Antisemitic reactions in Germany to the Hamas massacres in Israel

Antisemitic incidents with reference to the terrorist attacks on Israel between October 7–15, 2023



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Introduction

On October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists from the Gaza Strip attacked Israel and killed more than 1,400 people in several massacres of civilians. Nearly 200 people were taken as hostages to the Gaza Strip. Thousands of rockets were fired at Israel. Since then, the attacks have continued uninterrupted. October 7, 2023, will go down in history as the day with the most Jewish casualties since 1945.

In Germany, there were numerous expressions of solidarity with Israel, but also antisemitic and terror-glorifying reactions. On the evening of October 7, for example, chants of "From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free" and "From Berlin to Gaza, yallah Intifada" were documented in Berlin. On X (formerly Twitter), someone was quoted as saying "You stupid idiot, Hezbollah will flatten you. 350 000 soldiers and 900 000 rockets are ready for israel" (translated from German).

Many Jews in Germany have a family connection to Israel and have lost relatives and friends on October 7, or are in constant contact with relatives and friends in Israel who are directly affected by the Hamas attacks on the civilian population. At the same time, in view of the glorification of terror and the legitimization of the murders and kidnappings of Jews at demonstrations in Germany and in social networks, the concern about antisemitism in Germany continues to grow. Many Jews take measures for their safety – they do not want to be recognised as Jewish. For example, outwardly visible symbols of Judaism are removed from their homes, such as mesusot. As a precaution, everyday places are avoided, pupils are not sent to school, Israeli restaurants remain closed.

Against the background of this tense situation in Germany and worldwide, the Federal Association RIAS publishes the present monitoring report.



Data basis

The Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism (Bundesverband RIAS) is the umbrella organisation of civil society reporting offices for antisemitic incidents. Since information about the Hamas massacres spread around the world, numerous antisemitic incidents in Germany have been reported to the hotlines. This monitoring report provides an initial overview of the antisemitic incidents of October 7–15 related to the terrorist attacks in Israel. It includes monitoring reports and incident reports from RIAS Bavaria, RIAS Berlin, RIAS Hesse, the Documentation and Information Centre on Antisemitism Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (DIA.MV), RIAS Lower Saxony, RIAS North Rhine-Westphalia, RIAS Saarland, RIAS Saxony-Anhalt, the Statewide Information and Documentation Centre Schleswig-Holstein (LIDA-SH) and RIAS Thuringia. Incidents that occurred in federal states without regional reporting offices are processed and documented by the federal association RIAS. For the period from October 7–15, the federal RIAS association and the RIAS reporting offices have received almost 300 reports of incidents (as of Oct. 16, 2023, 2 p.m. CET). Overall, all RIAS reporting offices have registered an increase in reports. Some reported incidents could not be conclusively verified by the editorial deadline and are therefore not included in the evaluation. Others do not constitute incidents according to RIAS. New reports are registered every day and the reporting offices are verifying further incidents – the situation remains dynamic, and this report represents a preliminary excerpt.

Antisemitic incidents in numbers

In the period of October 7–15, the RIAS reporting offices have so far become aware of 202 verified antisemitic incidents in Germany which had a connection to the Hamas terror attacks against Israel and the massacres of the Israeli civilian population. A look at the same period in the previous year 2022 shows an increase of at least 240%: Between October 7 and 15, 2022, a total of 59 antisemitic incidents were documented by RIAS reporting centers nationwide.



In the following, an overview is given of the types of incidents, the political background and the forms of manifestation.

Twenty-two incidents per day

Among the 202 antisemitic incidents already verified are six attacks, seven targeted damage to property, five threats, one mass mailing and 183 cases of abusive behavior (of which 30 cases involve assemblies).

What becomes clear is: antisemitic incidents that specifically came about because of – or had as their theme – the terrorist attacks against Israel and the massacres of Israeli civilians are manifold. It is evident that the situation in Israel, in addition to concerns about the situation on the ground, also strongly shapes the everyday life of Jews in Germany through antisemitic incidents. In the first nine days since the beginning of the war, 22 antisemitic incidents occurred per day in Germany.

Political background

The analysis of the political background shows that most of the incidents that RIAS was able to assign to a background were assigned to anti-Israel activism. This includes those incidents that cannot be clearly assigned to any other political-ideological background and where anti-Israel motivation clearly dominates over a political positioning, such as in the left, right or Islamic/Islamist spectrum. In the period analyzed, just under 18% were assigned to anti-Israel activism. A further 8% were attributed to Islamic/ Islamist background. This is assigned when there is a positive reference to Islamic beliefs or symbols and no other political background dominates. In all, 4% of the cases were classified as leftist/anti-imperialist. Just under 2% were attributed to the extreme right-wing background and 1% each to the Christian/fundamentalist, political center and conspiracy ideological spectrum. In 64%, the political background was unknown. The fact that antisemitic incidents do not only originate from people with a certain political background reinforces the perception among Jews that they can potentially be confronted with antisemitism anywhere.



Antisemitic manifestations¹

Analysis of the incidents documented so far according to the content-related manifestations of antisemitism shows that Israel-related antisemitism unsurprisingly dominated the incidents. At the same time, all other forms of antisemitism that RIAS distinguishes were also documented. While Israel-related antisemitism was present in most incidents (91%), antisemitic othering played a role in just under 19% and post-Shoah antisemitism in 13%. Stereotypes of anti-Judaic antisemitism were documented in 8% of cases, and those of modern antisemitism, such as antisemitic conspiracy myths, in almost 7% of all cases. In some incidents, manifestations were intertwined. This is the case, for example, when Israel is compared with Germany under National Socialism, i.e. when Israel-related antisemitism is combined with post-Shoah antisemitism. Such an incident was documented on October 15 in Trier (Rhineland-Palatinate): At a meeting, signs were displayed reading "One Holocaust doesn't justify another" and "Stop doing what Hitler did to you."

The first evaluation shows: Already on the first day of the terrorist attacks on Israel, there were antisemitic incidents in Germany. These originate from different political spectrums, although anti-Israel activism particularly dominates the incident scene. The incidents related to the terrorist attacks against Israel and the massacres of Israeli civilians are diverse. Israel is blamed for the attacks, antisemitic terror is legitimized, a perpetrator-victim reversal is practiced and the state is demonized and delegitimized. In addition, Jews in Germany are held responsible for Israel's policies. And even those who position themselves against the terror of Hamas and show solidarity with Israel and the Israeli civilian population are attacked in an antisemitic way.

1 RIAS distinguishes between five different manifestations of antisemitism. Individual incidents are regularly assigned to several manifestations if the corresponding stereotypes occur.



Antisemitic incidents related to Hamas massacres

The following is a description of some antisemitic incidents with reference to the Hamas terror attacks and massacres from October 7 to 15:

October 7, Kassel (Hesse)

A meeting calling attention to the Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel was disrupted with shouts of "Allahu Akbar." In addition, a passer-by threatened that what had happened there [meaning Israel] would soon happen here.

October 8, Marburg (Hesse)

In a café, two men were talking about the terrorist attacks on Israel. One said that it was great that guys on scooters had taken the IDF by surprise. The other replied, "Yes, even their money can't help the Jews anymore."

October 8, Kiel (Schleswig-Holstein)

At a solidarity rally with Israel, several participants were spat at by a group.

October 10, Dortmund (North Rhine-Westphalia)

A Palestinian flag and a banner saying "Israel is our misfortune" were hung above the entrance to a pub. The modification of the slogan "The Jews are our misfortune" from the National Socialist newspaper Der Stürmer was an election campaign slogan of the current far-right party Die Rechte.

October 12, Bremen

The graffiti "For every Zionist 1 bullet" was discovered on a wall next to the writing "Free Gaza."





Antisemitic Graffiti in Bremen

Antisemitic confrontations online

Almost every third incident that could be verified by the editorial deadline occurred online. RIAS only records incidents here that are directed at specific people or institutions. Antisemitism on social media platforms, in emails or direct messages often have a similarly drastic effect on those affected as do antisemitic incidents face to face.

The internet currently plays a special role because images of the Hamas massacres and attacks are being disseminated worldwide in the digital space. The perpetrators shared graphic footage of their acts, sometimes explicitly via social media to the relatives of those murdered or abducted. Numerous victims were identified through this video and visual material. By spreading their atrocities via social media, the terrorists expand the circle of those directly affected and stir up grief and fear among Jews in and outside Israel. Similar tactics of digitally spreading their impact have been used in the past by groups such as the Islamic State or far-right terrorists, such as in Halle and Wiedersdorf or Christchurch (New Zealand), all in 2019.

October 7, online (unknown).

In response to a tweet about Hamas' massacres of Israeli civilians, one user said "Your 2 school fathers will be destroyed you fucking Zionist".



October 10, online (Bavaria)

The organizer of a solidarity rally the day before received a direct message via Instagram saying "Die, vallah [coll. Arabic,"I swear to God"]" in response to one of the stories from the demonstration.

October 11, online (Baden-Württemberg)

After the victim publicly expressed solidarity with Israel on Instagram, a user posted comments under several of her posts that had an Israel reference, including "Allah akhbar," "is arab dick good?" and "Too bad Hitler didn't gas you."

Marking practice in the residential environment

Antisemitic incidents that occur in the residential environment often have a particular impact on those affected. An especially threatening practice of "marking" in the residential environment has been reported in recent days from Berlin and North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). There, houses were daubed with Stars of David, among other symbols, and thus "marked" as supposedly Jewish. By the end of the reporting period, ten incidents had been verified in Berlin and North Rhine-Westphalia, three of which were known to be Jewish. The massive appearance of such graffiti shows a new quality.

This kind of "marking" is reminiscent of the marking of Jews under National Socialism: first, during the so-called April Boycott on April 1, 1933, shops owned by Jews were marked with a Star of David and the slogan "Do not buy from Jews." From September 1, 1941, all Jews over the age of six had to wear a yellow Star of David. The so-called compulsory marking, which applied to all Jews in the German Reich and the territories occupied and annexed by the Germans, represented a turning point in the gradual disenfranchisement, exclusion and persecution of the Jewish population.



This form of marking is antisemitic othering, i.e. those affected are confronted antisemitically on the basis of an (assumed or actual) affiliation to Judaism or are addressed as not belonging to the respective imagined "we" group. Antisemitic markings of this kind can also function as public identification of targets of potential attacks. Since they focus on the immediate living environment, the feeling of security and life of those affected is considerably worsened.

From October 7–15, there were 15 antisemitic incidents in the living environment of victims. The living environment can be one's own flat, the stairwell or the immediate neighborhood. The incidents range from antisemitic graffiti to antisemitic leaflets left at the location, from damage to an Israeli flag hung out of the window to physical assaults. The 15 incidents include nine cases of hurtful behavior, four incidents of targeted damage to property, one assault and one threat. In order to protect those involved, no further details can be given about the assault and the threat.

Antisemitic assemblies

For the period of October 7–15 RIAS recorded 30 assemblies as antisemitic incidents. RIAS documents gatherings as cases of antisemitic offensive behavior when antisemitic statements are made at the events or when antisemitic content is disseminated on signs, flyers or in speeches.

Regional focus and chronological history

The documented gatherings differed in terms of the political background of the organizers and participants as well as in form, scope and dynamics. The regional focal points so far are North Rhine-Westphalia (six), Berlin (five), Bavaria (four), Baden-Wuerttemberg (three) and Lower Saxony (three).

Depending on the character of the gathering, differences in the articulation of antisemitism could also be observed: At individual smaller events,



greater care was taken to avoid antisemitic statements, either by the organizers or due to assembly requirements and bans. On the other hand, antisemitism was openly and aggressively expressed at larger gatherings, sometimes in connection with fantasies of violence and the glorification of Hamas terror attacks and massacres of the Israeli civilian population.

Smaller rallies as well as larger demonstrations with up to 1,000 participants took place in the aforementioned period, whereby the number of participants gradually increased in as the week progressed. The largest gatherings took place on the weekend of Friday-Sunday, October 13-15, especially on Saturday, October 14. Similar to the increase in the number of participants, there was also an increase in the religious charge of the rallies. For example, between Saturday, October 7, and Thursday, October 12, RIAS became aware of four antisemitic meetings at which "Allahu Akbar" shouts could be heard, while from Friday-Sunday, October 13-15, nine such meetings were reported.

Political background

In terms of political background, the various events brought together registrants and participants from different spectrums.

If the anti-Israel motivation of the responsible persons or groups in whose context an incident took place prevails over a certain positioning, an attribution to anti-Israel activism is made (see above). At such gatherings, it often happens that actors from different political spectrums participate in the same gathering, despite all other differences, with the common goal of expressing anti-Israel content.

Most of the antisemitic gatherings that RIAS was able to assign to a political background were classified as anti-Israel activism (20). This was followed by gatherings with an Islamic/Islamist background (5), as well as left-wing anti-imperialist and conspiracy ideology backgrounds (2 each). One meeting could not be assigned a political background by RIAS.



Forms of manifestation

All forms of antisemitism recorded by RIAS were expressed at the meetings. The most frequently documented manifestation was Israel-related antisemitism. This was documented at all antisemitic gatherings known to RIAS and related to the massacres in Israel. This was followed by anti-Judaic antisemitism and post-Shoah antisemitism, each of which was articulated at eight gatherings. Modern antisemitism was documented at four gatherings, and antisemitic othering also occurred at two gatherings.

The aforementioned religious charge of the assemblies – which increased over the course of the week – was also reflected in the manifestations of antisemitism expressed: Two of the assemblies where anti-Judaic antisemitism was observed took place on Monday, October 9. The remaining six gatherings took place on the weekend of Friday to Sunday, October 13-15, including four that took place on Saturday, October 14. At six of the eight antisemitic gatherings where anti-Jewish antisemitism was documented, "Allahu Akbar" was also chanted as a slogan.

The following are examples of some of the antisemitic gatherings documented from October 7 to 15:

October 14, Dresden (Saxony)

At a meeting with an Islamic/Islamist background, the Islamist slogan "Khaibar, Khaibar, ya yahud, jaish muhammad saya'ud!" was chanted by a larger crowd (in translation: "Khaibar, Khaibar, oh Jews, remember Khaibar, Muhammad's army is returning").

The slogan refers to a campaign of the Prophet Muhammad against an oasis populated by Jews in 628, which ended with the conquest of the area and, according to some sources, a massacre of part of the Jewish population. The reproduction of this slogan in today's context resembles a call for a pogrom against Jews, supposedly legitimized by religious tradition.



October 14, Braunschweig (Lower Saxony)

At an anti-Israel meeting, Hamas terrorist attacks and massacres were described as the "response of the Palestinian resistance" to Israel's supposed "apartheid."

The classification as "apartheid" is a common antisemitic demonization and delegitimization of Israel.

October 15, Berlin

At an anti-Israel rally, in addition to shouts of "Allahu Akbar," various antisemitic slogans were heard, including "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." A journalist reporting critically on the gathering was insulted as "Zionist media" and obstructed from reporting.

The slogan "From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free" propagates the eradication of Israel and, in the current news context, legitimizes the Hamas terror attack and massacres. The term "Zionist media" also ties in with a stereotype of modern antisemitism, according to which Jews control the media.



A poster with the slogan "From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free" at a demonstration in Munich, photo: RIAS Bayern.



October 14, Düsseldorf (North Rhine-Westphalia)

At an anti-Israel rally, among the items on display was a poster showing American President Joe Biden handing Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a blood bag with the inscription "Gaza." Netanyahu is drinking from this blood bag. Posters also equated Israel's defense measures with the Shoah: "Stop Palestinian Holocaust," "One Holocaust does not justify another - Free Palestine" and "Didn't you say never again?"

The proximity to the American president is meant to portray Israel as particularly powerful in geopolitical terms. The blood, on the other hand, is a recourse to the aforementioned ritual murder legend. The equation of Israel with National Socialism serves to demonize and delegitimize Israel. It trivializes the Shoah and declares survivors and victims of the Shoah as well as their descendants to be perpetrators.



A case of post-Shoah antisemitism at a rally in Düsseldorf, photo: RIAS NRW.



October 9, Königs Wusterhausen (Brandenburg)

At a conspiracy ideology meeting, a speaker talked about the terrorist attacks and massacres committed by Hamas. These could be "summed up in one harsh but, in my opinion, appropriate sentence: Whoever believes that you can surprise Israel also believes that you can blow up pipelines in the Baltic Sea without being noticed."

Such statements suggest the terrorist attacks and massacres by Hamas are a "false flag" action by Israel, thereby portraying Israel as at least complicit in the atrocities and reversing the perpetrator-victim roles. Such "false flag" narratives can be observed increasingly in the media of the conspiracy ideology spectrum.

Breakdowns of solidarity rallies

Across the country, numerous solidarity rallies with Israel and vigils for the victims of the Hamas massacres occurred simultaneously. So far, 21 incidents have been verified in which passers-by disrupted these rallies. In addition to shouting against the rallies during minutes of silence, there was also one threat and six attacks.

The following incidents give an impression of the way in which expressions of solidarity and vigils were addressed in an antisemitic way.

October 8, Hesse

In a town in Hesse, during a minute's silence for the victims of the massacres in Israel, a woman walked past the rally and said in its direction: "Minute's silence for Israel and a few dead Jews, already embarrassing, digga [dude]!"



October 8, Halle/Saale (Saxony-Anhalt)

A memorial service for the victims of the terrorist attacks was disrupted by a group of about 40 men. The men displayed several Palestine and Syrian flags, chanted "Allahu Akbar" and "Our souls, our blood for Palestine" (in Arabic). They also shouted "Fuck Israel" in the direction of a participant in the commemoration, who contacted the police.

October 9, Mannheim (Baden-Württemberg)

During a vigil for the Israeli victims of Hamas terrorist attacks in Mannheim, several breakdowns of the event occurred. An Israeli flag belonging to one of the participants was stolen. There were also several shouts of "Free Palestine." A passer-by who had stood in the crowd shouted that Palestine was being oppressed and demanded its freedom.

October 9, Jena (Thuringia)

At a solidarity rally in Jena, while a member of the Jewish community was speaking, the middle finger was shown and shouts of "It's their own fault" were heard.

October 12, Berlin

At a vigil for the victims of Hamas terror, "Fuck the Jews" was shouted from a passing car.

There were also expressions of solidarity with Israel in many cities, with the Israeli flag being hoisted on public buildings. In 33 cases, these flags were damaged or stolen. In some cases, these incidents were accompanied by antisemitic shouting and screaming.



October 11, Stade (Lower Saxony)

A group of two to four men were observed entering the town hall in Stade. The men broke a window on the upper floor in order to get hold of the Israeli flag hoisted in front of the town hall. The perpetrators were unsuccessful and fled when the police arrived.

October 11, Schwerin (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania)

The Israeli flag hoisted in front of the Ministry of the Interior was torn down. The perpetrators then kicked the flag and shouted "Allahu Akbar."

October 12, Mainz (Rhineland-Palatinate)

The Israeli flag hoisted in front of the city administration was torn off the pole and set on fire. Other hoisted flags remained unharmed.

Glorification of terror

In addition to the antisemitic incidents described here, a number of terror glorifications as well as disruptions of solidarity and memorial gatherings were reported to RIAS, indicating deep-seated antisemitic resentment.

Cases of terror glorification have been reported throughout Germany, which take Hamas' cruel massacres of Israeli civilians as "legitimate resistance" against what they call the Israeli occupation. In Wuppertal, for example, a rally took place on October 15 with the title "Your repression does not break us. Solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle." Among other things, they showed a banner with the words: "Resistance remains legitimate!!!," a Palestinian flag and a flag of the FKO ("Federation of Class Struggle Organisations"). Both in the call and on the banner, the participants legitimized the Hamas massacres of the Israeli civilian population and glorified it as "legitimate resistance."



In Leipzig, on October 11, flyers were distributed in the run-up to an event on which the Hamas terror attacks were also played down as "resistance" requiring "unconditional solidarity" and Hamas was generally glorified as "progressive forces of the Palestinian freedom movement."

In addition, in many cities, speeches at rallies expressing solidarity with Israel and the affected people and their relatives and friends were disrupted by heckling or the display of Palestine flags.

Similar terror-glorifying, resentment-laden references can also be found on social media. For example, one person reacted to a post by the Thuringian Prime Minister Bodo Ramelow, in which he expressed his solidarity for Israel, by stringing together the word Hamas over 50 times without spaces. A Twitch livestreamer known as HasanAbi, who has 2.6 million followers, streamed in front of 40,000 viewers, the fourth largest group of whom were from Germany, as he trivialized Hamas crimes and justified violence against civilians as violence against "Zionists" and "settlers." On the X platform (formerly Twitter), one user wrote: "Israel is no more Insha Allah [God willing]." as well as two rocket emojis.

Even if the cases mentioned are not antisemitic incidents according to RIAS categories, they point to the broad approval of Hamas' massacres and a glorification of terror and suggest an existing antisemitic worldview. Overall, language that glorifies violence to an extreme is used on social media in particular.

Language that legitimizes violence

An increase in violent antisemitic language can also be observed in antisemitic incidents where no direct reference is made to the Hamas massacres: For example, the director of the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorial Foundation received the newspaper article in question after an interview on the election of the mayor of Nordhausen. A photo of the mayor had been embellished with a speech bubble that read: "I am a disgusting piece



of Hebrew shit. My mother tongue is Hebrew. I am a Jew and I celebrate the cult of guilt and memory terror." On the second page of the article, under a photo of the leader and participants in a demonstration with Beate Pommer, president of the Thuringian state parliament, the text was added: "We are Jews and eaten up by hatred".

Conclusion

The surge in news reports and antisemitic incidents in Germany against the backdrop of the Arab-Israeli conflict is not a new phenomenon. Images of the Hamas massacres of Israeli civilians, which are characterized by an eliminatory character, have led to sympathy and solidarity with Israel and its population in many parts of the world. For Jews in Germany, the situation is amplified by the fact that relatives and loved ones have been murdered, injured or abducted. The uncertainty and concern for the safety of relatives in Israel is constantly high in view of the dynamic events of the war. Against this background, activities glorifying the terror of Hamas and statements legitimizing the atrocities are currently having a particularly negative effect on Jews in Germany.

Many of the 202 antisemitic incidents reported between October 7 and 15 occurred in the home environment, on social media platforms, at school and at work. Those affected are often unable to avoid these potential threatening situations without hiding their Jewish identity. The fact that some Jewish parents did not send their children to school, that Jewish or identifiably Israeli restaurants remained closed, or that Jews removed their mesusot from the external doors of their flat, illustrates the extent to which the terror attacks and massacres of Hamas shape the everyday life of Jews in Germany.

If you witness or are affected by antisemitic incidents, report them at <u>report-antisemitism.de</u>!



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Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism (Bundesverband RIAS)

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The project is funded by the German federal government (Federal Programme "Live Democracy!", Federal Ministry of the Interior and Home Affairs).

