their "beliefs" with them. Thus, a connection emerges between an association with the devil and the ritual killing of children, two classic antisemitic narratives. Furthermore, the theory states, a powerful



Khazar family emigrated to Central Europe and later called itself “Rothschild”. On the one hand, the purpose of these explanations is to be able to make a distinction between “good, real Jews” and “evil, fake Jews”, as is done with “the Zionists”. On the other hand, the term “Khazars” or “Khazar Mafia” is also used as a code word for Jews. One can thus reject the accusation of antisemitism, since one does not mean the “real Jews”, but the wicked devil-worshippers who only pretend to be Jews.

There are several reasons why the Khazar conspiracy theory is so popular now:

- The “evil forces”, who are supposed to be behind all the bad things of recent years, have long been accused of Satanism and paedophilia.
- Part of the Khazar Empire lay peripherally on the territory of today’s eastern Ukraine.
- It is the Russians who are acting against this so-called “evil empire”, which coincides with the destruction of the actual Khazar Empire by the Kievan Rus.



## Antisemitism in a new conspiracy-oriented and anti-state subculture

### The emergence of a new subculture

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, an active scene has developed in Switzerland, as in other countries, which refuses to accept measures to contain the pandemic. In the 2020 and 2021 Reports on Antisemitism, they were referred to as “corona rebels”. For these groups, however, it was about more than just Covid measures from the start. A wide variety of conspiracy theories found supporters in this scene. Along with the conspiracy theories about Covid, they included:

- chemtrails\*
- the “Great Reset”\*\*
- the fight against the “deep state”
- the claim that Switzerland is a corporation
- 5G rays that can kill people at the push of a button
- the claim that Donald Trump won the 2020 election
- the allegedly large number of paedophiles and Satanists holding high office.

\* As per this theory, contrails from planes are actually chemicals sprayed from the planes in order to poison the population and manipulate the weather. The term is a mixture of the words “chemicals” and “contrails”. This theory is generally not antisemitic, but it can become so if, for example, the planes have Star of David stickers on their wings.

\*\* “The Great Reset” has been described by the World Economic Forum (WEF) as an initiative aimed at making the global economy more sustainable and equitable after the COVID-19 pandemic. The conspiracy theory is that Klaus Schwab controls practically all governments and, using the descriptor “the Great Reset”, wants to introduce an eco-communist New World Order of his design. Meat, cars, air travel and possessions would only be available for a small elite class and no longer for the population. This theory is also not fundamentally antisemitic. However, there are repeated attempts to portray Klaus Schwab as a member of the Jewish Rothschild family. This once again lends the entire theory the antisemitic element of the “Jewish World Conspiracy”.



With the beginning of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the theories took on new elements. The majority of the “corona rebels” adopted the content of Russian propaganda. They support the view that the Russian army in Ukraine is fighting Nazis, the “deep state” and Western decadence. However, these individuals were not focussing



on a new topic because they needed a replacement after Covid measures were lifted. In their minds, issues such as Covid, the war in Ukraine, etc., and the theories associated with them are interrelated. Simply put, it is a great battle of good versus evil. On one side, there are paedophile Satanists who want to oppress the world and reduce the population. On the other side are God-fearing men like Trump and Putin who fight for freedom and the protection of children.

Since 2020, people in this scene have increasingly distanced themselves from society and state structures and created their own parallel world. Many would like to expand this even further: living independently of the state in self-sufficient villages that keep children away from state-run schools so that they cannot be “indoctrinated”, and do not have to pay taxes, fees for public media or health insurance premiums.

The extent of the danger presented by adherents of this subculture is difficult to assess. Threats and fantasies of violence, however, are not uncommon in the Telegram groups. Even the Federal Intelligence Service warns of the possible radicalisation of such groups or individuals. In December 2022, members of a group that largely believed in the same conspiracy theories were arrested in Germany. This shows that there are certainly people in this environment who want to fight “against evil” not only virtually, but also in reality.

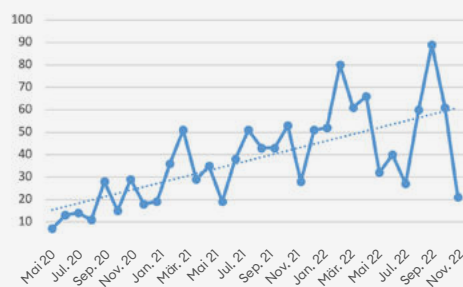
## Antisemitism in this subculture

Not all people in this scene have antisemitic prejudices or are decidedly antisemitic. However, it is striking that, in contrast to the previous two years, antisemitic posts now go virtually unopposed – even in cases of overt antisemitism. Statements such as “the vaccinations were invented by the Jews” and “Germany is a Jewish republic run by Jews for Jews” or videos entitled “Jewish power exposed here” remain unchallenged. This may

be because antisemitism has actually gained majority support in this scene. On the other hand, the limits of freedom of expression are extremely broad for these people, and also include hate speech.

The antisemitic incidents in the Telegram groups studied, which all belong to this new subculture, have increased steadily over the past three years, as the trend line in the diagram clearly shows. The proportion of incidents in the Telegram groups among the total number of online incidents has also increased massively. While they accounted for 61% in 2021, they have risen to 75% in 2022. The absolute number of Telegram incidents also increased steadily and significantly: from 135 in 2020 to 445 in 2021 and finally 640 last year.

Number of incidents in Telegram groups 2020 – 2022



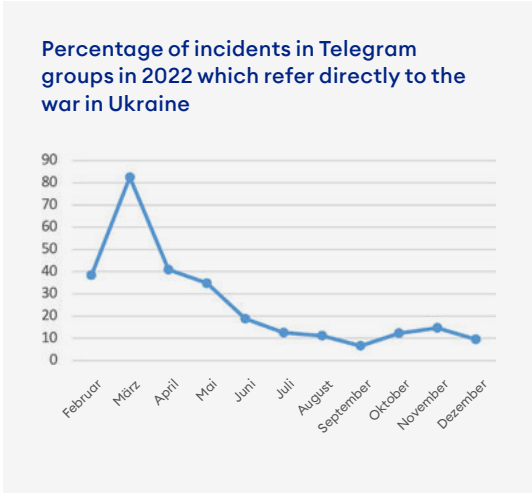
Antisemitic attitudes and narratives are intrinsic to this subculture, yet they are also constantly adapting to current events and influences. This is evident in incidents that have a direct connection to a specific topic, such as Covid and the war in Ukraine. At the beginning of 2022, almost 40% of antisemitic incidents in Telegram groups were directly linked to Covid. However, this figure declined quickly and fluctuated between 5% and 10% over the summer months. This is because Covid measures were lifted during this period and the Ukrainian war was dominating the media



in the spring. This figure increased again in September and October, as Covid became more prevalent with the approach of winter. In the media and in politics, potential measures were once again a topic of conversation. However, there was no major Covid wave or renewed measures, which explains the almost complete absence of incidents directly related to Covid in November and December.

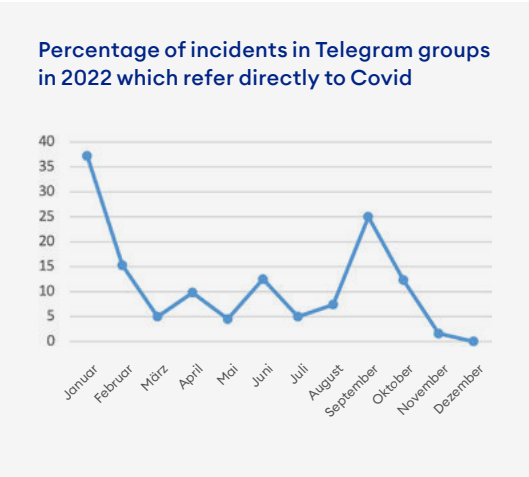
There was an extremely high rate of incidents directly related to the war in Ukraine in February and March in particular.\* This is steadily decreasing and has stagnated at around 10% from July onwards. The reason for this is that media and general interest in the war diminished over time.

\* Although this was just under 40% in February, if counting after the outbreak of war on 24 February 2022, it increases to over 60%.



### Comparisons with the Shoah

In 2021, misguided comparisons between Covid measures and the National Socialist regime and the persecution and murder of the Jewish population during the Holocaust, continued to come up very often. Over 150 such cases were recorded in Telegram chats, in addition to various comparisons at demonstrations. This peaked in November 2021 in the wake of the second referendum against the COVID-19 Act, as Covid certificates were the main topic of the referendum campaign. It was mainly the certificates which triggered these comparisons. After the vote and after the certificate requirement came to an end shortly thereafter, the number of comparisons dropped rapidly. In 2022, only 24 such comparisons were identified among the Telegram chats analysed. It is unlikely that those who used to post such comparisons no longer do so because they realised that the statements are incorrect and inappropriate. Instead, with the discontinuation of the certificate and the social debate about getting vaccinated, the most important foundation for such comparisons has disappeared.



## Shoah denial/trivialization

In the reporting year, 46 incidents were recorded in this content category. It remains the smallest of the four content categories. Nevertheless, the number of incidents increased again this year (2022: 46, 2021: 38). There were clear statements that denied the Shoah directly. For example, some denied that six million Jews had been murdered or that extermination camps with gas chambers existed. Frequent reference was made particularly to the well-known German Holocaust denier Ursula Haverbeck. There were also cases in which terms such as “allegedly” or “so-called” were used to disguise the denial. Trivialization of the Shoah can include comments and posts with tasteless jokes or claims that the concentration camps were “not that bad”. Statements such as “Hitler didn’t manage to finish the job, unfortunately” also come up frequently. Of the 46 incidents in this category, 30 denied the Shoah and 16 were considered trivialization.

Statements of this nature are made by people from all sorts of backgrounds. Among the extreme right there are people who deny the genocide of the Jews and those who celebrate it. Many of the posts denying or trivializing the Shoah come from the Telegram groups investigated. However, the content and origins of the posts (the Shoah as the “Greatest Lie in the History of the Germans”, videos with the well-known Holocaust denier Ursula Haverbeck) suggest that the authors have a far-right background.

## Israel-related antisemitism

Antisemitism associated with the state of Israel was less prevalent than in the previous year (74), with 58 incidents (online and real world). This decline is likely because the war in Ukraine left little space in the media for the Middle East conflict. There was also no severe escalation in the Middle East conflict in 2022; experience has shown that this would lead to more incidents.

Israel-related antisemitism makes itself known in very diverse ways. The authors of these comments and posts come from all sorts of backgrounds, with Islamist and far-left groups in the majority. Some authors appear to come from “mainstream society”, however.

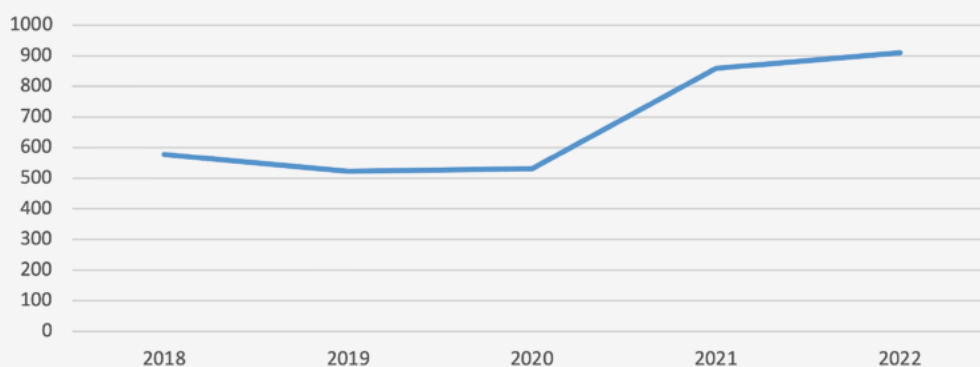


## 2. Statistics

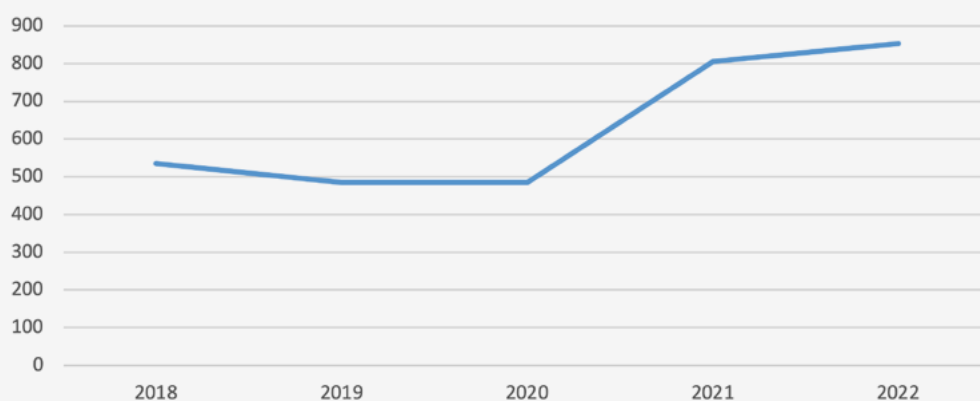
### 2.1 Incidents in 2022 in the German, Italian and Romansh language areas of Switzerland

#### Antisemitic incidents - trends over time

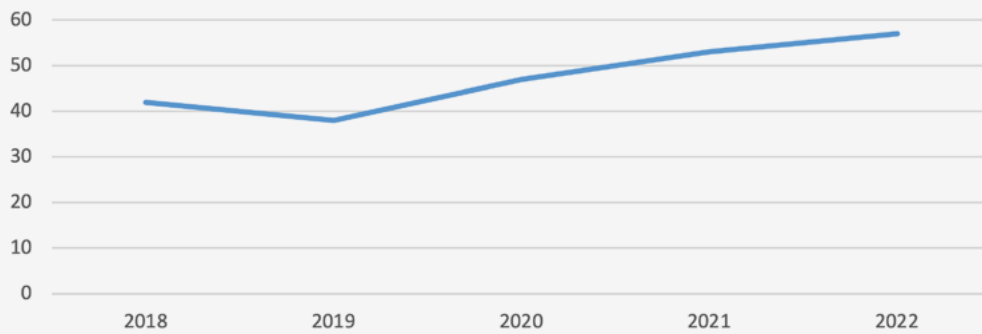
Change in the number of antisemitic incidents  
2018 – 2022 (all incidents)



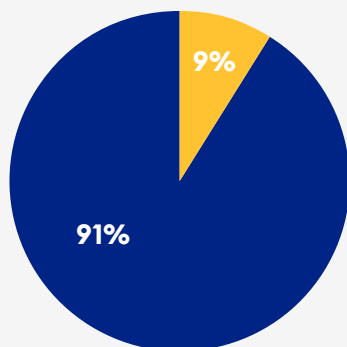
Change in the number of antisemitic incidents  
2018 – 2022 (online)



### Change in the number of antisemitic incidents 2018 – 2022 (real world)



### Distribution of incidents

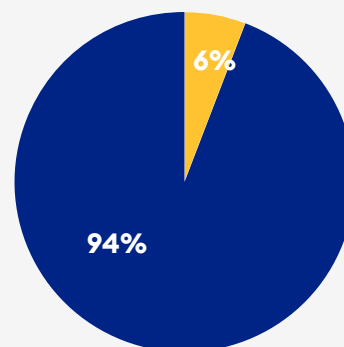


### Distribution of incidents reported and observed (all)

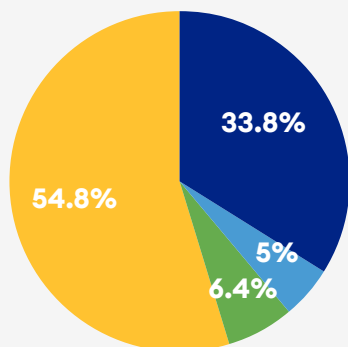
- Reported 9%
- Observed 91%

### Distribution of real world and online incidents

- Real world 6%
- Online 94%



## Distribution of incidents by content

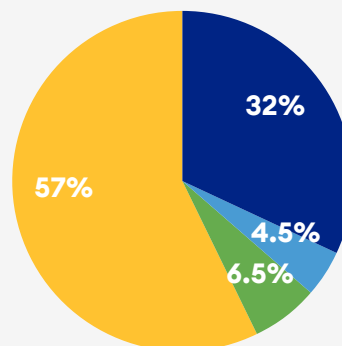


### Distribution by content (all incidents)

- General antisemitism **33.8%**
- Shoah denial/ trivialization **5%**
- Israel-related antisemitism **6.4%**
- Antisemitic conspiracy theories **54.8%**

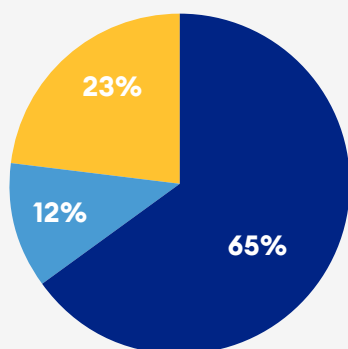
### Distribution by content (online)

- General antisemitism **32%**
- Shoah denial/ trivialization **4.5%**
- Israel-related antisemitism **6.5%**
- Antisemitic conspiracy theories **57%**

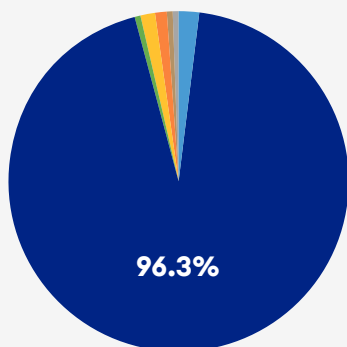


### Distribution by content (real world)

- General antisemitism **65%**
- Shoah denial/ trivialization **12%**
- Israel-related antisemitism **0%**
- Antisemitic conspiracy theories **23%**



## Distribution of incidents by type

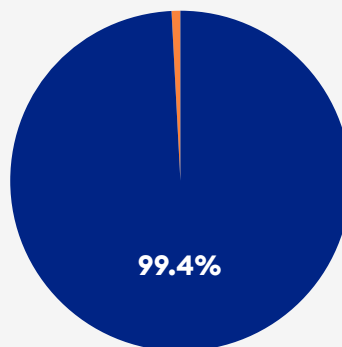


### Distribution by type (all incidents)

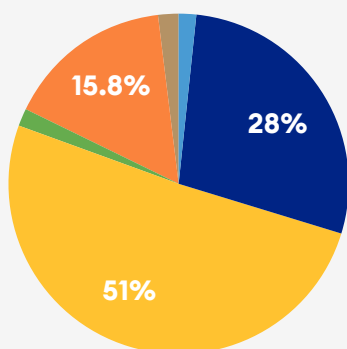
- Verbal abuse **1.7%**
- Comments **96.3%**
- Physical assault **0.1%**
- Offensive graffiti **1%**
- Caricatures **0.5%**
- Public acts **0.1%**
- Posters/ banners **0.1%**

## Distribution by type (online)

- Comments **99.4%**
- Caricatures **0.6%**



## Distribution by type (real world)



- Physical assault **1.75%**
- Verbal abuse **28%**
- Comments **51%**
- Posters/ banners **1.75%**
- Offensive graffiti **15.8%**
- Public acts **1.75%**

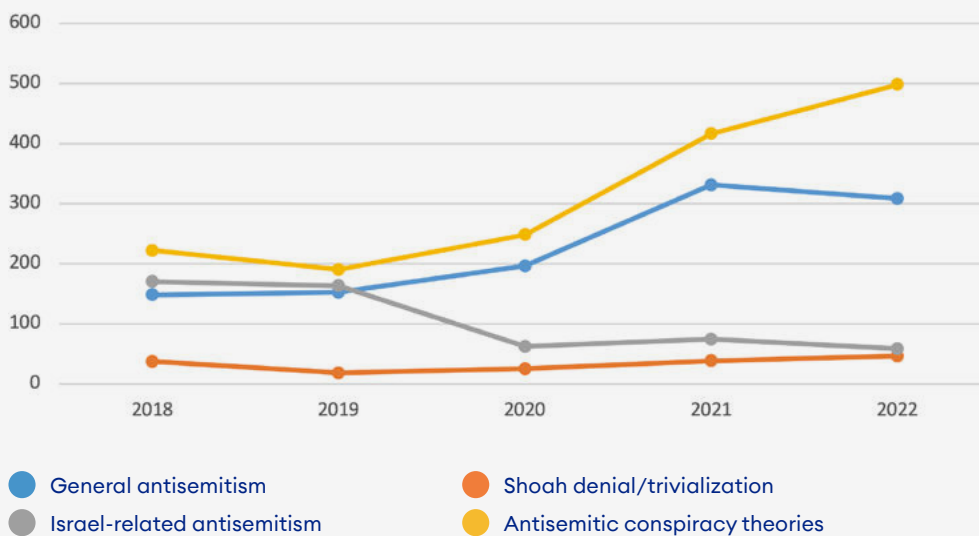


## Distribution of all incidents by month for 2021 and 2022

Month	Total incidents		Actions		Sent items		Online	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
January	73	41	1	2	3	4	69	35
February	83	75	4	1	4	2	75	72
March	104	104	2	0	0	4	102	100
April	86	70	3	5	2	1	81	64
May	80	103	2	5	2	4	76	94
June	62	62	4	5	12	2	46	55
July	50	82	3	1	0	1	47	80
August	57	74	3	5	1	1	53	68
September	75	62	3	0	0	2	72	60
October	119	59	3	3	0	0	116	56
November	82	77	3	1	1	2	78	74
December	39	46	0	2	1	0	38	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>802</b>

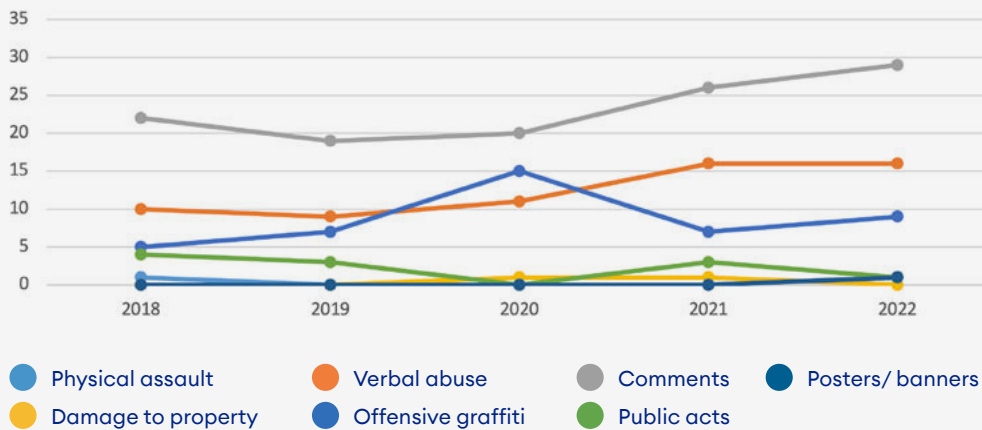
## Trends of incidents over time since 2018

Trends by content (all incidents)





### Trends by type (real world)



## 2.2 Online incidents

### Recording online incidents

There are certain difficulties associated with monitoring the occurrence of antisemitism online. The large number of online posts makes it impossible to cover all social media platforms and online media products, even with significant resources. The cases recorded do not therefore serve to determine the absolute level of antisemitic comments on the internet. However, it is possible for the SIG to use its online monitoring to record certain trends and moods and illustrate them in the Report on Antisemitism. The figures collected in this way also help to produce a qualitative analysis that is as informative as possible.

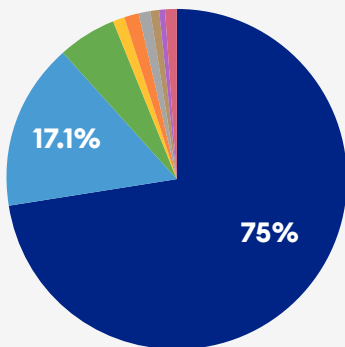
### Distribution of online incidents

The table below shows where the online incidents were recorded. It should be noted that for the media outlets (20 Minuten, Blick, etc.), only incidents observed in the comment sections on the website of the relevant source are counted. Comments posted on articles published on the outlet’s Facebook page are categorized under “Facebook”.

What stands out is that antisemitic statements in comment sections of online media outlets make up only a very small fraction of online incidents. In absolute terms, the figure is also very low at 15 incidents, compared to between 25 and 40 incidents in previous years. The main reason for this low figure is the involvement of those responsible for overseeing the online media outlets. Monitoring of comments prior to publication has improved, resulting in fewer antisemitic comments being published. Furthermore, many online media outlets do not even enable comment sections on controversial topics or topics where a lot of hate speech is to be expected.



	Telegram	Twitter	Facebook	20 Minuten	Blick	Watson	Nau	Instagram	Other	Total
January	51	14	1	1	2					69
February	52	12	6	1		3		1		75
March	80	12	9						1	102
April	61	6	6	2	1		3		2	81
May	66	9	1							76
June	32	13							1	46
July	40	6	1							47
August	27	19	6		1					53
September	60	7	5							72
October	89	19	7						1	116
November	61	13	4							78
December	21	16	1							38
<b>Total 2021</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>853</b>
<b>Percentage share</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>0.46%</b>	<b>0.46%</b>	<b>0.35%</b>	<b>0.35%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.58%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



### Distribution of online incidents by platform

- Telegram **75%**
- Twitter **17.1%**
- Facebook **5.5%**
- 20 Minuten **0.46%**
- Blick **0.46%**
- Watson **0.35%**
- Nau **0.35%**
- Instagram **0.1%**
- Other **0.58%**

## 2.3 Triggers

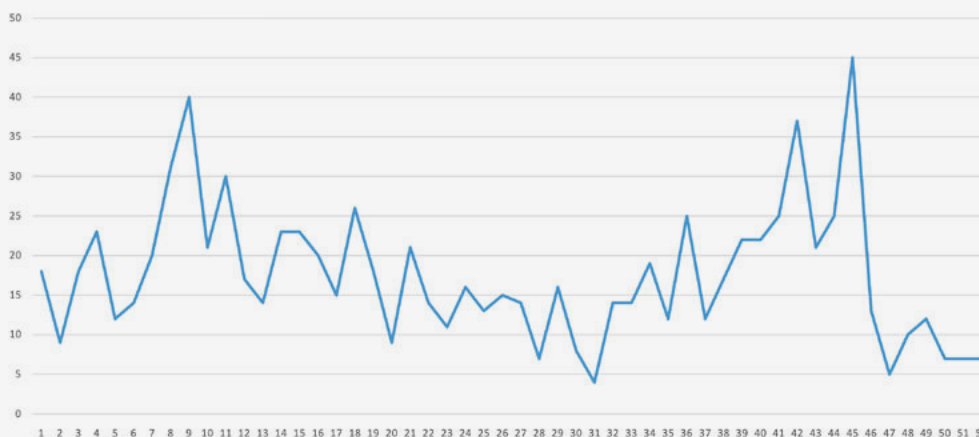
Triggers are events or occurrences that, for a limited period of time (usually a few days), cause a massive spike in the number of anti-semitic incidents. They may relate to international events (e.g. associated with the Middle East), national events (local referendums, court proceedings, etc.) or media reports.

In previous years, most peaks in the diagram below could be attributed to specific triggers. This has changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the monitoring of Telegram groups. There have been and currently are two long-term triggers that directly or indirectly produce incidents of antisemitism on an ongoing basis: Covid and the war in Ukraine. Smaller triggers do occur, such as the anniversary event for the first Zionist Congress

in Basel in 2022, but they cannot be detected on the graph. Another reason for the disappearance of the classic triggers is the dwindling number of incidents in the comment sections of online media platforms as described in the previous section. These incidents were often the result of triggers.

Only the first peak around calendar week 9 can be explained by a trigger: the war in Ukraine began on 24 February. All other peaks are random clusters of antisemitic incidents.

Total number of incidents per calendar week



## 3. The most serious incidents

### Physical assault

- In February, four young people threw a full pot of yoghurt at the back of a Jewish man (wearing a kippah) in Zurich.

### Verbal abuse/comments

- In February, a man saw a Jewish woman on the street in Zurich, spat on the floor, then performed the Hitler salute and shouted: “You f\*cking Jew”. Then he spat on the floor again and walked away.
- In March, several employees made fun of Jewish people in a company break room and made antisemitic comments. One of the employees present was Jewish, which they did not know.
- In April, Jewish guests at a hotel in Davos, identifiable as devoutly religious by their clothing, were in front of the hotel entrance on the evening after Shabbat. A group of about six young men passed by and shouted “Heil Hitler” and “The Jews belong in the gas chamber”.
- In June, a pupil said to a Jewish fellow pupil at a school in the canton of Zurich: “Hitler should have killed all Jews”. Hitler and swastika pictures were also often posted in the class chat.
- In September, a Jewish man was called a “nutcase” and a “Jewish pig” on a Zurich tram.

### Online

- In January, someone posted an ad for “Heizjuden” – a reference to putting Jews in ovens for heating – on Facebook Marketplace with a picture of devoutly religious Jews and commented “very useful, especially in winter”.

### Sent items

- In June, the SIG reporting office received 11 reports of the same flyer being found in postboxes in Zurich, Basel, Olten and Bern. The flyer describes Covid vaccinations as snake venom and the pharmaceutical industry as the “Jewish mafia”.

### Offensive graffiti

- In January, someone stamped a three-by-three -metre swastika into the snow in front of a Jewish woman’s house in the canton of Bern.
- In February, the phrase “Kein Jude in Schweiz” (no Jews in Switzerland [sic]), a swastika and SS runes were painted on a bridge in Basel.
- In February, someone wrote “Jewish lies” on a poster in Basel promoting the Covid vaccine.
- In July, graffiti was found on several trees on the Birsig river in Basel, including a swastika and the phrase “Gas the Jews”.

### Posters/banners

- In April, a poster was discovered at Belvoir Park in Zurich warning of the “Jewish-capitalist New World Order” and referencing the “Great Replacement” theory.



## 4. The situation in the Italian language area

The SIG reporting office also receives reports of antisemitic incidents from the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland and records them. However, only isolated incidents are reported. Since July 2022, there has been a specific reporting office for the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland, based at the Università della Svizzera Italiana and supported by the Goren Monti Ferrari Foundation. The incidents reported there and recorded by the monitoring team are then relayed to the SIG and included in the Report on Antisemitism.

Antisemitic graffiti was reported to the Ticino reporting office. Our own monitoring allowed us to record three incidents on Facebook (category: general antisemitism). These figures are too small for a meaningful analysis of the situation in Ticino.

## 5. Summary of overall situation in Switzerland

There are two reports on antisemitism in Switzerland: one covering the country's German, Italian and Romansh language areas and one for the French-speaking part. This reflects Switzerland's federal structure and its multicultural nature, as well as the organisational structure of its Jewish community. The present synthesis summarises the most important trends and presents numbers for the whole of Switzerland.

When analysing the similarities and differences in the individual language areas, it must be remembered that people in the French-speaking parts of Switzerland are culturally influenced by France, while in the German-speaking areas, influences from Germany are noticeable, albeit to a lesser degree.

	German- and Italian-speaking Switzerland		French-speaking Switzerland		All of Switzerland	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Incidents real world	57	53	28	22	85	75
Online incidents	853	806	534	143	1387	949
<b>All incidents</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>859</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>1472</b>	<b>1024</b>
Antisemitic conspiracy theories	498	416	114	23	612	439
Israel-related antisemitism	58	74	35	31	93	105
Shoah denial/trivialization	46	38	280	78	326	116
General antisemitism	308	331	133	33	441	364



For example, a Geneva-based coronasceptic ex-teacher is well known in the French-speaking conspiracy community. Her theories on COVID-19 or the war in Ukraine are spread from Geneva to Quebec via Marseille. However, she remains virtually unknown in the German-speaking part of Switzerland.

## Physical violence, verbal abuse, and vandalism

There was a slight increase in the number of real-world antisemitic incidents registered in the whole of Switzerland in 2022. They include antisemitic verbal abuse, graffiti, and public statements. In the German-speaking part, there was one case of physical assault, in the French-speaking region one desecration of a synagogue.

## Antisemitism on the internet

The number of antisemitic incidents on social media continued to rise in the German, Italian and Romansh language areas in 2022, but not as steeply as in the year before. A sharp increase in online incidents was recorded in French-speaking Switzerland.

This is notably due to the expansion of observed sources for online watch work. Since the beginning of 2022, CICAD has started to monitor alternative media such as Telegram, VK, and the video hosting site Odysee.

At the national level, we have noted two triggers this year: COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine. Both subjects are a source of antisemitism and generated numerous online incidents throughout the year. For the French-speaking part, the 2022 French Presidential election also resulted in antisemitic and conspiratorial incidents.

The number of incidents related to Israel declined in the German, Italian, and Romansh areas and remained practically the same in the French area. This is due to the fact that there was no major escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 2022.

## Shoah denial

Denial or trivialisation of the Shoah rose slightly in the German, Italian and Romansh language areas in the year under review. As a noticeable change, such statements were often made more openly rather than in a roundabout way as in the past. A steep increase in Shoah denial was registered in the French-speaking region. However, these incidents can be predominantly traced to a single person and their activities on the internet and social media. This person has, for this reason, served a six-month prison sentence.

## Antisemitic conspiracy theories

Similarly to the last couple of years, conspiracy theories across Switzerland in 2022 have been generally driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the start of the war in Ukraine in February marked a turning point in conspiracy theories, as conspiracists focused more on this subject.

As a result, the share of conspiracy theories related to online incidents advanced throughout the entire country. Today it represents the largest category of antisemitic incidents in the German-speaking part. In the French-speaking area, it has a share almost equivalent to “General antisemitism”.



## 6. Safety of the Jewish community in Switzerland

In its most extreme form, antisemitism manifests itself in physical assaults on Jewish people and institutions. The Jewish community and its institutions in Switzerland are subject to a heightened level of threat, with meeting places, synagogues and schools all potential targets for terrorist attacks. This danger emanates from far-right and Islamist groups in particular. This assessment of the situation is based on the experience of a number of terrorist attacks worldwide and in Europe. The Swiss Federal Intelligence Service (NDB) confirms this view in its annual review and classifies the Jewish and Muslim communities in particular as being at increased risk.

Europe has been confronted with the rising threat of extremist violence for over ten years. The large number of attacks proves that this is not a temporary phenomenon but a permanent and real threat to safety. Over a dozen European countries have been affected, demonstrating that this kind of terrorist activity does not recognise national borders. Attacks have repeatedly and specifically targeted Jewish institutions. The attacks on the Jewish Museum in Brussels, a synagogue in Copenhagen, a Jewish school in Toulouse, a kosher supermarket in Paris and a synagogue in Halle are examples of antisemitic aggression targeted at the Jewish community. Around the world, further examples include the attacks on synagogues in Pittsburgh and San Diego in the United States.

The Jewish community in Switzerland has faced rising demands on its security for decades and has responded quickly to the increased threat evident in recent years. Safety and security arrangements covering building security, security staff and training have been updated and

reinforced. The resulting costs are a major burden for the Jewish communities. Implementing proper security for Jewish institutions is non-negotiable and reducing security measures is not an option, despite the heavy financial burden. The Jewish communities reached the limit of their ability to pay for this long ago and are consequently being forced to make cuts to other budget areas, such as training, events and education. This affects the very purpose of a religious community: the practice of its religion.

After years of debates about accountability and responsibilities regarding safety and security, the unsatisfactory situation was acknowledged by the federal government in 2017, and in November 2019, the Federal Council passed the “Verordnung über Massnahmen zur Gewährleistung der Sicherheit von Minderheiten mit besonderen Schutzbedürfnissen” (regulation on measures to guarantee the security of minorities requiring special protection). The law is in accordance with the Federal Council’s July 2018 resolution to increase the safety of at-risk minorities and reduce the burden on communities to finance security measures. The measures set out in the resolution are based on a security concept put forward by a working group with representatives from the government, the cantons and municipalities, and the minority groups affected – including the SIG. The resolution states that funding will be provided for safety-related projects implemented by the minorities concerned in the areas of structural and technical measures to make buildings safe, training, awareness-raising and education.

At the time, the federal government only provided support payments of up to CHF 500,000 per year for the above measures. To date, the Federal Office of Police has conducted three application cycles from 2020 to 2022. The projects submitted by Jewish communities and institutions were primarily aimed at structural measures to increase the security of synagogues, schools and community buildings. The volume of requests has shown the urgent need



of the Jewish community for assistance in the area of security. Since then, a total of 27 applications have been approved, including 23 from the Jewish community. However, the need for financial resources to improve the security of Jewish institutions far exceeded the available resources. As a result, some applications had to be rejected. In this context, it has also become clear that funding to support ongoing safety and security costs is urgently needed.

Ultimately, in April 2022, the Federal Council decided to increase federal funding from CHF 500,000 to a total of CHF 2.5 million per year, starting in 2023. As part of this, new funding is available for the federal government to invest in comprehensive security concepts to safeguard facilities at risk. For the first time, the federal government has taken account of the high ongoing security costs for vulnerable facilities. According to its own calculations, the SIG estimates that the annual uncovered costs of the Jewish community for safety and security are between CHF 4 and 5 million.

In the first round of applications for 2023, the Federal Office of Police granted a total of just over CHF 2 million for 20 Jewish communities, schools and cultural institutions. This also includes new contributions to ongoing security costs. The city and canton of Zurich and the canton of Bern now have regulations to supplement federal contributions. This resulted in additional contributions of nearly CHF 1 million in January 2023. The canton of Basel City has been providing comprehensive protection services separately since 2019 with its own security solution. The cantons of Aargau and Vaud, as well as the cities of Biel, Lausanne and Winterthur, provided one-off support payments.

With the support contributions that have now been made, including those for the high ongoing security costs, Jewish communities and institutions are finally receiving the tangible financial relief they had hoped for. Nevertheless, all cantons with Jewish institutions must

continue to be called upon to make regular and substantial contributions towards ongoing security costs. The aim must be to relieve the Jewish community of the burden of providing for its own safety by introducing effective security measures and long-term funding.

## 7. Recommendations and action areas

The annual SIG and GRA Report on Antisemitism provides a well-researched insight into the issue of antisemitism in Switzerland. The presentation and analysis of incidents reported and observed sheds light on the different types of antisemitism and their prevalence and causes. The comparisons over several years allow potentials, trends and dynamics to be interpreted. For the SIG and the GRA themselves, but also for politicians, educational establishments, the media and, finally, for the general public, the report sets out a picture of the overall situation. It serves as a basis on which to develop suitable measures for prevention, education and criminal prosecution. However, Jewish associations and civil society organisations are increasingly reaching the limits of their resources. SIG and GRA are therefore calling for greater government involvement.

### More federal support for recording antisemitism

The federal government should increase its support for the various methods used in civil society to monitor and analyse antisemitism. At the same time, the federal government should also strengthen and improve its own instruments for monitoring and analysis.





## More legal options in the fight against antisemitism online

Judicial authorities should consider additional legal means to monitor and prosecute those who author and disseminate antisemitic hate speech and conspiracy theories online. Social media platforms also have a duty to greatly increase their own efforts to curb such posts.

## More federal support for prevention

Prevention projects from civil society must receive increased and more targeted support from the federal government. These projects can deny antisemitism its breeding ground at an early stage. Schools also have an important role to play here. Finally, companies and organisations can review and improve their guidelines and values relating to religion, minorities, antisemitism and racism.

## Banning Nazi symbols in public

Politicians are urged to finally ban the use of Nazi symbols in public. The report from the Federal Office of Justice in December 2022 demonstrated that this is possible. It is now up to Parliament to process the pending parliamentary motions quickly.

## A national strategy in the fight against antisemitism

To implement all these points in a meaningful and targeted manner, a national strategy against antisemitism is crucial. This is already being demanded by a majority in Parliament. National strategies and action plans against antisemitism already exist or are currently in development in many European countries.

# 8. Prevention of antisemitism

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### **In 2022, the SIG's Likrat project hosted 130 school meetings – more than ever before.**

“Likratinos” and “Likratinas” visited the participating schools and gave pupils an insight into the Jewish religion as well as their personal religious and cultural experiences. Once again, many newly trained Likratinos and Likratinas were also brought in, so that the project does not run out of young talent.

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### **Schools are one of the most frequently mentioned places where racism and discrimination are experienced.**

Therefore, the GRA launched the two-day educational workshop on discrimination prevention for schoolchildren, “Sparks – together against racism”, in the spring. Five cantonal schools in the German language area of Switzerland participated. The young people learned how to address problems of racism and antisemitism in a self-reflective and goal-oriented manner. Supported by their teachers, the pupils were given the task of initiating a project of their choosing at their own school. Participants were able to pass on their acquired knowledge using a peer-to-peer approach and launch internal discussions within their school.

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### **For the fourth time, Likrat Public conducted the SIG summer project focussing on Jewish holidaymakers in Swiss tourist regions.**

Its aim was once again to promote mutual understanding between hosts and Jewish visitors. The facilitators were based in Davos and Saastal, with short visits to Lake Blausee, Crans Montana, Grindelwald and Gstaad. For the first time, the Valais villages of Nendaz, Verbier and Veysonnaz were also covered. The facilitators were well-received by participants and were able to make very positive progress.



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**In November, the Swiss Army assessed the SEDIA awareness-raising project, which was carried out jointly with the SIG, to be a success.** An evaluation showed that participants in the six training units provided positive ratings. The project “Sensibilisierung zu Diversität und Inklusion in der Armee” (Raising awareness of diversity and inclusivity in the army) was developed by the SIG and has been conducted together with the Army Chaplaincy since mid-2021. The SEDIA training seminars were developed based on the experiences from the SIG’s Likrat prevention projects and conducted by Likrat specialists. As the developer of the pilot project, the SIG is justifiably confident that its prevention approach is working.

## 9. Positive developments in 2022

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**More and more Swiss political parties are recognising the IHRA definition of antisemitism.** After the Social Democratic Party (SP) was the first to do so at the end of 2019, the Free Democratic Party (FDP) followed suit in September 2021, as did the Green Liberal Party (GLP) in November 2021. In January 2022, The Centre also committed to the definition. Jewish associations and organisations have been in constructive dialogue with all parties on this issue and therefore welcome this step.

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**In April, the Federal Council increased the funds for supporting the safety and security of vulnerable minorities from CHF 500,000 to CHF 2.5 million per year.** Recurring security costs can now also be claimed. It is very gratifying that the long-standing work of the SIG in this area has led to this necessary increase, enabling urgently needed financial relief for Jewish communities.

## 10. Guest article by Jérôme Endrass : The problem of a “few bad apples”

Is there cause for concern if an adolescent son is shooting thousands of virtual opponents on the computer all night long playing first-person shooter games? Is a virtual massacre an expression of an aggressive urge? Sometimes, yes, but this is usually not the case. While Switzerland has so far fortunately been spared school shootings, several attacks have shaken German educational institutions. Up until the Covid pandemic, schoolchildren and teachers had been victims of a school massacre, on average, every other year. Nearly all of the young attackers were enthusiastic gamers. Some even managed to virtualise their school in a computer game before the attack, so that they could play through their massacre in minute detail. However, these few bad apples stand in contrast to hundreds of millions of gamers around the world who are very good at distinguishing between fantasy and reality.

Forensic psychology deals with the problem of a “few bad apples” in a variety of contexts. For example, most men understand that short skirts are a fashionable trend and not an invitation to make a move. However, there are a few exceptions who, sexually frustrated, view a short skirt as a free ticket for a sexual assault.

The Covid pandemic had a negative impact on society in many ways. The economic burden, constantly changing Covid measures, social isolation and restrictions on freedom proved to be a stress test for us all. While the vast majority of the population was able to cope appropriately with this stress, a small percentage could not. And there they were again, the few bad apples: those who plunged into the sea of anti-



semitic conspiracy tales. How dangerous anti-semitic conspiracy narratives can be is directly illustrated by how often assailants use them to legitimise their actions. Their destructive potential also became apparent when a nationwide police operation recently uncovered a network of violent followers of the “Reich Citizens’ Movement” who had planned a coup in Germany. At first glance, the “Reich Citizens” and their somewhat alien and bizarre movement seem like a small group of a few crackpots. However, underestimating such groups can be dangerous, as history teaches us.

When antisemitic extremists failed to oust the government in Germany a century ago in the wake of severe crises, they were also dismissed as a small group of crackpots. At the time, Germany was regarded as the European country where antisemitism was the least prevalent. A few years later, however, the few bad apples succeeded in transforming a tolerant parliamentary republic into a dictatorship that sought a “final solution to the Jewish question”.

Typically, small groups of rogue agitators are unable to prevail in modern constitutional states. Potential escalations can be nipped in the bud thanks to counterterrorism, threat management and strategic crime prevention. However, these preventive and de-escalating benefits are not self-sustaining. They require a vigilant, enlightened society that identifies hazards at an early stage, communicates them and intervenes to reduce threats.

Reports such as this one on antisemitism in Switzerland provide a crucial foundation for ensuring the safety and security of particularly vulnerable minorities. The Report on Antisemitism is of critical significance for another reason as well. What dangerous conspiracy narratives have in common is that they are based in antisemitism and deny the functioning rule of law. The rise of antisemitism endangers open society and the democratic order, and carries a considerable

threat of a few bad apples becoming many. That is reason enough to take a closer look, remain vigilant and respond appropriately to extremism wherever it develops.

Prof. Dr. Jérôme Endrass, Co-Director of the Forensic Psychology Working Group at the University of Konstanz. His work includes research into the deradicalisation of extremist offenders.



# 11. Appendices

## 11.1 Dates

Form	Phy.			Verb.			Com.			Pub.	Dam.	Graf.	PB.	Car.	Act.	Sen.	On.	Total
	A	A	S	O	A	S	O	A	A	A	A	S	O	Total	Total	Total		
General antisemitism	1	9	3	0	5	10	268	1	0	8	0	0	3	24	13	271	308	
Shoah denial/trivialization	0	4	0	0	1	2	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	39	46	
Israel-related antisemitism	0	0	0	0	0	0	57	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	58	58	
Antisemitic conspiracy theories	0	0	0	0	0	11	484	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	11	485	498	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>910</b>	

**Key:** Phy. = Physical assault / Verb. = Verbal abuse / Com. = Comments / Pub. = Public acts / Dam. = Damage to property / Graf. = Offensive graffiti / PB. = Posters/banners / Car. = Caricatures / Act./A = Actions / Sen./S = Sent items / On./O = Online.



## 11.2 Methods

### 11.2.1 How does the SIG find out about incidents?

**Reported incidents:** The SIG operates a reporting site for antisemitic incidents. Incidents that have been observed or experienced personally can be reported via a contact form or by phone or e-mail. These may include physical assaults, verbal abuse, graffiti, letters and messages, or posts or comments seen on the internet or social media. By following up contacts and conducting research it is possible to verify whether the incident occurred as described and whether it was definitely a case of antisemitism. If necessary, the credibility of witnesses or other parties involved may be investigated. Only once the verification process is complete is the incident added to the list of antisemitic incidents for the year concerned.

**Media monitoring:** The SIG also carries out monitoring of the media and records antisemitic incidents which are reported upon there.

**Online research:** The SIG carries out research on the internet, the social media and in the comment sections of the online media and records antisemitic incidents. The very nature of the internet makes it impossible to monitor all social media platforms and websites in full and record all incidents. Nevertheless, over the course of the reporting year this approach does provide an assessment of the triggers that cause antisemitic incidents, the basic mood among the public, who the authors of antisemitic comments are and the narratives they typically use.



## 11.2.2 Processes used in online research

Monitoring on the internet and social media is conducted as follows:

**Twitter and Facebook:** Monitoring of around 60 profiles which have a past history of posting antisemitic content. There is always a certain amount of flux in this, as some profiles get deleted while new ones are discovered and then included in the monitoring process.

**Online comments sections of the media:** Monitoring of comments sections on articles about subjects likely to generate antisemitic comments. These would include Jewish life in Switzerland, conflict in the Middle East, articles about well-known Jewish personalities and reports about major antisemitic incidents at home and abroad.

**Telegram:** Since May 2020, the SIG has been monitoring at least a dozen Telegram groups made up of Covid sceptics and other groupings critical of the measures imposed to control the pandemic.

**Websites:** The SIG monitors certain websites that have previously been reported for publishing antisemitic content or where antisemitic content has repeatedly appeared over a long period of time.

**Other platforms, e.g. Instagram and TikTok:** There are repeated instances of antisemitic incidents on these platforms too. It is difficult to extend the monitoring process to include these platforms as they demand a different approach. They only publish videos, which makes it difficult to categorize them geographically and be sure that there is a Swiss connection. As a result, the incidents from these platforms that are listed in this document have all been reported by third parties.

The general principle that applies to online monitoring is the more you look, the more

you'll find. The figures from online monitoring published in this report do, however, make it possible to conduct a valid analysis and identify trends and moods. Monitoring similar groups and profiles using similar resources allows a reasonable comparison with previous years to be made.

## 11.2.3 Geographical scope

This report lists antisemitic incidents which took place in the German, Italian and Romansh language areas of Switzerland in 2021. Incidents in the French-speaking part of the country are recorded by the Coordination Intercommunautaire contre l'Antisémitisme et la Diffamation CICAD. The incidents recorded have to have taken place in Switzerland or affect Switzerland in some way. Online incidents are of relevance if the author or recipient of a post is resident in Switzerland or if the organization operating the website is Swiss.

## 11.2.4 Nature of reporting

A fundamental difficulty associated with any reporting of antisemitism or other form of transgression is that incidents can only be recorded if they are actually reported or otherwise become known. In Switzerland as elsewhere, a large number of unrecorded cases must be assumed, which are neither reported nor prosecuted. There are various reasons for this: the victim may feel that there is no point in publicizing the incident or reporting it to the police, or the perpetrator may be a colleague or fellow student and the victim does not want to make their situation even worse for themselves.

It is of course almost impossible to estimate how many incidents go unrecorded. However, a study published in 2020 by the Zurich University of Applied Sciences, entitled "Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen von Antisemitismus unter Jüdinnen und Juden in der Schweiz" ("Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism



among Jews in Switzerland”), gives some insights into the context of the unrecorded cases. For example, victims would often come to the conclusion that it was not worth reporting an incident to the police or a specialist organization such as the SIG, either because of the time and effort involved, or the possible consequences, or for other reasons. It is of concern that these are often cases of verbal abuse and insults in public spaces and also in the workplace. The SIG therefore encourages members of the Jewish community to report antisemitic incidents to the SIG so that we can compile as complete a picture as possible.

## 11.2.5 Definitions: antisemitism, anti-Zionism, criticism of the state of Israel

### Antisemitism

#### Definition by the IHRA

The SIG uses the definition of antisemitism and illustrative examples provided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance IHRA. The definition is also recognized in most other European countries and used by most Jewish organizations in Europe. “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

Examples are:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion;
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective – such as, especially but

not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions;

- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews;
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust);
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust;
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations;
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g. by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour;
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

#### Recognition of the IHRA definition in Switzerland

The IHRA definition of antisemitism is now recognized and applied by 30 countries along with various cities and organizations. The IHRA, of which Switzerland is a member, approved this definition in 2016. The European Parliament called upon its member states to adopt it in 2017.

In response to a postulate by Council of States member Paul Rechsteiner, the Federal Council published its report on the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism in June 2021. In it, the Federal



Council acknowledged the value and practical relevance of the IHRA's working definition, which is not legally binding. The Federal Council further emphasised that the IHRA's working definition must be interpreted within the context of specific cases. All parties involved in this issue in the public and private sectors are therefore encouraged to familiarize themselves fully with this working definition and the debate surrounding it.

Of the major political parties in Switzerland, the Social Democratic Party SP officially recognized the IHRA definition in May 2019, the Free Democratic Party FDP in September 2021 and the Green Liberal Party in November 2021.

## Symbols

The SIG only classifies daubed or sprayed Nazi symbols such as swastikas or SS insignia as antisemitic if their use is directly or indirectly connected to Jewish people or institutions. For example, they would have to be applied directly to a synagogue or other building belonging to a Jewish institution, or in conjunction with Jewish symbols, or be interpreted as being anti-Jewish (indirectly) through the context.

## Criticism of the state of Israel

Criticism of the state of Israel or its politics is not generally antisemitic as long as the criticism is made in the same way that one would criticize any other country. Criticism of Israel is antisemitic if:

- double standards are applied by requiring of Israel a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation;
- equivalence is given to "Israelis" and "Jews";
- symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism are used to portray or characterize Israel or Israelis, such as through

the use of symbols and images traditionally associated with antisemitism (e.g. claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel);

- comparisons are drawn between contemporary Israeli policy and that of the Nazis.

## Anti-Zionism

Anti-Zionism refers to the rejection of the Jewish national movement (Zionism). The motives and rationales of anti-Zionists are wide-ranging and not bound up with any particular political parties or ideologies. It is not generally antisemitic to reject the ideology of Zionism. In reality, however, anti-Zionist comments are often made to disguise antisemitism. For example, instead of the antisemitic narrative of a "Jewish-controlled press", someone might say the "Zionist-controlled press", or make a comment like "I don't hate the Jews, just the Zionists". If "Zionists" are described in terms of classic antisemitic stereotypes, it is easy to see through the obfuscation. However, it is often necessary to check carefully whether a case of antisemitism exists or not. Sometimes it helps to know whether a person has previously made explicit antisemitic comments in the past.

## 11.2.6 Incidents and their categories (with examples)

Reports submitted and the results of research are categorized as:

**Incidents:** Cases of obvious antisemitism

**Borderline cases:** With these cases it is not possible to say without any doubt whether they are antisemitic or not, or various interpretations may be possible. They are therefore not counted as incidents.

**Cases** in which **no antisemitism** is present and which are therefore not included in the statistics.





**Incidents** are divided into the following sub-categories according to their content:

**General antisemitism:** These incidents involve classic antisemitic stereotypes, e.g. Jews are mercenary, Jews control the banks and the media or Judaism is the devil's religion;

**Shoah denial and trivialization:** This category includes denying that the Shoah (Holocaust) happened or trivializing or downplaying it;

**Israel-related antisemitism:** This is antisemitism linked to the state of Israel (see the section on "Criticism of the state of Israel" on page 31);

**Contemporary antisemitic conspiracy theories:** This category covers conspiracy theories that go beyond the classic "Jews rule the world" idea and have proliferated in recent times, e.g.: "The Rothschild family and the entrepreneur George Soros are responsible for the waves of refugees because they want to manipulate European ethnicity. They want to create a stupid 'Negroid mixed race' which is easier to control by the elite Jewish bankers." Or: "Jews invented the coronavirus so they can use vaccines to sterilize and kill people."

There are also categories for the different type of incident:

Physical assault, verbal abuse, comments, public appearances, damage to property, offensive graffiti, posters/banners and caricatures.

**Physical assault:** physical attacks motivated by antisemitism on people who are Jewish or presumed to be Jewish.

**Verbal abuse:** antisemitic abuse directly targeted at people who are Jewish or presumed to be Jewish, e.g. "F\*cking Jew", "Get in the gas chamber", "Shame Hitler missed you".

**Comments:** comments with antisemitic content not directly targeted at a specific person

**Public acts:** public demonstrations of antisemitic thinking, for example at demonstrations or by aiming Nazi salutes at Jewish people.

**Damage to property:** damage to synagogues, Jewish institutions, Jewish cemeteries or Jewish businesses where the motive can reasonably be assumed to be of an antisemitic nature.

**Offensive graffiti:** graffiti, painted images or stickers with obvious antisemitic content.

**Posters/banners:** posters or banners on public display with obvious antisemitic content.

**Caricatures:** caricatures based on antisemitic stereotypes, often mimicking the style of antisemitic cartoons from the first half of the twentieth century.

For some of the incident types (verbal abuse, comments and caricatures) a decision may be made as to whether they also belong in the sub-categories of action, sent item or online incident.

**Actions:** anything occurring as part of an interaction with people or buildings.

**Sent items:** anything sent to a person, i.e. letters, packages, e-mails, text messages, etc.

**Online:** anything occurring in the digital realm or on the internet, e.g. on a website, in the comments sections of online media, on social media such as Facebook and Twitter or Telegram.

An incident can only be categorized as one incident type. This ensures there are no duplicate entries. Where an incident could be placed in more than one category, the most serious is selected. For example, damage to property would take precedence over graffiti, and physical assault over verbal abuse.

Examples of incident types:

**Physical assault:** Four young people threw a full pot of yoghurt at the back of a Jewish man (wearing a kippah).





**Verbal abuse:** A man saw a Jewish woman on the street, spat on the floor, then performed the Hitler salute and shouted: “You f\*cking Jew”. Then he spat on the floor again and walked away.

**Comments:** In March, several employees made fun of Jewish people in a company break room and made antisemitic remarks. One of the employees present was Jewish, which they did not know.

**Public acts:** In addition to various abstruse theories, a public lecture on religion included a number of antisemitic statements and antisemitic conspiracy theories.

**Damage to property:** (Old example, as no property damage was reported in 2022.) A sharp instrument was used to etch antisemitic slogans and a swastika into the door of the synagogue in Biel.

**Offensive graffiti:** The phrase “Kein Jude in Schweiz” (no Jews in Switzerland [sic]), a swastika and SS runes are spray-painted on a bridge in Basel.



**Posters/banners:** A poster was discovered at Belvoir Park in Zurich warning of the “Jewish-capitalist New World Order” and referencing the “Great Replacement” theory.



**Antisemitic cartoons:** A cartoon was posted on Facebook claiming that Jews were responsible for the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. The men depicted are all drawn in the style of classic antisemitic caricatures.



## 11.3 Summary of incidents and analysis of the 2022 Report on Antisemitism

During the reporting year, the SIG recorded 57 antisemitic incidents in the German, Italian and Romansh language areas of Switzerland (not including online incidents). This represents a slight increase from the previous year (2021: 53). They included one physical assault, 16 cases of verbal abuse and nine cases of offensive graffiti. 853 incidents were recorded online, primarily on social media and in the comment sections of media outlets (an increase of around 6%). In total, this amounted to 910 incidents reported and observed within the examination period (2021: 859).

The recorded incidents (real world and online) were divided into four categories: general antisemitism (308 incidents), Shoah denial or trivialization (46), antisemitism related to Israel (58) and current antisemitic conspiracy theories (498).

In previous years, antisemitic incidents often occurred due to “triggers”. Triggers are international or national events, including media reports, that cause a spike in the number of antisemitic incidents for a limited period (usually a few days). This has changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the monitoring of Telegram groups. There have been and currently are two long-term triggers that directly or indirectly produce incidents of antisemitism on an ongoing basis: Covid and the war in Ukraine. This has also further increased the proportion of current antisemitic conspiracy theories among the total of online incidents. They accounted for 51% of online incidents in 2021, which increased to 57% in 2022.

The lion’s share of observed and reported incidents came from the Telegram messenger service (75%), representing a huge increase compared with 2021 (61%). The short message

service Twitter now accounts for only 17% (2021: 28%). The figure from Facebook (5.5%) has remained roughly the same and the comments sections of online media outlets have become almost irrelevant (1.7%). One reason for this is that almost no comments on Telegram are deleted, even if they contain hate speech. Another is that in Switzerland, as in other countries, an anti-state, anti-society and conspiracy-loving subculture has developed which communicates predominantly via Telegram. Many conspiracy theories with antisemitic content are shared in this environment

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, an active scene has developed in Switzerland which refuses to accept measures to contain the pandemic. In previous Reports on Antisemitism, they were referred to as “corona rebels”. However, many of its members were concerned with more than just the Covid measures from the start. They advocated and disseminated a wide range of conspiracy theories of various topics. With the beginning of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, elements of Russian propaganda were incorporated, and the priority also shifted from Covid to Ukraine. However, these individuals were not focussing on a new topic because they needed a replacement after Covid measures were lifted. In their minds, issues such as Covid, the war in Ukraine, etc. and the theories associated with them are interrelated. Simply put, it is a great battle of good versus evil. On one side, there are paedophile Satanists who want to oppress the world and reduce the population. On the other side are God-fearing men like Trump and Putin who fight for freedom and the protection of children.

Antisemitic incidents in the Telegram groups studied – all of which belong to this new subculture – have increased steadily over the past three years. The proportion of incidents in the Telegram groups among the total number of online incidents has also increased massively. While they accounted for 61% in 2021,



they have risen to 75% in 2022. The absolute number of Telegram incidents also increased steadily and significantly: from 135 in 2020 to 445 in 2021 and finally 640 last year.

Not all people in this scene have antisemitic prejudices or are decidedly antisemitic. However, it is striking that, in contrast to the previous two years, antisemitic posts now go practically unopposed – even in cases of overt antisemitism. This may be because antisemitism has actually gained majority support in this scene. On the other hand, the limits of freedom of expression are extremely broad for these people, and also include hate speech.

The most serious incidents in 2022 were:

- In February, four young people threw a full pot of yoghurt at the back of a Jewish man (wearing a kippah) in Zurich.
- In February, a man saw a Jewish woman on the street in Zurich, spat on the floor, then performed the Hitler salute and shouted: “You f\*cking Jew”. Then he spat on the floor again and walked away.
- In April, Jewish guests at a hotel in Davos, identifiable as devoutly religious by their clothing, were in front of the hotel entrance on the evening after Shabbat. A group of about six young men passed by and shouted “Heil Hitler” and “The Jews belong in the gas chamber”.
- In June, a pupil said to a Jewish fellow pupil at a school in the canton of Zurich: “Hitler should have killed all Jews”. Hitler and swastika pictures were also often posted in the class chat.





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