

## 2018's Top 11 Moments of Hate



### Sections

- 1 Pittsburgh: 11 Slain in Deadliest Anti-Semitic Attack in U.S. History
- 2 Surging Anti-Semitic Violence in Europe
- 3 Dehumanization of Immigrant Children
- 4 High-Profile Hate Crimes Dominate News
- 5 Jump in Number of Anti-Semitic Assaults
- 6 BDS Campaign Spawns Anti-Jewish Bigotry
- 7 Hurricane of Hate on Social Media
- 8 Explosion of Intolerance in Schools
- 9 Extremist Candidates on the Ballot
- 10 Malfeasance in the Middle East
- 11 Farrakhan Continues Spouting Hateful Rhetoric, Unchecked by Allied Progressive Leaders

## PITTSBURGH: 11 SLAIN IN DEADLIEST ANTI-SEMITIC ATTACK IN U.S. HISTORY

*As the year draws to a close, the experts at ADL annually recount the Top 10 moments in hate that challenged our nation and the world. This year, we are noting the Top 11 events as a tribute to the 11 people slain at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.*

The attack at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh sent shock waves across the country and around the world, and offered a reminder of the potent and lethal threat posed by right-wing extremists in America. Carried out by an avowed white supremacist, the attack was the single most deadly assault on the Jewish community in U.S. history. The perpetrator, Robert D. Bowers, read and shared anti-Semitic conspiracy theories on the internet and fulminated against Jews before, during and after the attack. But the shooting was not an isolated event. Weeks after Pittsburgh, the FBI and Ohio police stopped a man who planned to carry out another mass shooting against Jewish institutions in Toledo, Ohio, to show his support for the Islamic State terrorist network. Other threats against Jewish communities were reported in Los Angeles, Florida and elsewhere.

## **SURGING ANTI-SEMITIC VIOLENCE IN EUROPE**

In 2018, Europe was rocked by spasms of anti-Semitic violence across the entire continent, calling into question the fate of long-standing Jewish communities. In France, the country was shocked when an 85-year-old Holocaust survivor, Mireille Knoll, was stabbed to death and left to burn in her apartment by two Muslim suspects who targeted her because she was Jewish. Earlier in the year, an 8-year-old boy was beaten in suburban Paris reportedly for wearing a kippah. And in Germany, two men were whipped with a belt in broad daylight by three assailants who targeted them because one also was wearing a kippah.



People surveyed in exclusive CNN poll

**7,000+**  
across Europe

**1,000+**  
each from  
Austria  
France  
Germany  
Great Britain  
Hungary  
Poland  
Sweden

In addition to the physical violence, intolerant rhetoric spiked to near-crisis levels including disturbing examples of such anti-Semitism emanating from official sources and elected governments. In Britain, the Labour Party was consumed in a crisis as party leader [Jeremy Corbyn faced withering criticism](#) for not addressing anti-Semitism in his ranks and actually fanning the flames with a pattern of dismissive and insensitive remarks about the issue. As new revelations of anti-Semitism in the party leaked out week after week, Jews in the U.K. [took to the streets](#) to protest the failure of political leaders to address the problem.

And this was only the beginning. There were also concerns about Holocaust revisionism in Poland, with the passage of a [controversial bill](#) stating that Poles as well as Jews perished under the Nazis and criminalizing any speech stating otherwise. The law was [eventually watered down](#) after pressure from the United States and Israel. In Sweden, firebombs were planted outside a Jewish burial chapel. And in Hungary, Jewish philanthropist and Holocaust survivor George Soros [was scapegoated](#) for creating the country's immigration problems using traditional anti-Semitic tropes.

As [the frequency and intensity of anti-Semitic incidents rose across the Continent](#), the European Union released a [landmark survey](#) finding that European Jewish communities fear attacks and said other manifestations of hate were at an all-time high across the continent. Those findings were backed [up by a CNN poll](#).

## **DEHUMANIZATION OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN**

The [images were striking and shocking](#):

- Children as young as infants being forcibly separated from their parents at the border as part of the administration's expansion of the so-called "[zero tolerance policy](#)."
- Young boys and girls detained in cages, held in large prisons and herded [into tent cities](#).
- Children lost in the system with [little hope of reunification](#) with their families.

This catastrophic policy and human rights violation forced 2,500 children to be separated from their migrant parents. Those detained were subjected to inhumane and disturbing conditions. Even today months after the broad condemnation of the policy, some of the separated children have not been reunited with their families. The separation policy and the extreme rhetoric of political leaders caused anti-immigrant hate in America to [reach a fever pitch](#) and seemed clearly correlated to the [increase in hate crimes against Latinos](#) and other minorities.



## **HIGH-PROFILE HATE CRIMES DOMINATE NEWS**

Based on [ADL audits](#) and [FBI reporting](#), hate crimes and incidents have surged in recent years. These incidents traditionally impact a wide range of communities, and 2018 was no different. And where previously a single crime has dominated the national conversation, this year a number of high-profile hate crimes caught our attention. These incidents illustrated that prejudice remains a potent force with the potential to humiliate and harm individuals based on little more than their race, faith, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation or level of ability.



A gun lies on the ground inside a police barricade following the Oct. 24 shooting at the Kroger. (Timothy D. Easley/AP)

For example, Sam Woodward was charged with a hate crime for the stabbing death of his former high school classmate [Blaze Bernstein](#) who apparently was targeted because of his sexual orientation. The homophobic nature of the crime came into clear focus after Woodward's association with the violent [neo-Nazi group Atomwaffen](#) came to light in photos, social media and leaked Discord chat logs where he expressed hateful views.

In Tallahassee, a gunman killed two women and wounded five others at a [yoga studio](#). The gunman, Scott Beierle, appeared to have posted dozens of misogynistic and racist videos and songs to YouTube and SoundCloud before the attack. And in Jeffersontown, Kentucky a man was charged with hate crimes after [shooting and killing](#) two African-Americans at a grocery store. The accused shooter allegedly told people in the parking lot, "whites don't kill whites."

And this year saw a wave of homophobic and transphobic violence. For example, a 20-year-old woman in [New York City](#) was hospitalized and suffered a broken spine after a man attacked her on the subway and used anti-gay slurs. And a [36-year-old transgender woman from Detroit](#) was killed, and prosecutors have reason to

believe that the woman's gender identity was a motivating factor in her murder. In response, the LGBTQ nonprofit Anti-Violence Project called violence against trans women "a national epidemic."

## **JUMP IN NUMBER OF ANTI-SEMITIC ASSAULTS**

Violent hate crimes and assaults against Jews repeatedly made headlines in 2018. Law enforcement officials in New York City [responded to nearly 300 incidents](#) in the city alone, including [a wave of anti-Semitic attacks](#) targeting Orthodox communities. These crimes and other non-reported incidents have created environments of measurable anxiety in these neighborhoods:

- Two teenagers were arrested after a 16-year-old Jewish [boy was beaten](#) on Nov. 27 in Queens. Witnesses said the attack occurred after the victim exited a kosher restaurant when a group of at least 20 teenagers surrounded him, chanting "Kill the Jew";
- A 33-year-old Jewish man was [approached and punched](#) in the back of his head;
- A 62-year-old Brooklyn man was [attacked in broad daylight](#) by a livery driver as he was walking to services at a local synagogue; and
- A [teenager was assaulted](#) outside of a Queens yeshiva by a man who called him a "Jew boy."

Beyond these moments, many incidents of anti-Jewish harassment and intimidation that might not have risen to the level of a crime, but that generated anxiety and fear, were reported in NYC and many other cities across the country.

## **BDS CAMPAIGN SPAWNS ANTI-JEWISH BIGOTRY**

The so-called Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel remained a potent threat in 2018 even as it spawned hostility toward Jewish people. BDS efforts seek not a legitimate resolution to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict by recognizing the rights of both people to self-determination,

but instead endeavor exclusively to delegitimize the Jewish state and undermine the prospects for peace through intimidation, mischaracterization and slander. At ADL, we have increasingly observed their efforts foster unwelcome environments for Jewish people in a variety of venues, and generate hostility and discrimination more broadly.



*Chalk writing appeared around SFSU Feb. 23 with anti-Zionist messages, the same day that a letter from SFSU President Les Wong assured students that Zionists are welcome on campus. (Photo/Courtesy SF Hillel)*

At New York University, after the student government passed a resolution supporting BDS, the Bronfman Center for Jewish Life was **temporarily closed** in response to threatening Twitter posts by a student who expressed “a desire for Zionists to die.” At San Francisco State University, the president **issued a campus-wide apology** to Jewish students who felt alienated and threatened on his campus due to the actions of BDS supporters. At California Polytechnic Institute in San Luis Obispo, student groups issued a list of demands that included an increase in funding for all cultural clubs, “with the exception of organizations that are aligned with Zionist ideology.” We also saw a new type of boycott when a University of Michigan professor **refused to write letters of recommendation** for qualified students seeking to study abroad in Israel, creating a sense of isolation among some Jewish students on campus.

While BDS pressured numerous companies to stop doing business in Israel, nearly all declined to act based on their assessments of the facts and the realities of BDS campaigns. [Airbnb was one unfortunate exception](#). It succumbed to pressure to remove all rental listings from Jewish settlements in the West Bank and, despite its claims, produced no evidence of an actual process that examined the facts, engaged various stakeholders or evaluated the issue in an objective manner.

## HURRICANE OF HATE ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Facebook's "war room" at its headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif. The repercussions of social media companies' inability to handle disinformation and hate speech have manifested themselves abundantly in recent days. *Monica Davey/Epa, via Rex*

Many have noted about the abundance of intolerance on social media platforms. In 2018, more attention was focused on this pattern including the breadth of hate speech. An inquiry found [nearly 12,000 posts on Instagram](#) repeating the anti-Semitic charge that Jews were involved in the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Numerous news reports [detailed the horrific propaganda spread against the Rohingya community on Facebook](#) – and the lethal consequences of such incitement. Even as YouTube [removed a number of hateful videos](#), the platform also garnered notoriety as one of its leading celebrities Pewdiepie drew widespread criticism for

his [promotion of other YouTube videos that spread anti-Semitism and white supremacist themes](#). And even as these platforms sought to manage these issues, their parent companies, such as Google, struggled to combat [racial discrimination](#) and [sexual harassment](#) within their ranks.

And we know, such online rhetoric can manifest in real-world violence. Before carrying out his shooting in Pittsburgh, white supremacist shooter [Robert Bowers](#) had posted anti-Semitic comments on Gab, a social media site [frequented by right-wing extremists](#). The vast majority of the shooter's posts were anti-Semitic in nature, using messages such as "Jews are the children of Satan," "kike infestation," "filthy EVIL jews [sic]" and "Stop the Kikes then worry about the Muslims." Just one day before the shooting, ADL released [a new report](#) showing how white supremacists and others on the so-called alt-right were using social media to amplify their hate-filled views about Jews in an attempt to intimidate them before the mid-term elections.

## **EXPLOSION OF INTOLERANCE IN SCHOOLS**

When boys in the senior class at Baraboo High School outside Milwaukee posed in a pre-prom photo [making a Nazi salute](#), it served as a stark reminder of rising intolerance in K-12 schools. Their display prompted a school investigation and led the district to consider more Holocaust education for its students. In 2018, there were [regular reports of anti-Semitism occurring in public and parochial schools](#), capping an ongoing trend over the last several years as [ADL found that such incidents had nearly doubled since 2017](#).

Unfortunately, anti-Semitism was not the only form of hate that seeped into schools. In rural Oregon, [gay and lesbian high school students were targets of homophobic slurs](#). And, on occasions when the principal in this North Bend School District needed to discipline gay and lesbian students, he assigned them to read passages of the Bible. Across the country, [a Muslim elementary school](#)

[student](#) received letters with hateful and threatening language deposited in her storage cubby in Framingham, Massachusetts.

We even got the black kid to throw it up [#barabooproud](#)



11/11/18, 8:56 PM

Twitter: @CarlySidey

## EXTREMIST CANDIDATES ON THE BALLOT

A record number of right-wing extremists and outspoken bigots made their presence felt in mainstream American politics, and a record number of them [ran for office in 2018](#). More than 1.8 million Americans voted for known extremists and bigots who were running for national offices, and in races for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House, extremists on average pulled in 29 percent of the vote. The sole winner of the night was [U.S. Rep. Steve King of Iowa, who embraced overtly white nationalist rhetoric](#). Others were less successful. Arthur Jones, the former American Nazi Party leader, lost his bid for Congress in Chicago, but still garnered 26.5 percent of the vote. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theorist John Fitzgerald also lost but managed to gain 28 percent of the vote in his California district. Maria Estrada,

a Democratic candidate who called Zionism “religious fanaticism” lost her bid for a seat on the California State Assembly.



## MALFEASANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East remains a conflict zone on multiple fronts -- from the fighting still shaking Syria over Assad's rule, the horrific civil war pulverizing the people of Yemen, and Iran and its terror proxies cultivating unrest through intimidation and violence in Gaza, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and other hotspots.



These conflicts have continued to spill out beyond the region. Iran remains the leading exporter of anti-Semitism and the number one state sponsor of terror worldwide. The Islamic Republic continues to provide financial support and training for terror groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad and others. [Authorities arrested Iranian agents who were surveilling Jewish and Israeli institutions.](#) [French authorities averted a terror attack that Iranian agents were planning to perpetrate in Paris](#) and [Danish authorities did the same later in the year.](#) And ongoing [human rights violations](#) by Iran against its minority communities remained a serious concern as the rights of women, workers, homosexuals, juveniles, religious and ethnic minorities all were brutally suppressed.

At the same time, other countries from the region also generated challenges beyond borders. Israel revealed that Hezbollah had been burrowing underground tunnels from Lebanon to inside Israel, demonstrating its continued intention to strike at Israeli civilians. Even as rumors circulate about a potential rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Israel, [the official textbooks in Saudi Arabia continue to foment anti-Semitism.](#) Qatar lent its official imprimatur to a book fair that included [heinous examples of hate](#) and its Al Jazeera network continued its long-standing policy of subjective reporting that seemed designed to inflame rather than inform its viewers. And [Turkish President Erodgan maintained his posture as a bomb-thrower](#), leveling conspiratorial accusations against George Soros and making other unfounded and wild charges against Israel and Jews that evoked stereotypes rather than statesmanship.

## **FARRAKHAN CONTINUES SPOUTING HATEFUL RHETORIC, UNCHECKED BY ALLIED PROGRESSIVE LEADERS**

Louis Farrakhan, the notorious anti-Semitic leader of the Nation of Islam, has used his pulpit to demonize Jews and the LGBTQ community for decades. This year, his attacks continued while a number of progressive movement leaders and politicians aligned with Farrakhan failed to denounce his hate.

Farrakhan [delivered an hours-long speech](#) at a Nation of Islam event that included his typical patina of anti-Semitism, homophobia and misogyny. Disturbingly, some progressive leaders and local politicians were in the audience, including Women's March Co-President Tamika Mallory. Women's March Board Members Linda Sarsour and Bob Bland lauded Farrakhan on social media before and after the speech.

Then, in October, [Farrakhan compared Jews to termites](#). This hateful rhetoric is unacceptable, as is progressive leaders' failure to denounce it. As [one leader](#) attempted to apologize for her failure to call out anti-Semitism in a timely fashion, she extraordinarily did so while evoking the classic anti-Semitic trope of [dual loyalty](#).

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As we look to and prepare for 2019, we will continue our work to stop the defamation of the Jewish people, and to secure justice and fair treatment to all. Together, we have the power to speak out against anti-Semitism and bigotry – and while we have accomplished a great deal in 2018, there's much more work to be done for an ever more just, fair, and kind society.