

ADL Audit:

U.S. Anti-Semitic Incidents Surged in 2016-17



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OVERVIEW

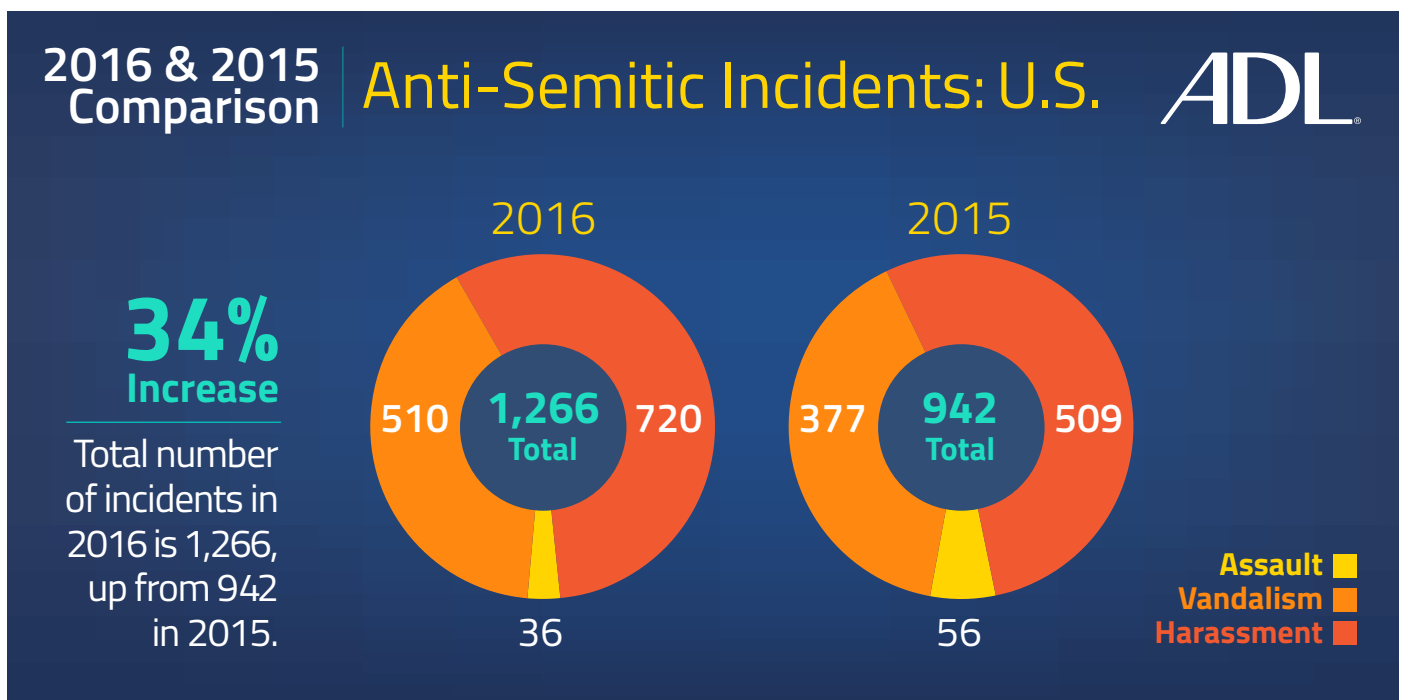
The Anti-Defamation League's annual *Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents* found a significant, sustained increase in anti-Semitic activity since the start of 2016. The number accelerated into the first quarter of 2017.

Each year, since 1979, the ADL measures the number of anti-Semitic acts in the United States through this annual Audit.

Anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. surged more than one-third in 2016 and jumped 86 percent in the first quarter of 2017. There was a massive increase in the amount of harassment of American Jews, particularly since November 2016, and a doubling in the amount of anti-Semitic bullying and vandalism at non-denominational K-12 grade schools.

In 2016, there was a 34 percent year-over-year increase in incidents — assaults, vandalism, and harassment — with a total of 1,266 acts targeting Jews and Jewish institutions. Nearly 30 percent of these incidents (369) occurred in November and December 2016. The surge has continued during the first three months of 2017, with preliminary reports of another 541 incidents, putting this year on pace for more than 2,000 incidents. Americans of all faiths have felt the increase and in a poll ADL released earlier this month a majority said they are concerned about violence in the U.S. directed at Jews.

The numbers are a chilling reminder that ADL has much work to do and needs to bring more urgency to the fight. At ADL, we will use every resource available to put a stop to anti-Semitism. But we also need more leaders to speak out against this cancer of hate and more action at all levels to counter anti-Semitism.

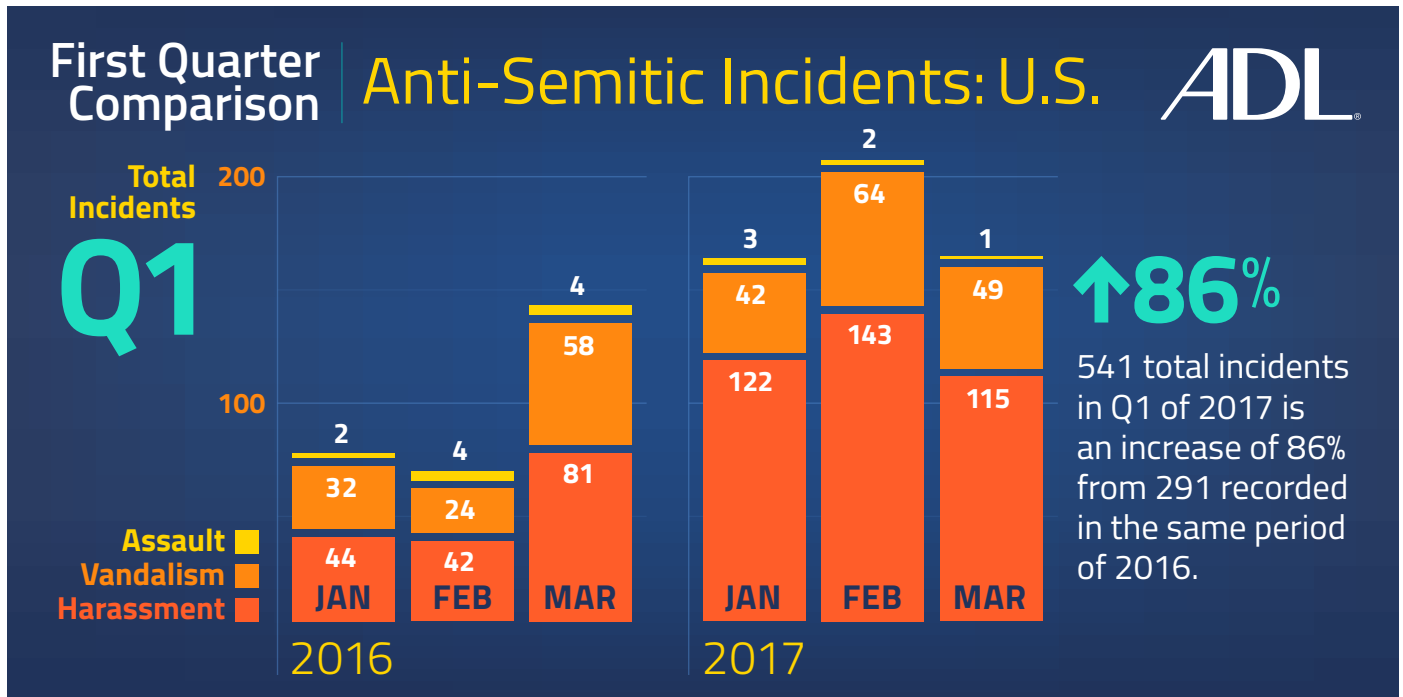


In the first quarter of 2017, preliminary reports of the 541 anti-Semitic incidents included:

- 380 harassment incidents, including 161 bomb threats, an increase of 127 percent over the same quarter in 2016;
- 155 vandalism incidents, including three cemetery desecrations, an increase of 36 percent;
- 6 physical assault incidents, a decrease of 40 percent.

In 2016, the 1,266 anti-Semitic incidents included:

- 720 harassment and threat incidents, an increase of 41 percent over 2015;
- 510 vandalism incidents, an increase of 35 percent;
- 36 physical assault incidents, a decrease of 35 percent.



The audit includes both criminal and non-criminal incidents, acts of harassment and intimidation, including distribution of hate propaganda, threats and slurs. Compiled using information provided by victims, law enforcement and community leaders and evaluated by ADL’s professional staff, the Audit provides an annual snapshot of one specific aspect of a nationwide problem while identifying possible trends or changes in the types of activity reported. This information assists ADL in developing and enhancing its programs to counter and prevent the spread of anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry.

CONTEXT

The incidents were felt across the country, but continuing a consistent trend, the states with the highest number of incidents tend to be those with large Jewish populations.

These include California (211 in 2016 and 87 in Q1 2017), New York (199 in 2016 and 97 in Q1 2017), New Jersey (157 in 2016 and 24 in Q1 2017), Florida (137 in 2016 and 41 in Q1 2017), and Massachusetts (125 and 38 in Q1 2017).

The 2016 presidential election and the heightened political atmosphere played a role in the increase. There were 34 incidents linked to the election. For example, in Denver, graffiti posted in May 2016 said “Kill the Jews, Vote Trump.” In November, a St. Petersburg, Fla., man was accosted by someone who told him “Trump is going to finish what Hitler started.”

Incidents on college campuses increased from 90 in 2015 to 108 in 2016. This is a troubling increase, but it pales in comparison to the dramatic rise in incidents at non-Jewish elementary, middle, and high schools. Incidents there increased 106 percent, from 114 in 2015 to 235 in 2016. This increase accelerated in Q1

2017, when 95 incidents were reported. Schools are a microcosm of the country. Children absorb messages from their parents and the media, and bring them into their schools and playgrounds. ADL is very concerned the next generation is internalizing messages of intolerance and bigotry.

The incidents need to be seen in the context of a general resurgence of white supremacist activity in the United States. Extremists and anti-Semites feel emboldened and are using technology in new ways to spread their hatred and to impact the Jewish community on and off line.

Incidents in 2016 and Q1 2017 included network printer hacks and the use of source-masking technology to make it easier to harass Jews anonymously. The majority of anti-Semitic incidents are not carried out by organized extremists, as the bomb threats in 2017 demonstrate. This was a reminder that anti-Semitism is not the sole domain of any one group, and needs to be challenged wherever and whenever it arises.

The Audit does not include in its count the thousands of anti-Semitic tweets directed at journalists during the presidential campaign, which were documented in a separate report issued in October 2016 by the *ADL Task Force on Harassment and Journalism*.

DATA ANALYSIS

Assaults

Thirty-six assaults with anti-Semitic bias were reported in 2016, down from 56 in 2015. Half of the 2016 assaults took place in either Brooklyn or Queens, New York. Incidents included robbery, pushing, choking or punching; in some cases victims were struck by stones or pieces of ice. One individual in Florida was threatened with a knife (November 2016). Two people in New York were struck by paintballs (June 2016).

In the first quarter of 2017, six anti-Semitic assaults were reported, down from 10 in the first quarter of 2016.



Vandalism

A total of 510 incidents of vandalism were reported, up significantly from 377 in 2015.



The three highest months for vandalism in 2016 were November (94 incidents), December (59 incidents), and March (58 incidents). The top three states with incidents of vandalism were New York (146), New Jersey (81), and California (77). The overwhelming majority of all 2016 incidents in New York were vandalism, and in New Jersey, just over half of the state's incidents were vandalism.

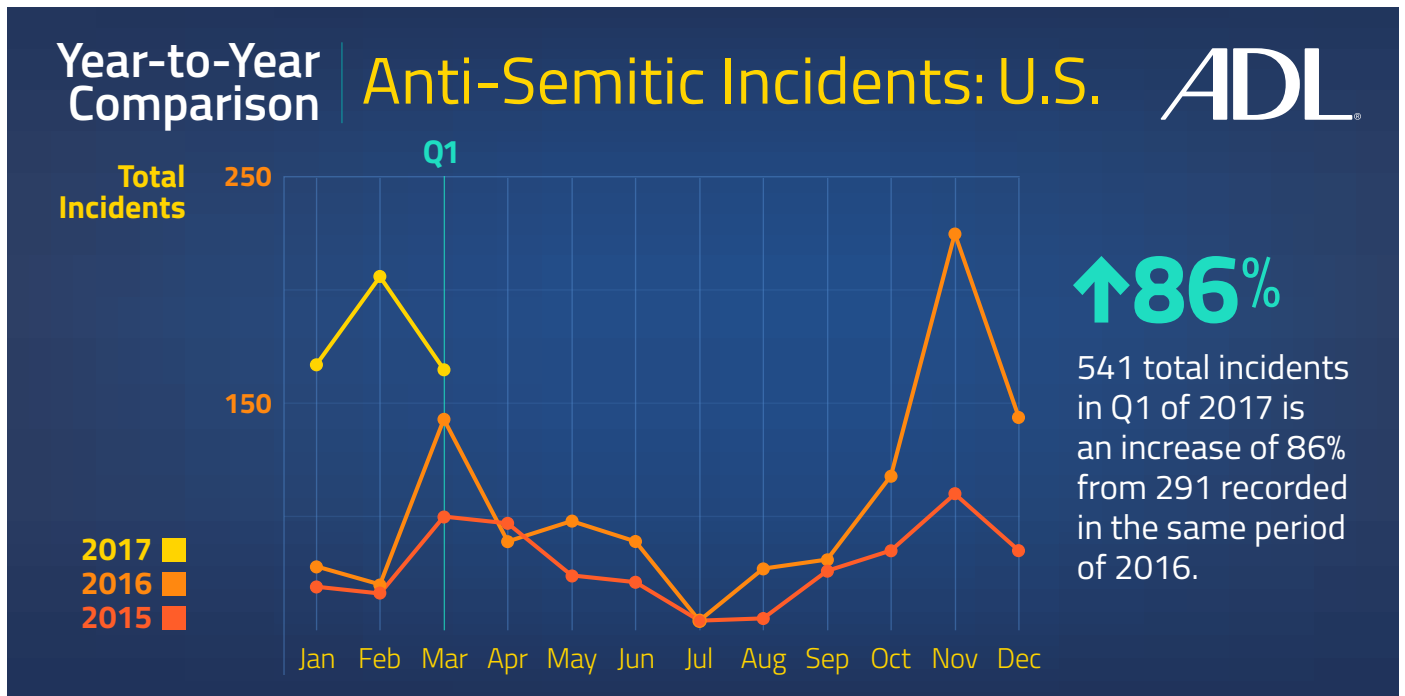
In November, New York reported 29 anti-Semitic incidents. Of those, 28 were acts of vandalism with the majority of those incidents including the use of swastikas. A clear majority of the incidents took place in New York City's boroughs and the metropolitan New York City area, which is known to have a significant and visible Jewish community.

In the first quarter of 2017, 155 incidents of vandalism were reported, up from 114 in the first quarter of 2016.

Harassment

A total of 720 instances of harassment were reported in 2016, up from 509 in 2015. Forty-one percent (41%) of those incidents took place in the last three months of the year, and the single highest month was November (with 131 incidents).

The three states with the highest reported number of harassment incidents were California (128), Florida (119), and New Jersey (73). In both California and Florida, incidents of harassment made up the majority of anti-Semitic incidents for those states. The most common forms of harassment were verbal or written





harassment of individuals, with a significant number of hate literature distributions as well.

In the first quarter of 2017, 380 incidents of harassment were reported. This is a massive, 125% increase compared to the 167 incidents of harassment reported in Q1 of 2016. However, the 380 incidents in 2017 include 161 bomb threats against Jewish institutions, the vast majority of which were allegedly perpetrated by a single disturbed Jewish teenager living in Israel whose motives were unclear.

Regardless, these incidents provoked anxiety and fear in Jewish communities across the US. Many of the Jewish community centers targeted for the bomb threats had to evacuate children, sometimes more than once.

Not including the bomb threats, there were 219 incidents of anti-Semitic harassment in the first quarter of 2017. This is still an increase of 31% over the same period in 2016.

The 2016 year also saw a months-long sustained and vicious campaign of anti-Semitic harassment aimed at the small Jewish community of Whitefish, Montana, where several members of the community were singled out for a campaign of relentless harassment, trolling and intimidation on the internet and on social media by white supremacists and members of the so-called "alt right."

In 2016 we also saw a vicious campaign of anti-Semitic attacks against Jewish journalists on social media.

THEMES & TRENDS

The 2016 Presidential Election

The 2016 presidential election featured prominently in several dozen incidents. In Denver (May 2016), graffiti was discovered that read "Kill the Jews, Vote Trump." In St. Petersburg, Florida (November 2016), a man was accosted by someone who approvingly told him, "Trump is going to finish what Hitler started." A complainant from Elkins Park, Pennsylvania received a threatening message on Facebook which read, "The one golden things [sic] about Trump's win is that sooner or later the filthy hold Israel and its cronies have on this country will weaken. God, I hope for a second holocaust. You people never learn, of course, but It'll [sic] be fun to watch it happen to trash like you..."

Although those incidents appear to have been committed by Trump supporters, some incidents which referenced the election were less clear. The day after the election, someone spray-painted a swastika and the words "Heil Trump" on a bus stop in San Diego. The graffiti traumatized a community that had already been riven by the election. Several other incidents with similar characteristics were reported.

Schoolyard Anti-Semitism

One of the most troubling trends in 2016 is the dramatic increase in the number of incidents reported of anti-Semitic bullying and vandalism in elementary schools and high schools across the country. A total of 235 incidents were reported from those locations, up from 114 in 2015. The increase was particularly stark in the fourth quarter. This tracks with the general rise in anti-Semitic incidents in Q4.

More than 90 cases of vandalism that included swastikas were reported. It is difficult to know whether the student perpetrators of these incidents fully understood the anti-Semitic message implicit in the symbol, but in some cases the attempt to intimidate Jewish students was clear.

A middle school in Boston experienced three cases of anti-Semitic messaging, including the words "Burn the Jews" etched into bathroom walls twice. In another incident, a swastika and the words "Fuck the Jews" were found in a school in Newton, Massachusetts (March 2016).

There also was a significant amount of anti-Semitic bullying reported. In the words of one constituent, a fifth grade student in Georgia was told that "Hitler was coming for her," and that "Nazis wanted to get her" (December 2016). In California, a Jewish boy was told "Go to the gas chamber, dirty Jew" (December 2016). A student in Michigan was told "All Jews should go back to Auschwitz" (November 2016), and a high school student in Wisconsin was overheard telling fellow students that "We have to get rid of the Jews once and for all" (November 2016). Several reports came in of Jewish students being told anti-Semitic "jokes." For example, a sixth grader in New Jersey was told, "What is the difference between a Jew and a pizza? A pizza doesn't scream in the oven" (February 2016).

Over the course of several weeks, a 13-year-old Jewish student in South Carolina received three anti-Semitic voicemail messages and a swastika was drawn on the sidewalk where he waited for the school bus (March 2016). Several students reported

repeatedly being called "kike" by their peers, hearing anti-Semitic "jokes" and even being physically assaulted in school hallways.

Some students reported having their notebooks and assignments being defaced with swastikas by other students. In Colorado, students set up a "Fourth Reich's Official Chat Group" on Facebook and threatened a Jewish student with anti-Semitic messages (September 2016). In Missouri, several students created an anti-Semitic Instagram account to target a Jewish student (December 2016)

Incidents Linked to Israel

One anti-Semitic theme that we saw less of in 2016 than in some previous years is the harassment of American Jews by anti-Zionists or individuals who want to express their displeasure with the actions of the State of Israel.

There were some examples, however. In Florida, a Jewish high school student's car was keyed with the phrase "Free Palestine, Free Gaza" (April 2016). The street sign of a synagogue in Massachusetts was defaced with Palestinian flag stickers (June 2016). Members of a New York synagogue were accosted by an agitated man who shouted comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany and taped a sign to the synagogue claiming that Zionists are bigots and that Jews "only care when Jews die" (August 2016).

Anti-Semitic acts pertaining to the State of Israel tend to spike during times of war between Israel and her neighbors. The absence of any major conflicts during 2016 explains the downtick.

To be clear: ADL believes in the right of free speech. We do not consider criticism of Israel to be anti-Semitic. However, the assumption that American Jews are somehow responsible for the actions of the Israeli government, the stated or implied allegation that American Jews have divided loyalties, and the claim that Jews have a tribal identity that trumps their concern for the human rights of others, evoke

classic anti-Semitic tropes that we cannot dismiss as regular political or protest speech. These incidents are included in the ADL Audit.

Hate Literature Distribution

In March 2016, internet-connected printers at universities across the United States were hacked and began printing anti-Semitic fliers. Andrew Auernheimer, a self-proclaimed internet troll and white supremacist, took responsibility for the intrusive hack. In an interview with The Washington Post, Auernheimer said that “the primary motivation of everything I do is the salvation of the white race and preserving our people and securing an existence for white children.”

Auernheimer claims to have been able to print his anti-Semitic fliers on 20,000 printers. ADL knows of only 15 such instances, ten of which occurred on college campuses; the remaining five were printed on internet-connected printers in private homes or businesses. We suspect that Auernheimer was exaggerating his reach.

Throughout the year, 12 synagogues, Jewish institutions, and even some individuals across the U.S., the majority of them in Florida, received hate mail from “Prophetic Ministry,” an operation run by Brian Charles in Sierra Vista, Arizona. Charles is an equal opportunity harasser, who has issued rambling treatises threatening hellfire and damnation to various groups including “DHS Traitors,” “Leftist-Liberal Judges,” the “Illuminati Wicked Ones,” “Big Pharma,” and Jews.

An intense wave of hate literature distribution took place from late-September through mid-December 2016. At least 50 synagogues and Jewish institutions received bulk anti-Semitic hate mail.

The hate mail, for the most part, contained classic anti-Semitic tropes and conspiracy theories about Jews. The majority of the synagogues targeted are located in the Philadelphia region and Florida.

Bomb Threats

An Israeli-American teen was arrested and charged with making more than 150 bomb threats to Jewish Community Centers, schools, ADL offices, and other Jewish community institutions. And a second man was arrested and charged with making copy-cat threats against Jewish centers and ADL offices. Juan Thompson, 31, of St. Louis, Missouri, is alleged to have made at least eight of the threats against JCCs in January and February as part of a sustained campaign to harass and intimidate a former girlfriend. Thompson was charged with one count of cyberstalking, and other charges may be pending.

In total, ADL counted 161 bomb threats against JCCs and other Jewish institutions during the first quarter of 2017.

The Justice Department affidavits that accompanied the announcement of the criminal charges against the Israeli teen graphically documented the chilling texts of a number of the bomb threats. A number of the calls to Jewish community institutions graphically threatened a “bloodbath” where “Jews” were going to have their heads blown off. Other threats to Jewish institutions



included specific language that a large number of “Jew children” were going to have their heads blown off from the shrapnel. And other calls to Jewish institutions included specific threats that the caller was coming to the school to shoot and kill children.

ADL included the bomb threats in the total count because regardless of the motivation of any specific perpetrator, Jewish communities were repeatedly traumatized by these assaults on their institutions and threats to their safety. The bomb threats sowed fear and anxiety among Jews across the country.

These crimes meet the textbook definition of hate crimes: Jewish community institutions were intentionally-selected and targeted — and the bomb threats sparked widespread fear at these institutions, causing evacuations, significant service disruptions, program cancellations, and deep community anxiety.

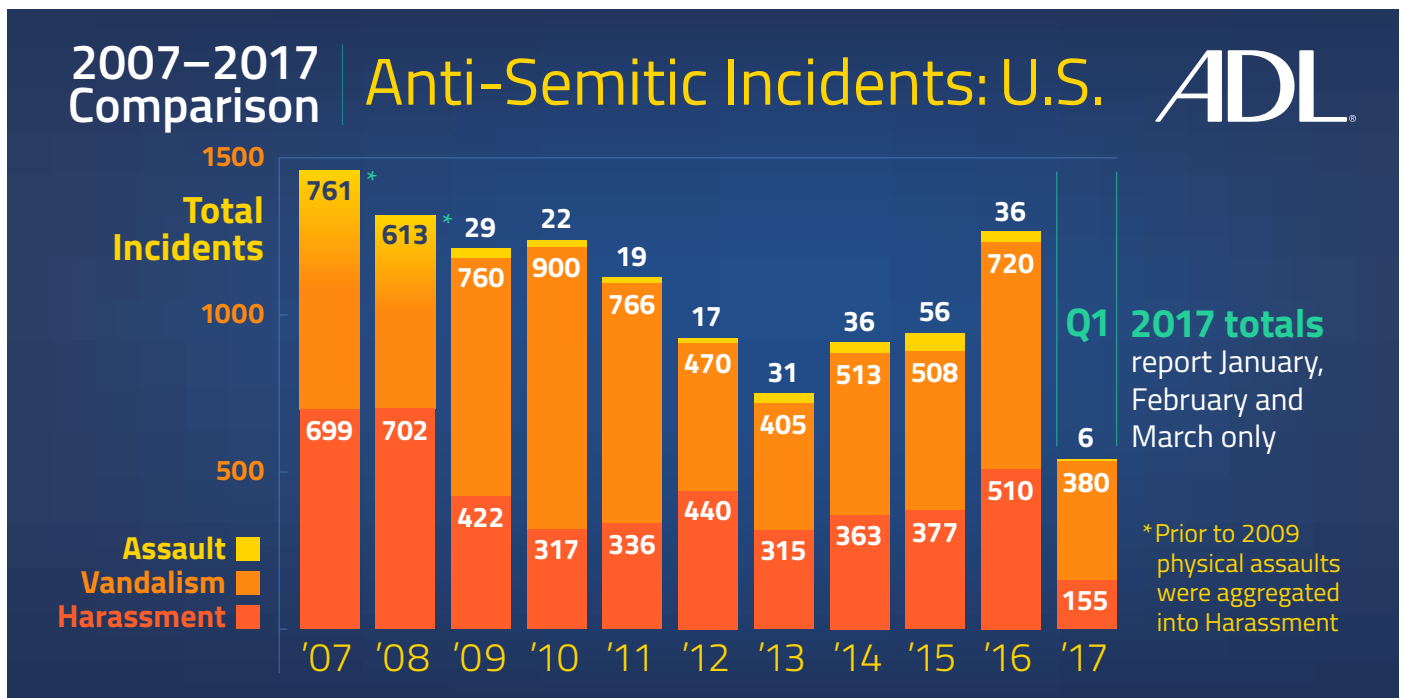
Cemetery Vandalism

In late February and early March, 2017, hundreds of gravestones in three Jewish cemeteries were toppled and vandalized. The desecration of Jewish headstones is a classic form of anti-Semitism employed for hundreds



of years by anti-Semites looking to scare, victimize, and offend Jews. It is a cowardly act and especially disturbing, seeing as those buried have no means of defending themselves from such baseless hatred.

While the cemetery desecrations were a low point in the Q1 2017 anti-Semitic incidents, the response was heartening: members of the Muslim and Christian faiths raised thousands of dollars to help repair the damaged tombstones. This was one of the few bright moments in a quarter when Jews across the United States were feeling threatened and under siege.



2015-2017 INCIDENTS BY STATE

State	Vandalism			Harassment			Assault			Total		
	2015	2016	Q1 2017	2015	2016	Q1 2017	2015	2016	Q1 2017	2015	2016	Q1 2017
Alabama	0	2	0	2	1	4	0	0	0	2	3	4
Alaska	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Arizona	1	5	3	3	5	10	0	0	1	4	10	14
Arkansas		0	0		0	1		0	0	0	0	1
California	69	77	21	105	128	66	1	6	0	175	211	87
Colorado	2	15	3	15	29	12	1	1	0	18	45	15
Connecticut	5	12	2	21	25	8	0	1	0	26	38	10
Delaware	0	0	0	4	3	6	0	0	0	4	3	6
Florida	27	15	7	61	119	34	3	3	0	91	137	41
Georgia	3	5	5	13	38	16	0	0	0	16	43	21
Hawaii		0	0		0	1		0	0	0	0	1
Idaho		0	0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	7	1	2	7	9	6	0	0	0	14	10	8
Indiana		4	0		2	2		0	0	0	6	2
Iowa	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	2
Kansas		1	0		2	1		0	0	0	3	1
Kentucky	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Louisiana	0	3	2	3	0	5	0	0	0	3	3	7
Maine	1	3	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	4	4	1
Maryland	3	1	2	6	2	12	0	0	0	9	3	14
Massachusetts	22	63	9	26	61	29	2	1	0	50	125	38
Michigan	2	3	3	4	12	8	0	0	0	6	15	11
Minnesota	5	2	0	7	17	2	0	1	0	12	20	2
Mississippi	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Missouri	1	1	2	4	6	5	0	0	0	5	7	7
Montana	1	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	2	4	0
Nebraska	1	1	0	1	12	2	0	0	0	2	13	2
Nevada	0	0	2	3	2	7	0	0	0	3	2	9
New Hampshire	2	3	0	4	5	1	0	0	0	6	8	1
New Jersey	79	81	9	57	73	15	1	3	0	137	157	24
New Mexico	0	1	1	7	10	6	1	0	0	8	11	7
New York	98	146	52	56	34	41	44	19	4	198	199	97
North Carolina	1	1	1	3	3	9	0	0	0	4	4	10
North Dakota		0	0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Ohio	4	5	2	6	9	9	0	1	0	10	15	11
Oklahoma		0	0		1	2		0	0	0	1	2
Oregon	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1
Pennsylvania	12	25	8	29	42	11	2	0	0	43	67	19
Rhode Island	0	5	2	1	2	5	0	0	0	1	7	7
South Carolina		2	0		7	3		0	0	0	9	3
South Dakota		0	0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	5	1	0	3	0	4	0	0	0	8	1	4
Texas	10	8	6	18	15	18	1	0	1	29	23	25
Utah	1	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	2	3	1
Vermont		1	0		4	0		0	0	0	5	0
Virginia	3	0	2	4	6	4	0	0	0	7	6	6
Washington	1	1	2	3	2	3	0	0	0	4	3	5
Washington DC	3	10	4	11	9	3	0	0	0	14	19	7
West Virginia		0	0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin	6	6	0	11	16	4	0	0	0	17	22	4
Wyoming	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	377	510	152	509	720	383	56	36	6	942	1266	541

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