Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2019

Sections

1 Executive Summary
2 Major Findings
3 Themes and Trends
4 Methodology
5 Policy Recommendations
6 Take Action
7 Acknowledgements
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year, ADL’s (Anti-Defamation League) Center on Extremism tracks incidents of antisemitic harassment, vandalism and assault in the United States. Since 1979, we have published this information in an annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents.

- In 2019, ADL tabulated 2,107 antisemitic incidents throughout the United States. This is a 12% increase from the 1,879 incidents recorded in 2018 and marks the highest number on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979.

- Of the 2,107 incidents recorded in 2019, 1,127 were cases of harassment, a 6% increase from 1,066 in 2018, and 919 were cases of vandalism, a 19% increase from 774 in 2018. The 61 incidents of antisemitic assault (a 56% increase from
39 in 2018), involved 95 victims and led to five deaths. More than half of the assaults nationwide took place in the five boroughs of New York City.

- There were three major attacks on the Jewish community in 2019: A white supremacist opened fire at the Chabad of Poway, California, on April 27, killing one. Two individuals, at least one of whom was associated with an antisemitic Black Hebrew Israelite sect, attacked a Jewish grocery store in Jersey City, New Jersey, on December 10, killing three. On December 28 an individual attacked a Hanukkah party at the home of a rabbi in Monsey, New York, with a knife, resulting in four injuries and one fatality. The assailant was charged with a federal hate crime, but has since been declared unfit to stand trial and was ordered committed to a psychiatric facility for continued evaluation. State charges are still pending.

- In 2019, ADL recorded 270 antisemitic incidents attributed to known extremist groups or individuals inspired by extremist ideology. This represents 13% of the total number of incidents.

- K-12 schools, as well as colleges and universities, continue to experience a significant number of antisemitic incidents. ADL recorded 411 incidents at K-12 non-Jewish schools in 2019 (up 19% from 344 in 2018), and 186 incidents at colleges and universities (down 10% from 201 in 2018).

- In 2019, there were 234 reported incidents at Jewish institutions such as synagogues, Jewish community centers and Jewish schools, a decrease of 12% from 265 in 2018. 171 were incidents of harassment and 60 were incidents of vandalism. There were three incidents of physical assault, one of which was the fatality at the Poway synagogue shooting. Fifty of these incidents were perpetrated by extremists.

- 171 antisemitic incidents in 2019 involved references to Israel or Zionism. Of those, 68 took the form of white supremacist groups' propaganda efforts, which attempt to foment anti-Israel and antisemitic beliefs. Most of the remaining incidents were expressions of anti-Israel animus that
incorporated antisemitic imagery or harassment and demonization of Jewish students for their real or assumed connection to Israel.

- ADL has included a comprehensive set of policy recommendations to help civil society, governmental and technology sector leaders fight the scourge of antisemitism. These recommendations, found at the end of this report, focus on assessing and combating the rise of online antisemitism, which, although not tracked in this report beyond specific instances of direct targeting, ADL has analyzed in other reports.

- The complete dataset of antisemitic incidents for 2016-2019 is available on ADL's H.E.A.T. Map, an interactive online tool that allows users to geographically chart antisemitic incidents and extremist activity nationally and regionally. Some details have been removed from the incident listings to protect the victims' privacy.

MAJOR FINDINGS

In 2019 ADL tabulated 2,107 antisemitic incidents throughout the United States. This number, a 12% increase from the 1,879 incidents recorded in 2018, is the highest on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979.

**Harassment:** 1,127 incidents were reported as harassment, defined as cases where one or more Jewish people reported feeling harassed by the perceived antisemitic words, spoken or written, or actions of another person or group. Acts of harassment increased by 6% from 1,066 in 2018.

**Vandalism:** 919 incidents took the form of vandalism, defined as cases where property was damaged in a manner that harmed or intimidated Jews. Swastikas, which are generally interpreted by Jews to be symbols of antisemitic hatred, were present in 746 of these incidents. Acts of antisemitic vandalism increased 19% from 774 in 2018.
Assault: 61 incidents took the form of assault, defined as cases where people's bodies are targeted with violence accompanied by evidence of antisemitic animus. Antisemitic assault increased 56% from 39 in 2018. Eleven of the 61 assaults were perpetrated with deadly weapons such as guns or knives. The 61 assaults resulted in 95 victims, including five fatalities.

Incidents occurred in every contiguous U.S. state, including the District of Columbia. The states with the highest incidents were New York: 430, New Jersey:
345, California: 330, Massachusetts: 114 and Pennsylvania: 109. Combined, these states account for nearly 45% of the total number of incidents.

Incidents were highest in March (210), May (216) and October (225); and were lowest in January (134) and February (136). As usual, incidents tended to be lower in summer months.

Antisemitic incidents occurred in a variety of locations:

- Public areas, such as streets and parks: 655 incidents, an increase of 38% from 476 in 2018.
- Non-Jewish K-12 schools: 411 incidents, an increase of 19% from 344 in 2018.
- Private businesses: 257 incidents, an increase of 22% from 211 in 2018.
- Homes and residences: 239 incidents, a decrease of 13% from 276 in 2018.
- Colleges and universities: 186 incidents, a decrease of 10% from 201 in 2018.
- Jewish institutions and schools: 234 incidents, a decrease of 12% from 265 in 2018.
- Other locations: 125 incidents.

The top five years since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979 are:

1. 2019: 2,107 incidents
2. 1994: 2,066 incidents
3. 2017: 1,986 incidents
4. 2018 and 1991: 1,879 incidents

THEMES AND TRENDS
Assaults

In 2019, there were 61 known antisemitic assaults in the U.S. An antisemitic assault is defined in the Audit as an attempt to inflict physical harm on one or more people who are Jewish or perceived to be Jewish, accompanied by evidence of antisemitic animus. Eleven of the assaults were perpetrated with a potentially deadly weapon such as a knife, gun or vehicle. The rest consisted of chokings, punches and the throwing of small objects such as pebbles or a bottle.

More than half of the assaults nationwide took place in the five boroughs of New York City, including 25 in Brooklyn, five in Manhattan, one in the Bronx and one in Queens. Five assaults took place in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area, and three took place in the greater Miami area. The remaining assaults were spread across the country, with no other city recording more than one.

Three-quarters of the assaults took place on streets and other public areas. The rest of the assaults were perpetrated in schools, homes, and businesses. Three occurred at synagogues.

A total 95 individuals were directly targeted during the assaults in 2019. (In some cases, there were larger numbers of people nearby who emerged physically unscathed in the attacks, such as the attacks on the synagogue in Poway and the home in Monsey.) This is a 61% increase over the 59 victims of assault in 2018. There were 21 victims in 2017.

There were three major attacks on the Jewish community in 2019, all of which resulted in fatalities.
Poway, CA

Six months after the deadly shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018, white supremacist John T. Earnest opened fire at a synagogue in Poway, California. Earnest armed himself for the April 27 attack with a semiautomatic firearm and a handgun, and opened fire on worshipers at the Chabad of Poway during services on the final day of Passover. The rampage left one dead and three injured.

A manifesto purportedly written by Earnest was uploaded to the document-hosting site PasteBin shortly before the attack. Brenton Tarrant, the Australian white supremacist who attacked two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, on March 15, 2019, uploaded a similar manifesto. Tarrant and Earnest’s manifestos shared many of the same themes and rhetoric of Islamophobia and extreme antisemitism.

Jersey City, NJ

On December 10, 2019, David N. Anderson and Francine Graham drove to JC Kosher Supermarket in Jersey City, NJ, where Graham allegedly fired shots into the establishment, killing three civilians inside the store and injuring another. The couple left behind a stolen U-Haul van that contained an arsenal of weapons and a handwritten note that implied a theological justification or imperative for the attack. Online identities linked to Anderson show that he espoused Black Hebrew Israelite (BHI) ideology. BHI disagree with the traditional view that contemporary Jews are descendants of the 12 biblical tribes of Israel, and argue instead that various non-European indigenous peoples, including Black Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans, are the true heirs. Some members of the movement identify or introduce themselves as belonging to specific tribes, which are named after the sons of the biblical patriarch, Jacob. This includes the Tribe of Judah, which is made up of Black Americans, many of whom believe this tribe is especially blessed because of Black Americans’ history of persecution.
According to New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, the attack is being investigated as an act of domestic terrorism that was motivated by antisemitic and anti-law enforcement sentiments (the perpetrators also killed a police detective prior to attacking the kosher market).

**Monsey, NY**

According to police reports, Grafton Thomas entered a local rabbi’s home in Monsey, New York, during a Hanukkah party on December 28, 2019, attacking attendees with a large knife. The attack left five injured, including Josef Neumann, who died of his injuries on March 29, 2020, three months after the attack.

The attack began just as the rabbi was preparing to light the menorah to mark the seventh night of Hanukkah. Monsey, a town in Rockland County, outside New York City, is home to a significant Jewish population.

According to police and media reports, Thomas entered the home on Saturday just before 10 pm, screaming, “I’ll get you.” It is alleged that he fled the scene after stabbing multiple people. He was apprehended two hours later in Harlem, reportedly covered in blood and smelling of bleach.

On December 29, police in Ramapo, New York, charged Thomas with five counts of attempted murder and one count of burglary, to which Thomas pleaded not guilty. The following day, on December 30, federal prosecutors filed hate crimes charges against Thomas. According to news reports, the Rockland District Attorney announced that he would seek to charge Thomas with murder following the death of Josef Neumann.

**Brooklyn assaults**

Of the 61 assaults in 2019, 25 occurred in Brooklyn. In December 2019, ADL documented eight assaults in the borough within an eight-day span (December
23rd and December 31st). These assaults took place primarily in the neighborhoods of Williamsburg and Crown Heights, which are home to large numbers of Orthodox Jews. All eight of these documented assaults were perpetrated against individuals who were visibly Jewish. Objects were thrown at victims, antisemitic slurs were shouted, and at least three victims were hit or punched in their heads or faces. Three of the assaults took place on just one day in Crown Heights; seven of the eight documented assaults took place during Hanukkah; all took place very shortly after the deadly attack in Jersey City, New Jersey, or immediately before the violent knife attack in Monsey, New York.

**Extremist Groups / Individuals**

Known extremist groups or individuals inspired by extremist ideology were responsible for 270 antisemitic incidents in 2019, up from 249 such incidents in 2018. In both years, these made up 13% of all incidents recorded in the Audit.

**Extremist Propaganda**

Of the 270 incidents attributable to hate groups or extremists, 212 took the form of antisemitic fliers, banners, stickers, or written messages. The biggest perpetrators were members of Daily Stormer Book Clubs (77 incidents) and the New Jersey European Heritage Association (76 incidents). The Loyal White Knights, a Klan group, were responsible for 18 antisemitic fliering incidents.

Daily Stormer Book Clubs (DSBC) are small crews of young white men who follow and support Andrew Anglin and his neo-Nazi website, The Daily Stormer. Their propaganda is generally antisemitic and often targets college campuses or Jewish institutions and is largely distributed as part of coordinated efforts by multiple chapters.

In 2019, DSBC's fliers included claims that the Holocaust was "fake news" and that Jews molest children and "push pornography" on them. A flier distributed during the summer of 2019 depicted Brenton Tarrant, the shooter charged with killing 51
worshipers at mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, with his mouth covered by the Star of David and the word “Jude,” and the words, “Censorship Ends in Violence.”

Sixteen of the DSBC antisemitic fliers were distributed at non-Jewish places of worship, such as mosques and churches, in Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Washington state.

The New Jersey European Heritage Association (NJEHA) was founded in 2018 and is a small white supremacist group whose members see themselves as defenders of white European people and white culture. The NJEHA often distributes explicitly white supremacist propaganda claiming the white race is endangered, but some of the group’s propaganda promotes the conspiracy theory that Israel intentionally targeted a U.S. warship during the height of the 1967 Six-Day War. NJEHA’s most recent flier, “Wake Up America – Your Country has been Subverted,” contains numerous antisemitic tropes and refers to Jews as “destroyers.”

Additional propaganda was distributed by Loyal White Knights (LWK), a Klan group best known for its vitriolic and often antisemitic messaging. In 2019, LWK’s propaganda targeted Jews for being responsible for an “open border policy,” “destroying” the economy, and other social ills.

**Other Extremist Activity**

The remaining 58 incidents of extremist activity included the previously mentioned assaults, acts of antisemitic vandalism and several small protests outside Jewish and pro-Israel institutions.

Incidents of vandalism included a coordinated effort in September by The Base, a small militant neo-Nazi organization, which orchestrated a multi-state vandalism ring dubbed “Operation Kristallnacht” where synagogues in Michigan and Wisconsin were targeted with antisemitic graffiti including swastikas, other Nazi
imagery and The Base logo. The event was orchestrated by Richard Tobin, an 18-year-old from Brooklawn, New Jersey, who was arrested by federal authorities in November. According to officials, Tobin admitted to having ties to The Base, and to having helped coordinate the targeting of the two synagogues. Two other arrests were made in connection to the Michigan and Wisconsin vandalism incidents.

In April, ADL helped to identify Corbin Kauffman, a white supremacist, who spray-painted antisemitic graffiti at a park, plastered a display case at Chabad Jewish Center in Ocean City, Maryland with white supremacist and antisemitic stickers, and posted photos of his vandalism. He was charged with interstate transmission of threats, a federal crime that carries a maximum of five years in prison.

In May, members of the white supremacist group, Shield Wall Network, disrupted a local Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony in Russellville, Arkansas chanting “six million more,” “God has the ovens warmed up,” and “Hitler didn’t finish the job.”

Extremist group Witness for Peace targeted a synagogue in Michigan every week on Shabbat. An expanded analysis of these protests can be found in the Anti-Israel/Anti-Zionism section of this report.

Other noteworthy antisemitic extremist activity in 2019 included a trolling campaign conducted by the white supremacist forum Vanguard News Network (VNN). VNN, which was founded in the early 2000s, provided a place for users to post publicly available photos of Jewish people (primarily women and girls) in order to mock their appearance. There was no call for violence against the people whose photos were posted; the thread appeared to have been an attempt to highlight what many antisemitic and white supremacists consider stereotypical Jewish physical attributes. The Audit recorded those who reported to ADL that their name and photo were on the list.

Black Hebrew Israelites, a movement whose members frequently adopt antisemitic and extremist beliefs, were implicated in the attacks in Jersey City.
K-12 Incidents

In 2019 there were 411 antisemitic incidents reported in non-Jewish K-12 schools, an increase of 19% from the 344 incidents reported in 2018. Of the 411 incidents in 2019, 184 were incidents of harassment, 220 were incidents of vandalism, and 7 were incidents of physical assault.

The 184 incidents of harassment in K-12 schools represent a 6% increase from the 173 incidents of harassment in 2018. Harassment incidents in 2019 included one-off incidents such as when a student announced to their class, “The Nazis should have killed all the Jews, especially this sub,” as well as ongoing harassment by peers taunting Jewish students with Holocaust jokes and references. Some of the harassment was carried out on social media, including cases where non-Jewish students targeted one or more Jewish students in a Snapchat or Instagram post, or created and circulated videos on TikTok, a platform for short-form mobile videos.

The 220 incidents of antisemitic vandalism in K-12 schools in 2019 represent a 30% increase from the 169 incidents reported in 2018. Fully two-thirds of the vandalism consisted of swastikas unaccompanied by any other messages or iconography and which did not specifically target a Jewish person.

Though the number of reported incidents increased 19% from 2018, it was a 10% decrease from the 457 incidents reported in 2017. Given the insidious nature of schoolyard bullying compounded by the fact that many children may not feel empowered to report their experiences, it is likely that the actual number of
antisemitic incidents taking place in schools was significantly higher than the number reported in the Audit.

**Campus Incidents**

In 2019 there were 186 reported antisemitic incidents on American university and college campuses, a decrease of 7% from 201 reported incidents in 2018.

Of the 186 campus incidents, 97 were incidents of harassment and 89 were incidents of vandalism. There were no reported incidents of assault.

Approximately 14% of the incidents on campuses were related to the distribution of antisemitic white supremacist propaganda by groups or individuals. Of the 89 incidents of vandalism, 65 incidents included one or more swastikas.

Thirty-eight, or 20%, of the 186 campus incidents involved references to Israel or Zionism. More information on the nature of those incidents can be found in the Anti-Zionist/Anti-Israel section of this report. Other acts of vandalism included the desecration of mezuzot (small ritual items that some Jews affix to the doorpost of the front door of their homes) in residential halls, messages of anti-Jewish animus such as “We must exterminate the Jews” and “fuck the Jews,” random swastika drawings found in academic and residential halls, or images of swastikas accompanying threatening messages targeting Jewish students.

**Jewish Institutions**

Jewish institutions, including Jewish schools, community centers and synagogues, were the targets of 234 antisemitic incidents in 2019. This is a decrease of 12% from the 265 reported incidents in 2018. 150 of these incidents specifically targeted synagogues.

Of the 234 incidents targeting Jewish institutions, 171 were incidents of harassment and 60 were incidents of vandalism. There were three incidents of physical assault, one of which was the Poway, California synagogue shooting,
which resulted in one death and two injuries (see Assaults section). The other two assaults both occurred in Florida. In one incident, a Jewish man was shot six times outside his synagogue while waiting for prayers to begin, and in the other two Jewish people were attacked outside their synagogue by a man wielding a knife and yelling “go back to Israel” and calling the victims “fake Jews.”

Fifty of the incidents targeting Jewish institutions were perpetrated by extremists. The vast majority of these took the form of harassment, such as white supremacist flierings or anti-Israel extremist protests. Four were cases of vandalism. One was the assault on the synagogue in Poway.

Cemetery Vandalism

Jewish graves and/or cemeteries were desecrated six times in 2019. The desecration of Jewish headstones is a long-standing form of antisemitism that has been employed for centuries by antisemites looking to scare, victimize and offend Jews. It is a cowardly act and is especially disturbing seeing as those buried have no means of defending themselves.

- Headstones at a Jewish cemetery were vandalized with antisemitic messages including "Heil Hitler" and "Expel the Jews," as well as a swastika. (March 2019, Fall River, MA)
- Swastika vandalism discovered at Mount Evergreen Cemetery. (June 2019, Jackson, MS)
- Atomwaffen Division, a neo-Nazi group, distributed antisemitic propaganda that read: "6 million kikes? We Wish." (July 2019, Birmingham, MI)
- A Jewish person's headstone in a cemetery was vandalized with a swastika etching. (October 2019, Los Angeles, CA)
- About 75 headstones were vandalized at Temple Israel Cemetery, causing more than $50,000 in damage. (October 2019, Omaha, NE)
A building at a Jewish cemetery was vandalized with swastika graffiti. (October 2019, Cheektowaga, NY)

This compares to eight cemetery desecrations in 2018.

**Anti-Zionist / Anti-Israel Incidents**

171 antisemitic incidents in 2019 referenced Israel or Zionism. Of those, 68 took the form of propaganda efforts by white supremacist groups to foment anti-Israel and antisemitic beliefs. For example, the New Jersey European Heritage Association distributed numerous fliers which called on readers to “Remember the USS Liberty,” a reference to the Israeli attack on a U.S. ship in the Mediterranean Sea during the Six Day War in 1967. White supremacists and other antisemites view the attack on the U.S.S. Liberty as proof of Jews and Zionists’ malign agenda for non-Jews, and promote the belief that the U.S. government covered up the incidents as proof that Jews control the U.S. government. Many other fliers distributed by white supremacists included the phrase, “Open borders for Israel,” which expresses the belief, common among white supremacists, that American Jews are manipulating U.S. immigration policy in order to undermine the U.S.’s white majority population while at the same time hypocritically demanding a pure Jewish ethnostate in Israel.

There were five instances in which Patriot Front, a white supremacist group, held protests outside Israel-aligned organizations such as AIPAC in order to oppose “Zionist influence” over the United States. Although it is not antisemitic to protest Israeli policies, these protests must be considered within the context of this group’s well-documented antisemitic agenda.

Throughout 2019, anti-Israel extremist group Witness for Peace (WFP) conducted almost weekly protests outside an Ann Arbor, Michigan synagogue. WFP members typically hold signs with slogans like “Resist Jewish Power,” “Israeli citizens in OUR Congress??” and “AMERICA First, NOT Israel.” WFP’s leader and founder, Henry Herskovitz, is a Holocaust denier. He has explained that he is motivated to
convene these protests because, in his view, the synagogue's support for Israel makes the congregation complicit in Israel's “nationalist agenda” and its “brutal and illegal military occupation of Palestinian lands and the suffering of the Palestinian people.” It is antisemitic to target Jewish people who are engaged in religious observances for harassment over their purported support for Israel and to hold them responsible for the policies of Israel’s government.

Other incidents involved antisemitic expressions of anti-Israel and anti-Zionist animus on campus. Students expressed this animus in columns of their respective campus newspapers. At Occidental College in Los Angeles, one student equated Zionism and white supremacy, claiming that racism and the white supremacist ideology is “central to Zionism.” At University of California, Davis, a graduate student who supports Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) published a column in the campus newspaper, writing, “two specific instances of white supremacy have situated themselves on our campus as ‘marginalized voices’: the Blue Lives Matter movement (and policing generally) and Zionism.”

As part of Israeli Apartheid Week at Vassar College in April, SJP distributed an “Educational Zine,” which stated, in part, “we recognize the racism inherent in Zionist ideology” and “Zionism exists as a form of racism.”

Twice at Cal State Fullerton, members of the school's SJP erected an “apartheid wall” that included a panel with a message reading, “Zionism=racism,” once in April and again in November.

In November, at Simmons University in Boston, Massachusetts, handwritten messages were placed on fliers advertising a Hillel Birthright Israel trip that read, "If celebrating Judaism means funding GENOCIDE, you're not practicing spirituality, you're practicing WHITE SUPREMACY."

In November, fliers accusing Jews in Florida of attacking campus free speech were posted around the University of Central Florida campus. The fliers blamed
Jews for a 2019 law that the Florida governor signed, which the flier claims “restricts legitimate criticism of Israel and the role of Jews in the United States.”

In May, a San Francisco State University bathroom was defaced with graffiti that included a swastika with a Star of David in the center, and the message “Free Palestine” written next to it.

**METHODOLOGY**

The Audit of Antisemitic Incidents is composed of criminal and non-criminal incidents of harassment, vandalism and assault against individuals and groups as reported to ADL by victims, law enforcement and the media. It is not a public opinion poll or an effort to catalog every expression of antisemitism.

Incidents are defined as vandalism of property, or as harassment or assault on individuals or groups, where either 1) circumstances indicate anti-Jewish animus on the part of the perpetrator, or 2) a reasonable person could plausibly conclude that they were being victimized due to their Jewish identity. Vandalism against Jewish religious institutions or cemeteries may also be included. The appearance of swastikas, which are generally interpreted by Jews to be symbols of antisemitic hatred, are also included.

Although some incidents are hate crimes, incidents included in the Audit include non-criminal acts that rise to the level of an antisemitic incident as we define it above. ADL carefully examines the credibility of all incidents, including obtaining independent verification when possible.

The Audit excludes the following types of incidents:

- Antisemitic activities or statements which take place privately (e.g. at a private extremist meeting) or in a manner that requires potential victims to “opt-in” in order to access them (e.g. by going to particular websites where
unmoderated discussion occurs, looking at specific individuals' social media pages, etc.)

- Instances of discrimination (e.g. a Jewish worker not receiving an accommodation for Rosh Hashanah), unless the discrimination is accompanied by verbal harassment as described above.

- General expressions of white supremacy or other hateful ideologies, unless those expressions include overt antisemitic elements.

The Audit of Antisemitic Incidents includes cases where individuals or groups were harassed online by being sent antisemitic content in direct messages, on listservs or in social media settings where they would have the reasonable expectation to not be subjected to antisemitism. The Audit does not attempt to assess the total amount of antisemitism online.

ADL is careful to not conflate general criticism of Israel or anti-Israel activism with antisemitism. However, Israel-related harassment of groups or individuals may be included when the harassment incorporates established anti-Jewish references, accusations and/or conspiracy theories, or when they demonize American Jews for their support of Israel. We have also included cases of picketing of Jewish religious or cultural institutions for their purported support for Israel.

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The 2019 Audit documents the highest number of antisemitic incidents reported to ADL Regional Offices in the 41-year history of the report – including a significant increase in physical assaults, and four extremist-related murders. In response to the deeply disturbing rise in antisemitic incidents, ADL is sharing the following policy recommendations with members of Congress and other government leaders:

1. Speak out against antisemitism and all forms of hate.
Public officials and civic leaders — from the President, to governors, attorneys general, mayors, other civic leaders, and law enforcement authorities — should use their bully pulpits to speak out against antisemitism and all forms of hate and extremism.

Federal, state, and local authorities should provide funding for security hardening and enhancements for at-risk houses of worship, schools, community centers, and other non-profit institutions.

Congress appropriated $90 million for the Non-Profit Security Grant program for fiscal year 2020 and a number of states have established similar programs. At a time of increased attention to white supremacy, antisemitism, extremist and hate-motivated violence, the federal government and states should significantly increase this funding and institutional security training and outreach.

2. Promote training for law enforcement officials.

Facing rising antisemitism and hate violence, governments should provide law enforcement officials with the tools and training they need to prevent and effectively respond to hate crimes, while providing trauma-informed comfort and assistance to individual victims and community members. Law enforcement should be trained in community policing best practices, including anti-bias training. When hate crimes do occur, law enforcement officials must be prepared to take prompt, strong action to investigate every incident — and to hold perpetrators accountable to the full extent of the law. Training can also be employed so law enforcement can better respond to cyber abuse crimes that are rooted in hate, bigotry or bias.

3. Improve hate crime laws and data collection.

The federal government, 45 states, and the District of Columbia have hate crime laws, but five states do not. Every state should enact comprehensive and
inclusive hate crime laws.

Further, according to the FBI, in 2018 (the most recent data available) 85 cities over 100,000 in population either did not report any data or affirmatively reported zero (0) hate crimes to the FBI for its annual hate crime report. Data drives policy. We cannot address a problem if we are not effectively tracking and measuring it.

Congress should pass the **Khalid Jabara and Heather Heyer National Opposition to Hate, Assault, and Threats to Equality (NO HATE) Act**, which would authorize grants to promote hate crime training, prevention, best practices, and data collection initiatives – and to develop state hate crime reporting hotlines to refer individuals to local law enforcement and support services.

Section 4704 of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act authorized $5 million total (not more than $100,000 for a single jurisdiction) for “technical, forensic, prosecutorial, or any other form of assistance” to state and local law enforcement authorities for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes. It is past time for Congress to appropriate funds to fulfill this mandate.

Investigate domestic extremist groups and resource a coordinated government response appropriately.

The 2019 Audit documents 270 incidents that were directly attributable to extremist activity, an increase from 2018 and now 13% of the total incidents. Congress and state officials should hold hearings to examine the nature and magnitude of this problem and to identify best practices and effective responses to hate.

Specifically, Congress should pass the **Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act**, which would improve coordinated response, collect data on domestic terrorism, and ensure training for law enforcement on best practices to combat domestic terrorism. Any legislation in this arena must focus on specific criminal acts and not cross the line to punishing First Amendment-protected expression.
In addition, Congress should research the online financial ecosystem used by hate groups and extremists: There is a need for research on the role of online financial products and services used by individuals and groups who propagate hate and commit violent acts and hate crimes against individuals or groups on the basis of race, gender, gender identity and expression, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, color, or national origin. Such research would aim to understand and analyze the online financial ecosystem behind hate-motivated conduct and crimes.

4. Promote anti-bias, bullying prevention, civics education, and Holocaust and genocide education programs in elementary and secondary schools.

Since it is not possible to legislate, regulate, or tabulate racism, antisemitism and bigotry out of existence, we need government leadership to promote anti-bias, anti-hate, and democracy-building education programs in our nation's schools. Especially in these divided and polarized times, every elementary and secondary school should promote an inclusive school climate and activities that celebrate our nation's diversity.

One critical aspect of that effort is the need to teach the universal lessons of the Holocaust and other forms of genocide. The House recently passed legislation, the Never Again Education Act, which would promote Holocaust education across the United States. Eleven states have their own instruction mandates. Teaching about the Holocaust goes beyond understanding the historical fact that six million Jews were murdered along with millions of other innocent victims of the Nazi regime during World War II. Holocaust education can teach universal lessons, including: the root causes of antisemitism, fascism, extremism, the fragility of democracy, the human capacity for immorality, scapegoating and stereotyping, the role of perpetrators and bystanders, the importance of empathy and diversity and efforts toward justice. Every state should teach the universal lessons of the Holocaust.

5. Report antisemitic incidents to ADL.
To our own community, we say: there are no trivial acts of antisemitism. We at ADL want to know about every single incident that occurs – and every incident must be responded to appropriately. It is impossible to respond effectively to a problem unless we know about it. If we expect law enforcement officials and community members to take these incidents seriously, we must take them seriously – and report them, both to ADL and to the police.

6. Address Online Antisemitism, Hate and Harassment Through Legislation and Training at the Federal and State Levels:

Hate that begins online does not stay there -- it has offline consequences.

7. Strengthen Laws Against Perpetrators of Online Hate:

Hate and harassment translate from real-world to online spaces, including in social media and games, but our laws have not kept up. Many forms of severe online misconduct are not consistently covered by cybercrime, harassment, stalking and hate crime law. States should close the gaps that often prevent government agencies from holding individual perpetrators accountable because the laws do not appropriately capture online misconduct. Congress also has an opportunity to lead the fight against cyberhate by increasing protections for targets as well as penalties for perpetrators of online misconduct. Some actions Congress can take include revising Federal law to allow for penalty enhancements based on cyber-related conduct; and legislating specifically on cybercrimes such as doxing, swatting, non-consensual pornography, and deepfakes.

8. Improve Training of Law Enforcement:

Law enforcement are a key responder to online hate, especially in cases when users feel they are in imminent danger. Increasing resources and training for these departments is critical to ensure they can effectively investigate and prosecute cyber cases and that targets know they will be supported if they contact...
law enforcement. This includes ongoing anti-bias training, hate crimes training, and training regarding technology and the Internet landscape, as all of these issues are perpetually changing.

9. Initiate Data Collection and Reporting:

There is no FBI record or published data on the number of annual reports of cybercrime or online hate. According to ADL’s findings more than one-third (37%) of Americans experienced severe online hate and harassment in 2018, including sexual harassment, stalking, and physical threats or sustained harassment. Further specific data on the extent of the problem as it relates to harassment based on specific protected characteristics is necessary to track trends and continue to define the landscape hate online.

Social Media and Online Game Platforms Must Institute Stronger Measures to Address Online Antisemitism, Hate and Harassment:

Social media and online game platforms must institute robust and verifiable industry-wide self-governance. This could take many forms, including Congressional oversight or passing laws that require certain levels of transparency and auditing. The Internet plays a vital role in allowing for innovation and democratizing trends, and that should be preserved. At the same time, the widespread exploitation of social media platforms for hateful and severely harmful conduct needs to be effectively addressed. Some of these measures should include:

Strong Terms of Service:

Every social media and online game platform must have clear terms of service that address hateful content and harassing behavior, and clearly define consequences for violations. In establishing and updating these terms of service, platforms should consult regularly with civil society groups, and especially seek
out and use their advice and expertise to shape platform policies that may impact the experience of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Moreover, platform policies should state that the platform will not tolerate hateful content or behavior based on protected characteristics. They should prohibit abusive tactics such as harassment, doxing and swatting. Platforms should also note what the process of appeal is for users who feel their content was flagged as hateful or abusive in error.

Responsibility and Accountability:

Social media and online game platforms should assume greater responsibility to enforce their policies and to do so accurately at scale. They should improve the complaint and flagging process so it is as user-friendly as possible and provides a more consistent and speedy resolution for targets. They should decrease their reliance on the user complaint process, and instead proactively, swiftly, and continuously address hateful content using a mix of artificial intelligence and human monitors who are fluent in the relevant language and knowledgeable in the social and cultural context of the relevant community. Additionally, given the prevalence of online hate and harassment, platforms should offer far more services and tools for individuals facing or fearing online attack. They should provide greater filtering options that allow individuals to decide for themselves how much they want to see likely hateful comments. They should consider the experience of individuals who are being harassed in a coordinated way and be able to provide aid to these individuals in meaningful ways. They should develop compassionate forms of communication for targeted users and allow targeted users to speak to a company representative as part of the complaint process in certain, clearly defined cases, instead of passing them off to a bot or forcing them to communicate in a unidirectional way through a complaint form. And they should provide user-friendly tools to help targets preserve evidence and report problems to law enforcement and companies.

Governance and Transparency Around Antisemitism and Other Forms of Hate:
Social media and online game platforms should adopt robust governance. This should include regularly scheduled external, independent audits so that the public knows the scope and nature of hate and harassment on a given platform. Companies should specifically add insights on the experiences of vulnerable communities using their platforms and provide information on how different groups are targeted. Audits should also allow the public to verify that the company followed through on its stated actions and assess the effectiveness of company efforts in creating and enforcing anti-hate and harassment policies over time. Companies should provide information from the audit and elsewhere through more robust transparency reports. Finally, companies should create independent groups of experts from relevant stakeholders, including civil society, academia and journalism, to help provide guidance and oversight of platform policies. Beyond their own community guidelines, transparency efforts and content moderation policies, features available on social media and online gaming platforms need to be designed with anti-hate principles in mind. Companies need to conduct a thoughtful design process that puts their users first, and incorporates risk and radicalization factors before, and not after, tragedy strikes.

TAKE ACTION

Antisemitic incidents are a reality across the country. It’s time to take action. Join ADL in fighting hate for good in your community.

FIGHTING HATE FROM HOME

At a time when we have seen antisemitism, racism and xenophobia in public discourse, we have launched ADL’s Fighting Hate from Home webinar series to learn from experts on how to fight hate for good in your community.
Join us for our next webinar, Fighting Hate From Home: Is there more antisemitic activity than ever?, for an important conversation about the findings of the 2019 Audit on Thursday May 14 at 2:30pm ET / 11:30am PT.

SPEAK UP

HOST a discussion with your family or friends. Use our discussion guide to start a conversation around antisemitism to spark ideas around what you can do to fight hate.

SHARE FACTS

EDUCATE and share facts about antisemitism with your family, friends and community. Here are some Educational Resources to help young people understand and challenge antisemitism.

LEARN more about acts of antisemitism and hate across the country by visiting ADL’s HEAT Map and ADL’s Tracker of Anti-Semitic Incidents.

UNDERSTAND the history and the age-old tropes by reading ADL’s new comprehensive resource Antisemitism Uncovered: A Guide to Old Myths in a New Era which provides context, fact-based descriptions of prevalent antisemitic myths, contemporary examples and actions for addressing this hate.

SHOW STRENGTH

REPORT incidents of antisemitism to ADL, your local Jewish community, and/or local law enforcement. Being prepared to report antisemitic incidents is important. It makes individuals and communities more secure and empowers us in challenging moments. ADL has tips for reporting antisemitism and other forms
of hate in public spaces, in schools, online and in the media in our The Good Fight Toolkit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Audit of Antisemitic Incidents is a project of ADL’s Center on Extremism, whose work is supported in part by the following generous donors as well as numerous others:

The ADL Lewy Family Institute for Combating Antisemitism

Roman Abramovich

The David Berg Foundation

Nathan Cummings Foundation

Joyce and Irving Goldman Family Foundation

The Marlene Nathan Meyerson Family Foundation

New England Revolution Foundation

Rowland & Sylvia Schaefer Family Foundation, Inc.

Charles and Mildred Schnurmacher Foundation

The Nancy K. Silverman Foundation

Louis Sobelman

Zegar Family Foundation