



antisemitismus
meldestelle

Antisemitic cases 2023 in Austria

ISRAELITISCHE KULTUSGEMEINDE WIEN



Inhalt

1. Summary	3
2. Commentary/analysis	6
2. 1. A year dominated by 7 October	6
2. 2. Changes in the breakdown of incidents	6
2. 3. New challenges for antisemitism work.....	7
2. 4. Anti-Israel agitation	9
2. 5. Antisemitism in education	10
2. 6. Antisemitism not related to 7 October	12
3. Categorisation of antisemitic incidents and examples	13
3. 1. Assaults	13
3. 2. Threats	14
3. 3. Damage and desecration	14
3. 4. Abusive behaviour	16
3. 5. Mass mailings	17
4. Sub-categories	18
4. 1. Coronavirus-related antisemitism	18
4. 2. Israel-related antisemitism	18
4. 3. Antisemitic conspiracy theories	19
4. 4. Shoah relativisation/denial	19
5. Ideological background	20
6. Methodology	21
6. 1. Working definition of antisemitism	21
7. The situation abroad	23



The full report, including all links and further information, can be found at [antisemitismus-meldestelle.at](https://www.antisemitismus-meldestelle.at)



Imprint

Publisher: Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien
1010 Vienna, Seitenstettengasse 4

Tel. +43/1/531 04-0
E-Mail: office@ikg-wien.at

Vienna, 1. edition 2024

The report can be downloaded on
[antisemitismus-meldestelle.at](https://www.antisemitismus-meldestelle.at).

Editing: Antisemitismus-Meldestelle der IKG Wien
Layout & Lektorat: IKG Wien

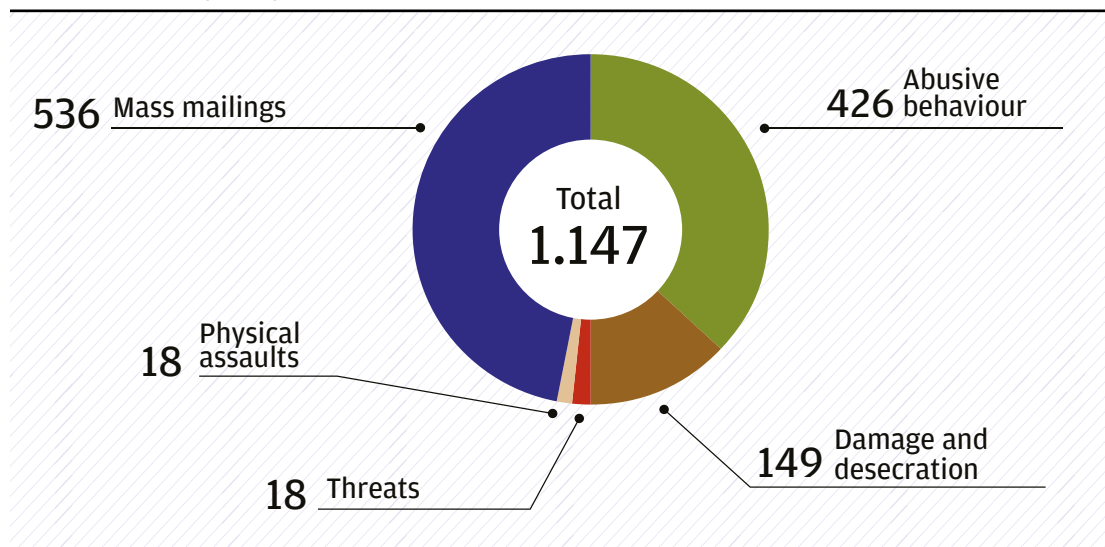
Coverimage: IKG Wien

1. Summary

During the 2023 calendar year, a total of 1147 antisemitic incidents were reported to the Reporting Centre for Antisemitism (Antisemitismus-Meldestelle) of the Jewish Community of Vienna (IKG Wien). This is an increase of 59.5% compared with the previous year (719 incidents), with the number of incidents even surpassing the previous all-time high of 2021 (965 incidents). 2023 was dominated by the major attack on Israel by Palestinian terrorist organisations on 7 October and the explosive increase in antisemitism that followed world-wide. The genocidal massacre marked a dramatic turning point: up until 6 October, the average number of reports per day had fallen from 1.97 in 2022 to 1.55. In the period from 7 October to 31 December, there was a fivefold increase in antisemitic incidents per day, up to 8.31.

This report does not constitute a complete overview of antisemitism in Austria. As in previous years, it must be assumed that there is a larger number of unrecorded incidents, and, in the light of the special circumstances and challenges of recent months (see p. xx), that the number is far greater than in previous years. The report counts only those antisemitic incidents which were reported and which, following evaluation by the experts at the Antisemitism Reporting Centre, were verified as being clearly antisemitic under the [IHRA definition](#).

Antisemitic incidents (in total)



Of the 1.147 incidents, there were:

18 physical assaults (2022: 14)

18 threats (2022: 21)

149 incidents of damage and desecration (2022: 122)

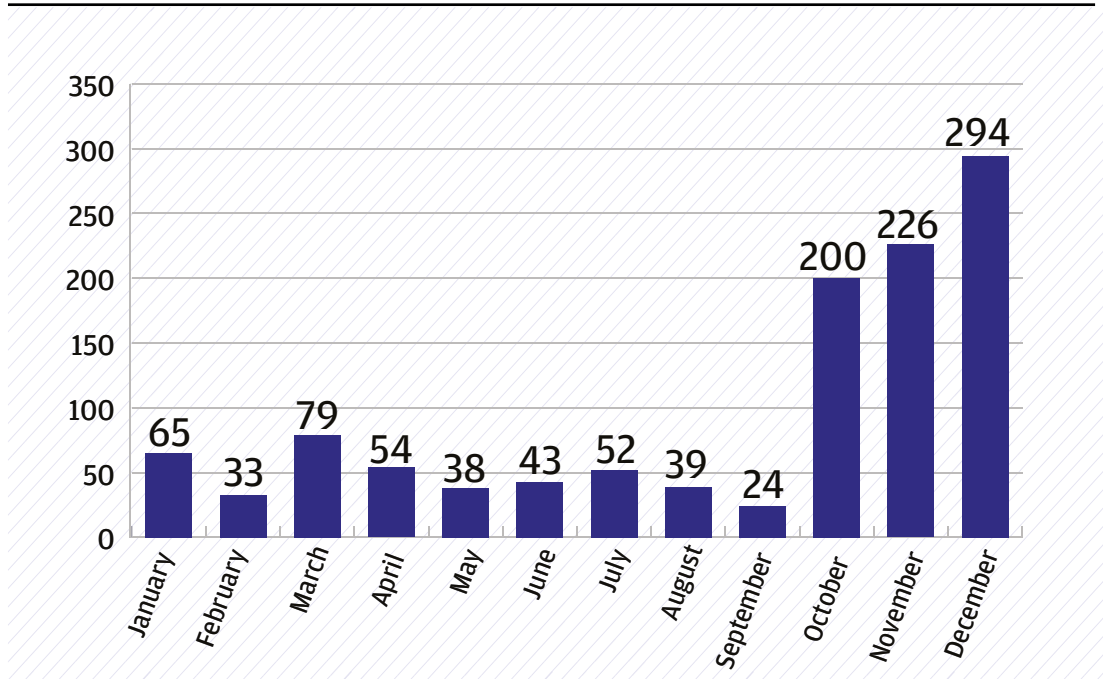
536 mass mailings (2022: 140)

426 incidents of abusive behaviour (2022: 422)

A recognised system of categorisation that has been in use for many years and is now established in several countries ensures that the results can be compared internationally (see the [“Categorisation”](#)).

Before the start of the Gaza war in October, only the months of January (the last month to have an increased number of incidents connected with Covid, after nearly 3 years) and March (when there were state elections in Lower Austria and the Austrian Freedom Party, the FPÖ, joined the

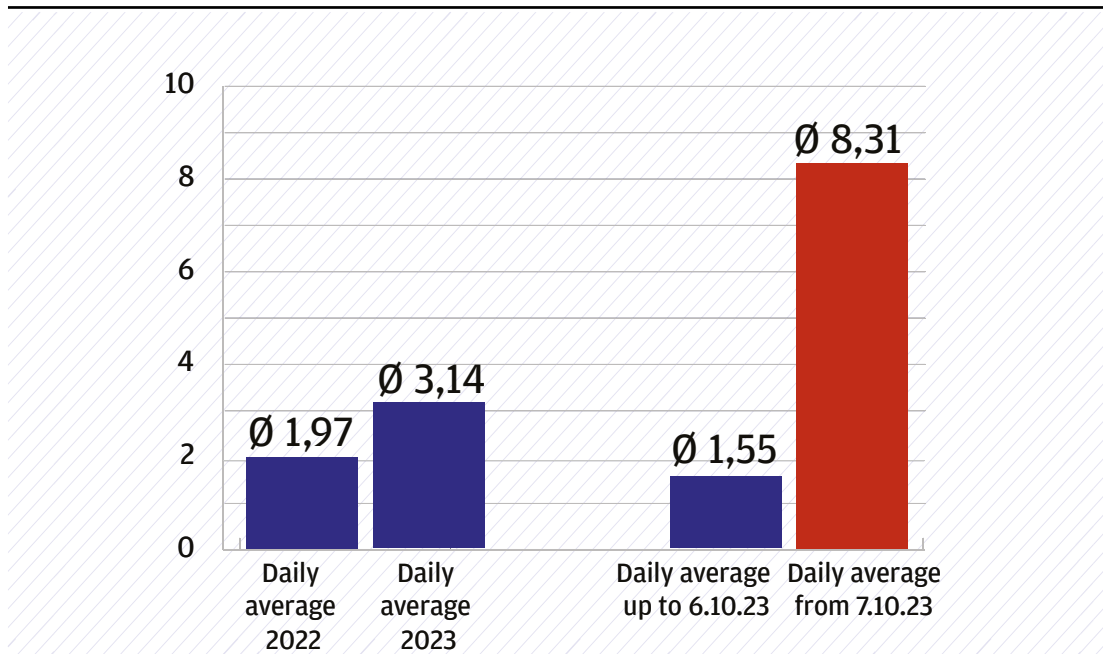
2023: Antisemitic incidents (in total)



coalition) were noteworthy; the numbers in the other months were around the long-standing monthly average or even below it. Indeed, September saw only 24 incidents recorded, the third-lowest number since the Reporting Centre was set up ([July 2019](#): 21 incidents; [April 2020](#): 23 incidents).

In other words, before 7 October, the average figure was 1.55 incidents per day, i.e. about 21% below the average for 2022. The average of 8.31 reported incidents per day from 7 October onwards represents a more than fourfold increase on the average for 2022 (+322%), and a more than fivefold increase on the daily average for the period from 1 January to 7 October (+436%).

Antisemitic incidents - average per day

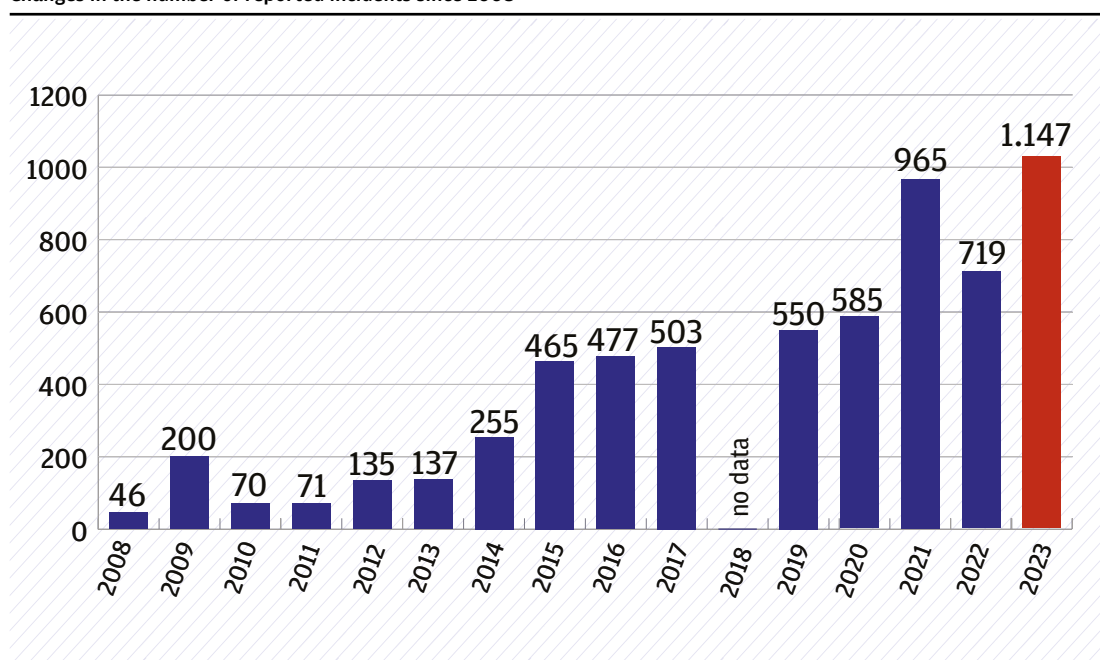


Left: Daily average 2022 and 2023

Right: Daily average up to/after 7. October

Whereas, in 2022, most incidents were reported on the basis of “**personal perception**”, this time the highest number of incidents originated in **social networks**. The latter more than doubled (from 212 to 514), while the former increased by a little over a quarter from 284 to 360. The number of antisemitic **emails** nearly **doubled** (from 90 to 178), while other online incidents fell from 83 to 77. However, it should be noted that, in discussion forums or on social media threads, there can often be several antisemitic comments – sometimes dozens – but they are only recorded in the statistics as one incident. Antisemitic **letters** were reported less frequently; the number fell from 39 in 2022 to seven in 2023. However, the number of antisemitic **phone calls** doubled from five to ten, while instead of two there was now only one reported **newspaper article** with antisemitic content. Unlike last year, when there was one reported incident on **TV**, nothing was reported in 2023.

Changes in the number of reported incidents since 2008



Changes in the number of reports (*no report for 2018)

2. Commentary/analysis

2.1. A year dominated by 7 October

It is now more than five months since, on the morning of 7 October 2023, Palestinian terrorist organisations led by Hamas launched a major multi-layered attack on Israel and thus started a war which continues to this day. The main element of this attack was – under the smoke-screen of thousands of rockets fired on civilians all over Israel – a meticulously planned invasion of Israeli territory. As part of this invasion, the terrorist commandos carried out a systematic, deliberate, pogrom-like massacre in neighbouring Israeli communities and at a music festival. At least 1139 people were murdered, many brutally – and the age, gender, faith or nationality of the victims was of no relevance. More than 200 people were abducted into Gaza and, as of today, more than 130 still remain in the clutches of various terrorist organisations in Gaza. The full extent of the bestiality only became clear in subsequent days when not only were details of the sometimes extremely difficult forensic examinations made public, but also footage recorded by the Palestinian terrorists themselves, documenting in detail the systematic atrocities inflicted on civilians in Israel, including mass rapes and mutilations.

Past experience has shown that any escalation in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict automatically leads to a flare-up of antisemitism worldwide. In May 2021, when Palestinian terrorist organisations in Gaza fired rockets into Israel, and during the resulting 11-day conflict, the Reporting Centre for Antisemitism recorded a huge leap in antisemitic incidents in Austria, which was addressed in detail in that year's [annual report](#) (e.g. p. 6) and also in the previous [half-yearly report](#). A further example is the war between Hamas and Israel in early 2009. That was largely responsible for the then fourfold increase in antisemitic incidents reported in Austria (see diagram on p. 6).

2.2. Changes in the breakdown of incidents

Compared with previous years, there were a few changes in the proportions of different categories of incident.

Assaults increased again compared with 2022 (from 14 to 18 assaults), but fortunately not by as much as might have been feared in the light of the prevailing mood and events in other countries. However, as is also the case with threats, the problem of unreported incidents which we refer to several times in this [report is significant](#).

We can only speculate about the causes, but the situation is probably due to a combination of various mitigating circumstances: these include the decisive way that the Austrian government and Austrian politicians in general spoke out against the terror attacks by Hamas, the resolute opposition to antisemitism expressed by numerous representatives of political and other organisations and, of course, the excellent work by the security forces in protecting Jewish lives, in a professional partnership with the IKG as ever. Not least, the moderating influence of the Islamic faith community may have helped ensure that the number of demonstrations in Austria glorifying violence has turned out to be far fewer than, for example, in Germany, France or the United Kingdom (see [“The situation abroad”, p. 23](#)).

It is pleasing to see, in contrast to the general trend, a fall in the number of recorded **threats** from 21 to 18.

The number of documented **incidents of damage** and desecration increased relatively little compared with the overall number of incidents (from 122 to 149).

The biggest change was in the number of incidents characterised by the Reporting Centre for Antisemitism as **mass mailings** (from 140 to 536), a more than threefold increase. This means that, for the first time, this category accounts for the largest number of incidents. This is due mainly to the explosive increase in various forms of hate speech on social media which, in numerous cases, crossed the line into criminality – be that in the form of glorification of terrorist offences, incitement, or breaches of the ([now amended](#)) [Prohibition Act \(Verbotsgesetz\)](#). Certain characteristics of the channels for distributing this kind of material, which have multiplied exponentially, will be described in more detail in the Commentary section ([Anti-Israel agitation](#)).

On the other hand, the number of incidents categorised as **abusive behaviour** remained almost unchanged; it rose from 422 in 2022 to 426, meaning that, for the first time, this category is not the largest.

2. 3. New challenges for antisemitism work

The first thing to say is that, from 7 October itself, the team at the Reporting Centre could barely keep up with documenting all the incidents. Their main priority was to look after the victims. So from 8 October, they introduced a triage system: in order not to compromise on supporting victims, some compromises had to be made on documenting antisemitic incidents; since this could never be at the cost of quality, or of caring for the victims, the team had to accept that, until about January 2024, not all reported incidents would be included in the statistics, especially not all the online incidents.

2. 3. 1. An enormous number of reports – an enormous number of unreported incidents

It is an inevitable part of incident reporting that not all incidents can be recorded; nevertheless, the aim is to build a picture of the situation that is as comprehensive and representative as possible – hence the note at the start of this report that it is not a complete reflection of antisemitism.

However, for 2023, these statistics conceal an abnormally large number of unreported incidents, due to various different factors.

In addition to the traditionally high number of **unreported antisemitic incidents**, the massive leap in reporting from October onwards added a new dimension, resulting in a large number of incidents which **could not be processed**. Only those incidents are included in the annual report which could be verified by the experts at the Reporting Centre as unambiguously antisemitic, according to the [IHRA definition of antisemitism](#).

It should also be noted that, as in earlier, sometimes similarly explosive increases in manifest antisemitism, the proportion of **reports assessed as not antisemitic** during the verification process grew disproportionately, further increasing the workload.

The enormous number of unreported incidents – the scale of which is hard to estimate – was further inflated by another factor: specific antisemitic incidents were often described in the media which unfortunately had never been reported to the Reporting Centre. In personal conversation, we also often heard about attacks which in fact would have fallen within the scope

of the Reporting Centre. In some cases it can be assumed that the victims were unaware of the low threshold set by the Reporting Centre for Antisemitism; but in many cases, the overwhelming motivation is **nervousness or even fear** of exposing themselves again to an experience which would be, at best, unpleasant and at worst **seriously traumatising**. Even though the importance of reporting antisemitic incidents is regularly publicised, the Reporting Centre's main priority is to **support victims properly and professionally**; all they can do, therefore, is keep appealing to victims – irrespective of whether incidents are documented – to make use of the many available support services, especially psychosocial services. See also [last year's annual report on 2022](#), in which the guest column on p. 21 addressed precisely this subject.

2.3.2. Psychological emergency

The reluctance around reporting incidents directly affecting individuals can be attributed, at least in part, to a **climate of fear** among Jews after 7 October. On the one hand, they were deeply shocked and unsettled by the meticulously planned and systematic manifestation of murderous antisemitic hatred by Palestinian terrorist organisations, one that was unprecedented in both scale and character. On the other, within just a few hours anti-Israel activists were celebrating the massacre online and on the streets, and already protesting against Israel. In Vienna, people danced on and around the memorial for the victims of Nazi military justice [on the Ballhausplatz](#); a short time later, a cavalcade of cars adorned with Palestinian flags drove honking through Vienna's 2nd district, known for its above-average number of Jewish inhabitants.

Aside: the employees at the Reporting Centre themselves were also more deeply **affected psychologically** than in previous crises. The major terrorist attack of 7 October and the weeks that followed could not fail to affect even people who deal with antisemitism on a daily basis. Our team was equally distressed by the numerous pictures, reports and stories detailing the acts of brutality. Large parts of the Jewish community in Austria are affected by the crisis, if only indirectly – via friends, acquaintances or relatives in Israel.

2.3.3. Antisemitism and how it adapts

As if all that were not enough, antisemitism is an **extremely adaptable phenomenon**; this was observed during Covid, when, at every phase of the pandemic ¹, people managed to make use of different elements from the rich store of millennia-old resentment against Jews and very quickly adapt them. There is a certain reciprocity here, because antisemitism itself is always looking for **new ideas and ways to express itself**, flourishing particularly in periods of social, economic or geopolitical upheaval – not only, but especially, if the State of Israel is involved or believed to be involved.

In order to be able to recognise these **mutations and variations** (in narrative, diction, symbols, style), and subsequently determine the antisemitic nature of incidents, it is essential that the team at the Reporting Centre keep up to date at all times, even though this takes even more time – be that by ramping up their internal knowledge management, interacting even more with partner organisations and people from the scientific or academic communities or recruiting more staff to the Reporting Centre team.

¹ These phases can be divided into: outbreak; lockdowns; Covid prevention measures in general; vaccine development; Israel's leading role in widespread vaccination; compulsory vaccination.

In addition to the recording and processing of statistics for actual incidents, surveys and studies such as the [Antisemitism Study](#) published by the Austrian parliament in April 2023 for the year 2022 help to give a more comprehensive view of antisemitism.

2. 4. Anti-Israel agitation

Ever since the start of the Israeli counter-offensive, numerous anti-Israel demonstrations have taken place regularly in several Austrian cities. Our findings show that antisemitism was disseminated at almost all of them. Even leaving aside the slogan “[From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free](#)”, which is now widely referred to even in the media, there was almost always some content which could be clearly categorised as antisemitic. It is by no means a question here of criticism or even abuse directed at Israel, which – even when hate-filled or mendacious – cannot in itself be classified as antisemitic. We are talking more about comparisons relativising the Shoah or [comparing Israel with the Nazi regime](#), crude conspiracy theories, traditional anti-Judaism, content that demonises the Jewish state, and numerous more or less [overt calls to commit acts of terrorism](#).

As already mentioned, the never-ending stream of incidents meant that it was not possible to check every anti-Israel demonstration for antisemitic content. The Reporting Centre for Antisemitism is, by definition, dependent on receiving reports, which is why – as in the case of antisemitic content at demonstrations during the pandemic – we owe huge thanks to **members of civil society**, who sift through the speeches at these gatherings, which take place several times a week and in several cities across Austria, and draw our attention to antisemitic content, or report it online.

The leading characters at these protests were individuals known to us from our [earlier reports](#), belonging to the **anti-imperialist milieu around the antisemitic BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions against Israel)**; they appear in the name of various different organisations that often overlap in their membership (particular mention should be made of the Dar al Janub group, which regularly **glorifies terrorism**), with the so-called Palestine Solidarity Austria serving as a kind of umbrella organisation; many of the members of these organisations were also noted for their extensive activism in the movement against Covid-prevention measures and they also play a leading role in the pro-Putin scene.

Regardless of the current situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories, the activities of these few individuals, who appear in different groups that are largely identical in their membership and ideas, continue throughout the year. The vast majority of them are **Austrian citizens from the extreme left**.

They have now been joined by groups whose activism is mainly aimed at escalating the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In particular, these are **Islamists**, including members of the Arab Palestine Club and Palestine Youth Austria. There have been relatively few participants from the Turkish nationalist movement; there has been no widespread, organised participation, such as we saw in 2014 during the last major war between Israel and Palestinian terrorist organisations in Gaza. At that time, the AKP lobbying organisation UETD (Union of European Turkish Democrats) brought more than 11,000 people on to the streets of Vienna. The anti-Israeli demonstrations this time are far from being on the same scale.

A new feature following 7 October is the participation of a number of groups traditionally associated with the left wing. However, the debate about the terrorist massacres and the Israeli counter-offensive has meant that [ideological divisions](#) within left-wing movements

and political parties, which had been disregarded for a long time, have now opened up into chasms which in many cases have suddenly proved to be unbridgeable.

Something which at first sight seems bizarre, but which is not unusual internationally, is the anti-Israel activism by queer and feminist **groups regarding themselves as progressive**. Suddenly all kinds of organisations have popped up on social media with snappy names like [Queers4Palestine](#) or Alerta Feminista, whose philosophy must presumably be completely incompatible with the often strongly Islamist motivation behind the anti-Israel protests. On social media, there have already been cases of homophobic hostility by Islamists against their fellow demonstrators, and in general they protest alongside, rather than with, one another.

The same applies to certain extreme left-wing groups which, on the one hand, take to the streets against Israel alongside Turkish nationalists and AKP-associated activists, but, at the same time, protest loudly about Turkey's military attacks on the Kurds which are going on at the same time.

Like when right-wing extremists and anti-imperialists protested together against Covid measures and for Russia, the explanation probably lies in the **common denominator**: antisemitic resentment, which appears to turn natural enemies into partners who at least tolerate one another.

Another trend that is being observed around the world is the participation, or rather the parading, of Jewish and supposedly Jewish activists. The main aim here is to try to defend the anti-Israel protest movement from accusations of antisemitism. Regardless of the fact that most of the organisations presenting themselves as "Jewish" are made up of non-Jews (which is both a fact and [how they describe themselves](#)), the individuals who are being paraded do not represent the fundamentally and traditionally very heterogeneous Jewish perspective. For example, one representative of one of the two anti-Zionist groups which promote themselves as "Jewish" is indeed Jewish but is a long-standing senior member of the antisemitic BDS group.

Especially in the first weeks of the conflict, it was striking that there was an exponential increase in social media accounts associated with the groups listed above. In addition to accounts belonging to regional "branches" of existing groups, suddenly Instagram accounts sprouted up which sometimes covered a range of groups that could be subsumed under buzzwords like "Social Justice" or "Students for Palestine" – and this also happened all over the world. Their distinguishing feature is that they remain totally anonymous and publish completely identical posts. Material of all kinds is also extensively promoted and redistributed between the groups, and this is intended to give users the impression that the community is larger than it is.

2. 5. Antisemitism in education

2. 5. 1. Antisemitism in schools

The annual report for 2022 already referred to the problem of **antisemitism among children and young people** ([see, e.g., p. 8](#)), not only, but including in schools. The 7 October attacks brought into the open numerous problems that were already known about or suspected and that have also been [discussed at length in the media](#). As we mentioned at the start, the Reporting Centre was probably only made aware of very few of these occurrences. Incidents here vary particular-

ly widely in nature, ranging from **offensive comments, bullying, abuse and graffiti to assaults including physical injury.**

In the end, the Reporting Centre becomes aware of these incidents from various different sources:

- incidents that are directly reported to the Reporting Centre;
- incidents that become known about from reporting in the media;
- statements by various stakeholders (e.g. teachers), referring directly and indirectly to much greater number of incidents, with varying degrees of specificity.

Because it is not possible to verify the latter, only incidents in the first category can be included in the statistics. Even in cases where the victims could have been identified – and, theoretically, actively contacted – from the context or from hearsay, we respect the decision which, at least by implication, has been made not to take any further action. Not least, the risk of **re-traumatisation** or **re-victimisation** plays an important role here. Instead, the IKG tries, in its internal and external publicity and in addition to the usual call for antisemitic incidents to be reported, to draw attention to the availability of **support and care services.**

In general, antisemitic incidents at school are particularly delicate in a number of respects, which is why those victims who actually do take the step of reporting them not only attach particular importance to confidentiality – which is in any case a high priority for the Reporting Centre – but, for understandable reasons, also demand absolute anonymity. In some situations in the past, it has even happened that parents only contact the Reporting Centre for the purpose of documenting incidents after they have already changed their child’s school because of antisemitism.

It must also be emphasised that far from every antisemitic incident in schools requires Jewish students to be present. Often, antisemitic comments or abuse at school were either directed at non-Jewish fellow pupils or teachers, or they arose in different situations in everyday school life.

The two main factors accounting for the virulent nature of antisemitic behaviour – especially, but not only, after 7 October – among children and young people can be found in two different environments:

Firstly, many of the ideas, opinions, stereotypes and narratives are picked up in the family, where in some cases they are drummed into the children. Often this can be spotted when children regurgitate certain arguments in the form of clichés which are inappropriate for their age.

Secondly, social media platforms, especially TikTok, have again proved to fan the flames of antisemitism. Their widely discussed, algorithm-driven mechanisms have triggered a dangerous and destructive effect which is being increasingly noticed and debated, especially in western societies. “Since the terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel on 7 October 2023, social networks have been playing an important and often underestimated role in spreading terrorist propaganda, fake news, hatred for Israel, antisemitism and conspiracy theories,” says, for example, the Anne Frank Educational Centre in [its latest report](#), which discusses and analyses this subject.

Following the strategy paper on antisemitism in schools, entitled “[Preventing Antisemitism by Education](#)”, which we referred to in last year’s report, we can only welcome the [programme of measures for schools](#) that is designed to focus on combating antisemitism and preventing extremism and was passed unanimously by the National Council in mid-December. Similarly, in the light of the scale of the phenomenon after 7 October, Education Minister Polaschek decla-

red that “all our work on antisemitism in schools [...] needs to be completely re-thought.” He said that a working group has already been set up to work on new ways of conveying the message and teaching children about democracy.

The [LIK RAT](#) dialogue project, an initiative by IKG Vienna, continues to be busy and successful and to play an important role in the context of work to [prevent antisemitism](#).

2. 5. 2. Antisemitism in universities

One hotly contested front (and the term should be interpreted literally in this context) in anti-Israel activism that has been widely highlighted in the media since 7 October is the often violent harassment of Jewish students at [universities](#). Even setting aside the high-profile events at elite American universities, universities in the West in general appear to be often problematic, and in some cases even dangerous, territory for Jewish students.

Unlike many universities in other countries, University of Vienna had [strong words](#) to say about Israel-related antisemitism at the start of the latest escalation. The Austrian Students’ Union – traditionally a powerful institution in our fight against all kinds of antisemitism – proved to be even more vehement in its [condemnation of antisemitic incidents](#).

Even though Austria therefore offers a much better environment than other countries, even here, Jewish students found themselves facing a **climate of insecurity** or even **intimidation** where they experienced **little empathy**. The intimidation is not always reflected in the number of incidents but is nonetheless troubling. Stories about changed behaviour on the part of their fellow students became the rule rather than a hoped-for exception. The direct consequence of this was that Jewish students became increasingly withdrawn and, for the most part, stopped wearing religious or other symbols which showed them to be Jewish. This climate became more tangible in direct interactions, not only with acquaintances, or even friends, but also in various WhatsApp groups within and outside the university context, where a lack of empathy was often replaced by sometimes open hostility, regardless of whether this was directed specifically at Jewish individuals or was more general.

Developments at a few universities proved to be yet more problematic, especially at the private [Central European University](#) in Vienna. The sometimes open antisemitism directed at Jewish students there in both words and deeds was, in its intensity, on a par with the worst incidents anywhere in the Anglo-Saxon world. Here again, the leadership did not want to deal with the problem and allowed [antisemitic activities](#) to continue, which attracted additional activists from the antisemitic BDS milieu described above, who, for their part, further inflamed the situation with a range of campaigns and events.

There were also antisemitic incidents at other academic institutions, for example, at the University of [Applied Arts in Vienna](#), where there was even an assault on the individual identified as President of the Jewish Students Union.

In view of such [antisemitic activities](#), the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) decided to address the subject of [antisemitism at Austrian universities](#) in a new project, not least because, according to ÖAW President Heinz Fassmann, “there is no loud chorus of opposing voices in our country.”

2. 6. Antisemitism not related to 7 October

Apart from the exceptional situation that began in October, there were relatively few statistical outliers in relation to antisemitism last year. However, it is worth highlighting the period of coalition negotiations following the state elections in Lower Austria, during which IKG President Oskar Deutsch spoke critically about the possible [participation in the government of the FPÖ](#), because of its close associations and sometimes correlation with neo-Nazism, Shoah relativisation etc. There followed a torrent of abuse, both on social media and in the form of mail to the IKG. This is reflected in the form of a sudden leap in the number of incidents to the historically very high figure of 79 in the month of March.

3. Categorisation of antisemitic incidents and examples

An important element in the recording, analysis and distribution of data relating to antisemitism is the categorisation of antisemitic incidents. For two decades, various EU institutions have highlighted the lack of comparability at international level as a significant problem in the fight against antisemitism and they have consistently sought standardisation.

To that end, guidelines have been published on the categorisation of antisemitic incidents. These were themselves greatly influenced by the UK's CST, which has [special experience in this field](#). Until recently, the recommendations had only been adopted and translated by the "Antisemitism Observatory" in [Italy](#) (with slight amendments) and RIAS (Antisemitism Research and Information Centre), based in Germany; the latter organisation has been using them in its antisemitism work for the last eight years. The IKG Reporting Centre for Antisemitism works particularly closely with RIAS. An initiative to further strengthen international cooperation has been launched.

Recently, the Polish organisation CZULENT also used this categorisation for the first time in its annual report for 2022, published at the end of April.

Adopting the categories and terminology of the EUMC Guidelines for antisemitism work in Austria in 2019 marked another step forward in international efforts to combat antisemitism.

The following section explains the categories and clarifies them, using examples from the past year. For further details about the methodology employed by the Reporting Centre for Antisemitism and the international context, please see the relevant section [\(from page 22 onwards\)](#).

3. 1. Assaults

Any form of physical attack on people or buildings, with or without weapons. Even a failed attempt at an assault (be that because the victim defends himself or was able to flee) is also included in this category. The same applies when objects are thrown at people, even if they miss their target. (The EUMC Guidelines, CST and RIAS also recognise a category called "Extreme Violence" as an aggravated form. We do not see the need to differentiate between the latter and "assaults" in Austria, see also the section on "Antisemitism work on an international level").

Vienna, June 2023: At the Vienna Pride event, a Jewish participant suffered a blow to the back of the head and his kippah was knocked off. (At the same event, another participant shouted "Shit Jews" at a group of young Jewish participants and showed them his middle finger. Since this was a separate incident, it was included in the statistics as "Abusive behaviour".

Vienna, June 2023: A group of young people (three boys and a girl) who were recognisably Jewish because of their clothing were on their way home in the evening when a car stopped beside them and a number of men in it shouted “Free Palestine!” The young Jews took no notice and continued on their way. Shortly afterwards, the car stopped beside them again, accompanied by another car; ten or twelve people jumped out, hurled abuse at the young Jews and threatened that it would “end badly” if they didn’t “disappear from their street”. The aggressive group surrounded the young people. Further terms of abuse such as “son of a whore”, “faggot” and “filthy Jew” were followed by blows aimed at the faces of the young Jews. When a neighbour called out of a window that he would call the police, the attackers went off.

Vienna, October 2023: In the early morning, a stone was thrown through the window of a kosher butchery. The male attacker shouted “Allahu Akhbar!” and ran off.

Vienna, October 2023: A woman who was recognisably Jewish because of her clothing was on her way to work. A man coming the other way hit her on the stomach with his hand as he walked past; then he went on quickly, without saying anything.

Vienna, November 2023: In the night of 1 November, unnamed [people started a fire in the Jewish part of the Central Cemetery](#). A lobby in the ceremonial hall was completely burnt down. Valuable ancient books and a Torah shrine were destroyed. Not far from the site of the fire, a (backwards) swastika was sprayed on the cemetery wall, along with the presumably misspelt word “Hitel”.



3. 2. Threats

A threat is defined as: an explicitly formulated threat of physical violence against individuals or institutions that are Jewish or perceived to be Jewish; the threat is specific and may be either written or verbal. Bomb threats and fake bombs targeting Jewish institutions are also categorised as threats.

Vienna, November 2023: A man who was recognisably Jewish because of his clothing was walking along the street when another man who looked threatening approached him and shouted at him: “You’d better look where you’re going, you shit Yahud (N.B.: Arabic for Jew)! You loser!”

Vienna, November 2023: When some schoolboys wearing the kippah boarded a tram, they were threatened by three young girls. They said things like “We’ll kill you!”, “You’ll see!” They also tried to provoke the Jewish passengers with slogans like “Free Palestine!”.

Vienna, November 2023: An unknown person phoned an institution belonging to the Jewish community several times and said only: “Kill the Jews!” and then immediately hung up again each time.

3. 3. Damage and desecration

The category of damage and desecration covers non-life-threatening assaults on an object. Damage and desecration also includes graffiti and the application of stickers and posters.

Vienna, March 2023: An [advertising poster](#) at the Jewish Museum in Vienna was defaced with antisemitic graffiti. Firstly, the state of Israel was linked to National Socialism by writing the name with two sig runes, and several swastikas were painted on the poster; there was also the slogan “Zionism = Fascism” and, on the left-hand side, Israel was deleted and replaced by “Palestine!”



Vienna, April 2023: A house wall was daubed with antisemitic abuse: “Jews are paedophiles and child-abusers = disgusting”



Vienna, May 2023: On the last day of a three-day military escalation between Hamas and Israel in May, unknown people daubed [“Free Palestine Nazis”](#) on the Theodor-Herzl steps (or rather on the memorial plaque), a few metres from the City Temple. The City of Vienna’s Emergency Assistance group arranged for the graffiti to be removed the same day.



Vienna, July 2023: The monument to Austrian Jewish victims of the Shoah on the Judenplatz was daubed with neo-Nazi symbols. A complaint was made and the people who reported the incident themselves tried to remove the symbols after photographing them; the City of Vienna and the listed building authority were informed.



3. 4. Abusive behaviour

The category “Abusive behaviour” covers antisemitic abuse, expressions, comments and messages; these may be expressed verbally (face-to-face, by phone) or in writing (letter, email, online media, other digital communication channels) and are directed at a specific person or institution.

St. Pölten, Vienna, May 2023: For the third time, the loudspeaker system on an ÖBB train was hijacked to play recordings of, among other things, extracts from [speeches by Adolf Hitler](#), including shouts of “Heil Hitler” and “Sieg Heil”. The two offenders were identified and they were [convicted](#) in January 2024.

Vienna, October 2023: At an anti-Israel demo in the heart of Vienna, there were numerous manifestations of antisemitism, some of which were recorded [in this video](#). It includes numerous examples of glorification of, and incitement to, terrorism; Jihadi war cries; comparisons between Israel and the Nazis, including talking about the “Israeli Wehrmacht”; denial of the right of Israel to exist; various conspiracy theories; one depiction of the antisemitic accusation of God-murder on a poster and several relativisations of the Shoah, some of them serious.

(Please note: in accordance with the Reporting Centre’s methodology, the demonstration is still only recorded as one incident, in this case as “Abusive behaviour”)

Vienna, November 2023: [Flyers about the Israelis](#) kidnapped during the major attack by Palestinian terrorist organisations on 7 October were defaced with “Juda Verrecke” and a swastika.



Linz, December 2023: A man who was recognisably Jewish because of his clothing walked past a group of young people. One of the young people shouted “Shit Jew” in his direction. When the victim of the abuse stopped to talk to the young man, his companions also began shouting antisemitic abuse.

The victim thought the situation was becoming too dangerous and walked quickly away.

Vienna, December 2023: Unknown people blocked access to the [Shoah Wall of Names Memorial](#) in the Ostarrichipark by using barrier tape. They put up a sign with a fake City of Vienna logo. The text on the sign trivialised the Shoah by, for example, comparing the victims of the Shoah with the dead in the Middle East conflict.

3. 5. Mass mailings

This refers to written antisemitic material sent to at least two addressees and usually targeting a large group of recipients. It includes publications (online and offline, e.g. newspapers, magazines, blogs), documents sent to multiple recipients (letters, emails) and the social media platforms which are rapidly replacing the latter two.

March 2023: Antisemitic letter sent to IKG President Oskar Deutsch (one of very many letters during this period), which was also sent to the media and to Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen.

Lieber Herr Deutsch, Sie sind Österreicher und nicht Israeli. Und Sie sind auch nichts anderes als alle Österreicher. Ihre sogenannten jüdischen Wurzeln sind kein Privileg, sondern ein Schande, weil Sie sich als eine vom Schicksal ausgewählte Rasse halten. Vielleicht wäre es nicht schlecht, wenn Sie sich gegenüber den „normalen Menschen“ öffnen würden, dann müssten Sie nicht Ihre Einrichtungen von Polizeitruppen bewachen lassen. Dass Juden bekanntlich gescheiter sein sollen, liegt wahrscheinlich daran, dass sie sich gegenüber der anderen Bevölkerung abgeschottet hat. Und wenn heute ein Familienvater sich gegen die Islamisierung in den Grundschulen äußert, ist er Rassist. Daraus folgt natürlich, dass die Juden auch Rassisten sind, da sie in ihrer Gemeinschaft keine anders „Gläubigen“ duldet.

Viele Grüße,

December 2023: The following email was sent to the IKG and other recipients.

Sieg Heil ihr Juden-Löser!!!

Das schöne Hakenkreuz Symbol steht für Freiheit, ist ein Symbol unserer ursprünglichen Kultur und Heimat. Niemand wird uns mehr verbieten, dieses Symbol einzusetzen, sowie wird bald wieder die schöne Fahne in Schwarz, Weiß und Rot mit dem schönen Hakenkreuz Symbol im Wind wehen.

December 2023: A [notorious female activist](#) in the antisemitic BDS movement posted one of the dozens of posts that were reported as relativising the Shoah and comparing Israel with the National Socialists.



November/December 2023: A prominent anti-Israel activist shared posts relativising the Shoah and comparing Israel with the National Socialists many times.



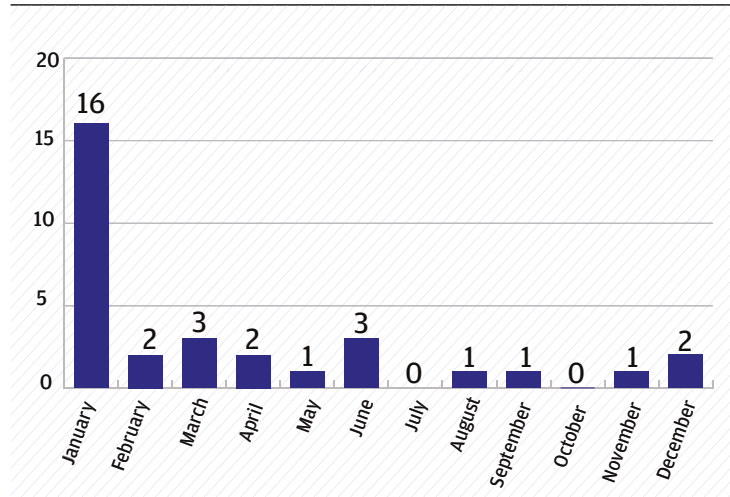
4. Sub-categories

In addition to the main categories, the Reporting Centre for Antisemitism also collects other data. We believe that the following analysis of sub-categories is particularly interesting and meaningful.

4.1. Coronavirus-related antisemitism

As mentioned in the commentary, there has been a very sharp and equally pleasing fall in the numbers in this sub-category, which was added in 2020. January was the exception here and accounted for half of the total of 32 Coronavirus-related incidents reported over the course of the whole year.

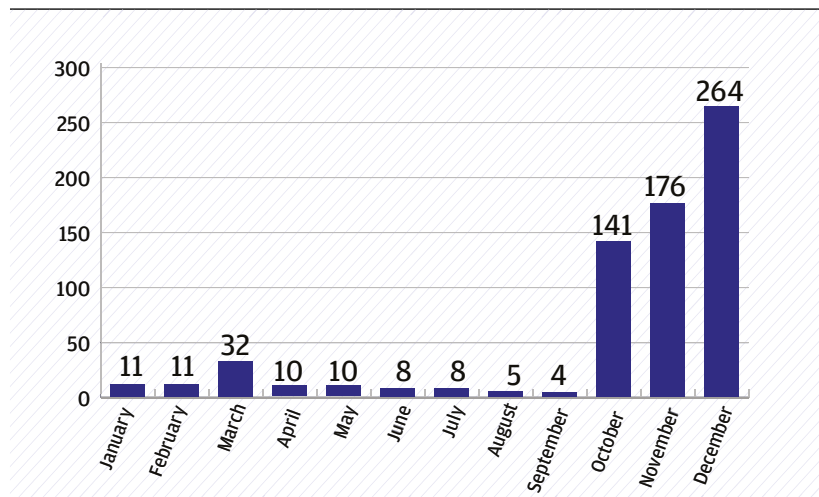
2023: 32 cases of Coronavirus-related antisemitism



4.2. Israel-related antisemitism

With the exception of March, until 7 October on average far fewer Israel-related incidents were recorded. The March blip is largely attributable to antisemitic abuse aimed at Jewish representatives in Austria after the FPÖ joined the coalition in Lower Austria. However, compared with the last quarter of the year, this figure – which is historically high – is vanishingly small. Even the previous record high in May 2021 (76 incidents, including several physical assaults, in the context of the 11-day war by Hamas against Israel) seems tiny compared with the period from 7 October onwards.

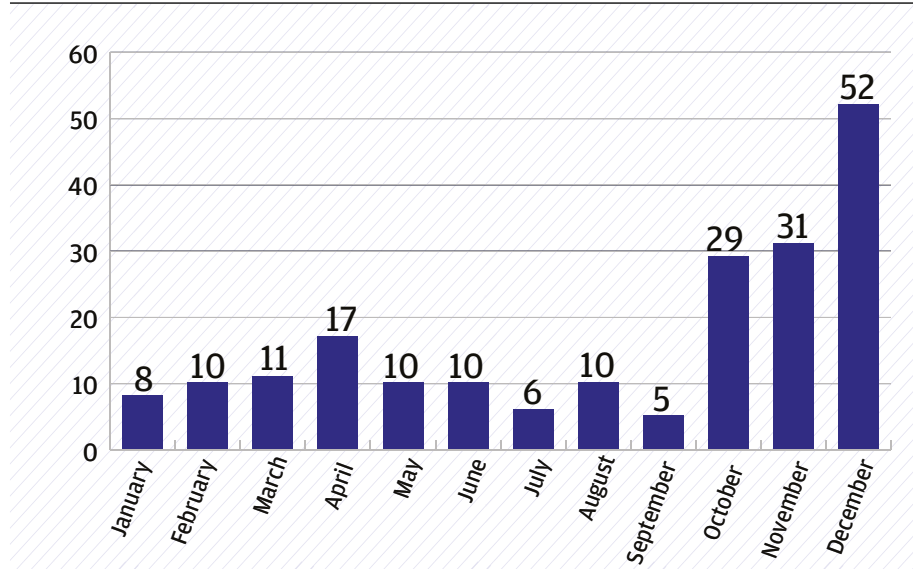
2023: 680 cases of Israel-related antisemitism



4. 3. Antisemitic conspiracy theories

Along with the rise in Israel-related incidents, there was also a rapid increase in the spread of antisemitic conspiracy theories after 7 October. Whereas, from January to September, the monthly average was roughly the same as that in 2022, from October to December the figures even exceeded the monthly records set during the pandemic, during which there was no shortage of conspiracy theories.

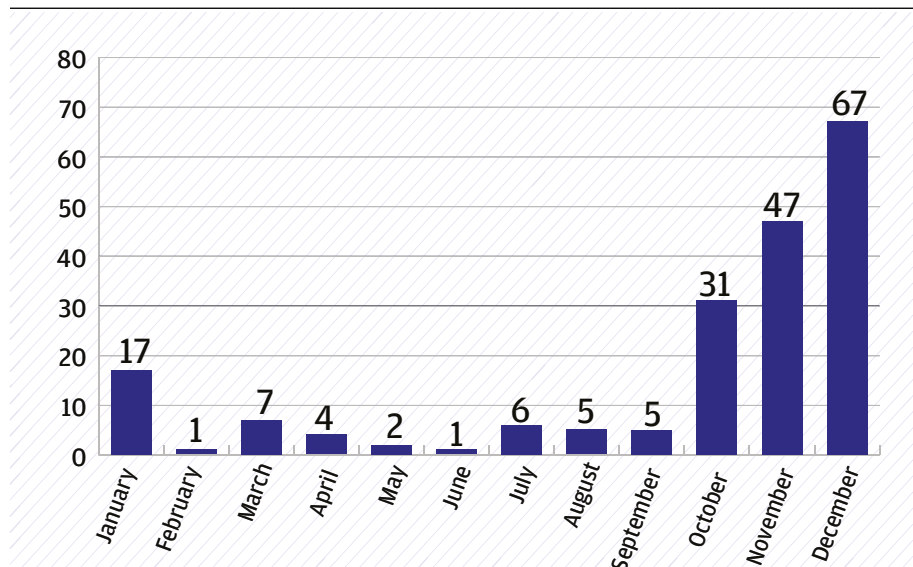
2023: 199 cases of Antisemitic conspiracy theories



4. 4. Shoah relativisation/denial

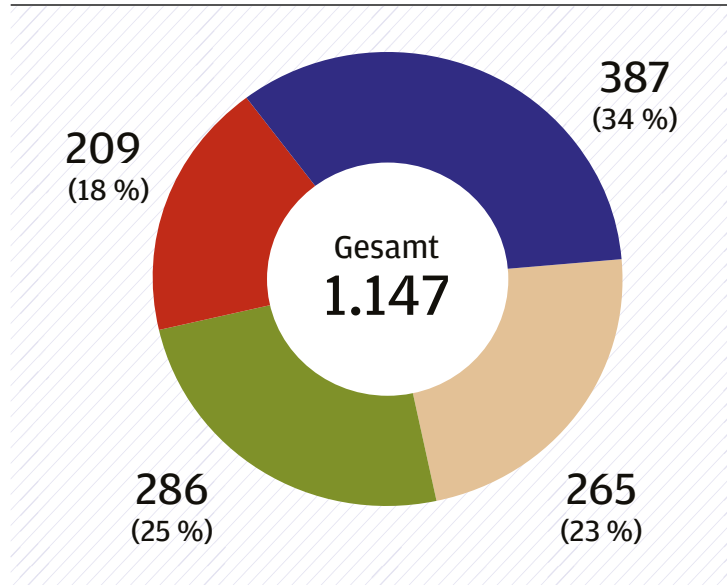
After an increase in the number of cases of Shoah relativisation/denial in January, in parallel to what is so far the last statistical outlier for Covid-related antisemitism, the former tailed off from April – until 7 October. As the war continues, there has been a linear increase in the number of incidents in Austria, influenced particularly by the accusation of genocide made against Israel which appeared first in anti-Israel propaganda and later in media reporting and is gaining more and more ground – an accusation often accompanied by perfidious comparisons between the state of Israel and the Nazi regime.

2023: 193 cases of Shoah relativisation/denial

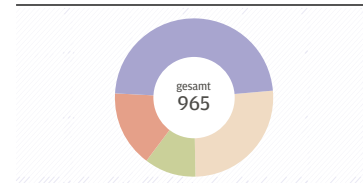


5. Ideological background

Antisemitic incidents - Ideological background



Antisemitic incidents 2022

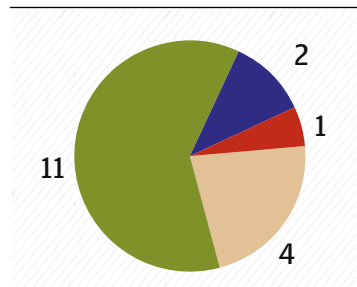


“**Right-wing**” covers all the incidents which could be attributed to the political or sociopolitical right-wing, right-wing extremism or (neo-)Nazism.

“**Left-wing**” covers all the incidents which could be attributed to the political or sociopolitical left-wing or left-wing extremism in all its forms (e.g. the antisemitic BDS movement and anti-imperialism).

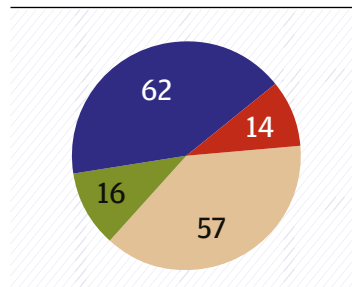
“**Muslim**” refers to antisemitic incidents perpetrated by people or organisations which can be attributed to Islam on account of their world view or religious beliefs, including Islamism.

Assaults



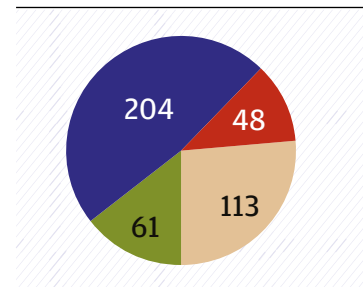
The proportion of perpetrators with a Muslim background remains unchanged from 2022 at nearly two-thirds. In the case of four assaults, the ideological background of the perpetrators could not be definitely ascertained, in two cases individuals with a right-wing background were involved and, for the first time since 2019, one assault by a perpetrator from the political left was recorded.

Deliberate damage and desecration



Here the relatively high number of incidents that could not be attributed to a particular ideology (57) is striking. What is remarkable is that 63 of the total of 92 cases of damage or desecration that could be attributed to a particular ideology were Israel-related, the same proportion as among those cases with no ideological attribution (32 out of 57).

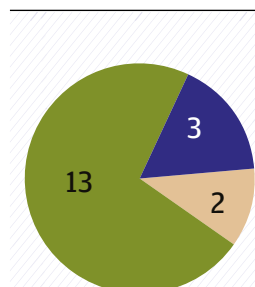
Abusive behaviour



For the first time, this was not the largest category in terms of numbers, but incidents with a clearly right-wing background continue to make up the majority. The discrepancy between this and the rapid increase in mass mailings is due to the categorisation (social media posts fall under the latter, link to the “Mass mailings” section), and also to the fact that incidents in this category are very often reported collectively – multiple incidents at a demonstration or in one online thread are processed separately but only count as one incident in the statistics.

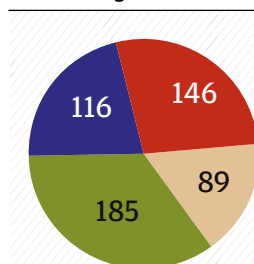


Threats



Despite the fall in the total number of threats from 21 to 18 year on year, the number of those with a Muslim background rose from 11 to 13. Three threats were uttered by perpetrators with a right-wing background and in two cases no attribution was possible. It is noteworthy that 12 of the 18 threats occurred after 7 October.

Mass mailings



It is the first time that this has constituted the largest category of incidents, and of those,

reported incidents with a Muslim background account for the majority, followed by those from the left-wing scene. The two together make up nearly 62% of the mass mailings. In most cases, this refers to antisemitic social media posts. For the first time, “right-wing” does not account for the majority of the ideologically attributable incidents, even though the number of them doubled from 83 in 2022 to 116.

6. Methodology

The main basis for our working methodology is the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.

6.1. Working definition of antisemitism

Ever since the working definition of antisemitism produced by the EUMC in 2005 with the help of numerous experts and civil society organizations was adopted in May 2016 by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), it has enjoyed ever-increasing international support at all levels. This is also the case in Austria, where the Council of Ministers (2017) and the Municipal Councils in Vienna (2018) and Graz (2019) have ruled that this working definition should be accepted. At EU level, in December 2018 the EU Council made a declaration to EU member states, calling on them to adopt the definition.² EU Commissioner Vera Jourovà had already called for the definition to be supported in January 2017.

Even though it is not legally binding, a definition of this kind is an essential weapon in the fight against antisemitism. It should help to achieve the intrinsically important international comparability that we have always called for and that is essential in order to make relevant findings and take the required targeted measures. Especially at national level, it also serves as a scientifically-based working tool: above all for organisations that are involved in the fight against antisemitism but potentially also for the forces of law and order which naturally often serve as the first point of contact for victims of antisemitism.

We should remember that by no means every antisemitic incident has legal implications; however, it is important that they are recorded efficiently in order to create as complete an overall picture as possible. This will in turn enable soundly-based decisions to be made by the relevant stakeholders, not least in terms of preventing antisemitism.

All the incidents reported to us are compared against this definition; not all of them meet its criteria and some are therefore not included in the statistics.

Here is the wording of the definition:³

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property and towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed

² [Combating antisemitism: Declaration by the Council](#)

³ [IHRA](#)

in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

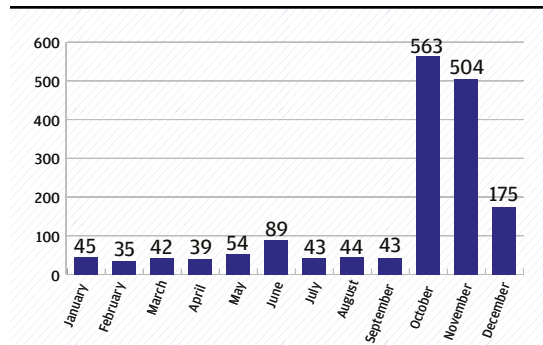
Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- 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 endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

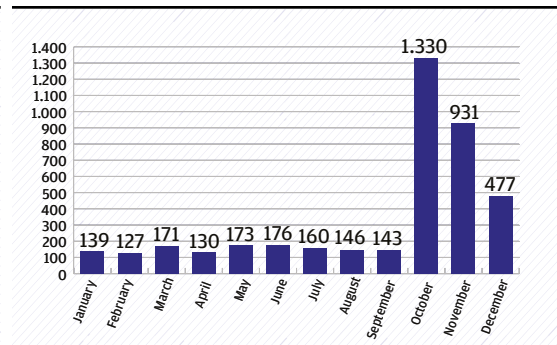
7. The situation abroad

At the time of going to press, data for 2023 is available from the [United Kingdom \(CST\)](#), [Italy](#) and French-speaking Switzerland. In particular, the growth in explicit antisemitism after 7 October could also be clearly seen in other countries. In Great Britain and France, there were terrible waves of violence. CST recorded 266 physical assaults, an increase of 96% over 2022. In France, the [SPCJ](#) reported an increase in assaults from around 40 per month in summer to 563 in October, 504 in November and 175 in December.

France: 1.676 incidents 2023

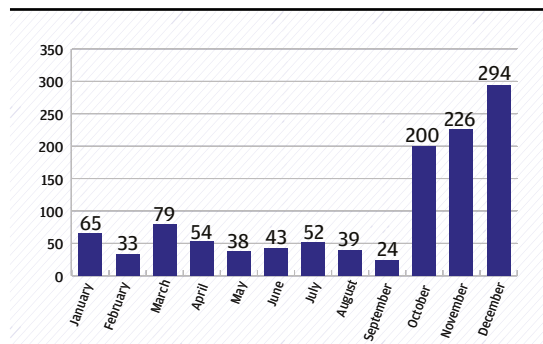


United Kingdom: 4.103 incidents 2023

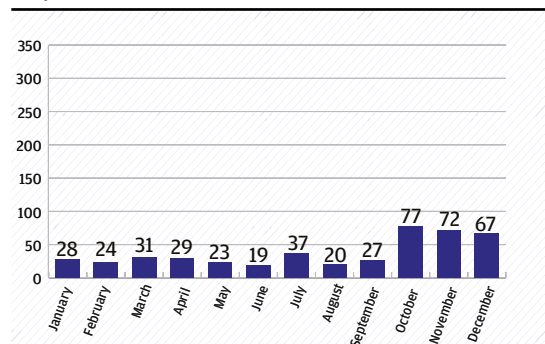


Please note the different scaling of the y-axis

Austria: 1.147 incidents 2023



Italy: 454 incidents 2023



www.antisemitismus-meldestelle.at